

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO
THE NATURE AND OUTWORKING OF
AUTHENTIC APOSTOLIC MINISTRY**

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	4
DECLARATION & COPYRIGHT	5
ABBREVIATIONS	6
INTRODUCTION	7
1 Background	8
2 Etymology	9
3 Structure & Scope	10
PART 1: BIBLICAL EVIDENCE	12
1.1 The Historical Records	14
1.1.1 Mark	14
1.1.2 Matthew	15
1.1.3 Luke	15
1.1.4 John	16
1.1.5 Acts	17
1.2 The Pauline Corpus	21
1.2.1 Galatians	22
1.2.2 Thessalonians	27
1.2.3 Corinthians	29
1.2.4 Romans	38
1.5.5 Ephesians & The Captivity Epistles	41
1.2.6 Pastoral Epistles	46
1.3 Other Evidence	48
1.4 Summary	48
PART 2: ECCLESIOLOGICAL MODELS	51
2.1 Models of the Church	53
2.1.1 Biblical Images	53
2.1.2 Models and Types	53
2.2 Concepts of Apostolicity	58
2.2.1 Apostolicity through Bishops	59
2.2.2 Apostolicity through Scripture	60
2.2.3 Apostolicity through The Church	61
2.2.4 Apostolicity through Apostles	63

2.3	Historical Development	64
2.3.1	Pre-Twentieth Century	64
2.3.2	Twentieth Century	67
2.4	Summary	75
 PART 3: PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE		 77
3.1	Apostolic Recognition	80
3.1.1	Criteria	80
3.1.2	Apostolic Spheres	84
3.2	Apostolic Authority	87
3.2.1	Nature	88
3.2.2	Accountability	91
3.2.3	Hierarchies & Authoritarianism	92
3.3	Apostolic Tasks	93
3.3.1	Apostleship and Homiletics	94
3.3.2	Apostleship and Liturgy	95
3.3.3	Apostleship and Catechetics	98
3.3.4	Apostleship and Poimenics	102
3.4	Apostolic 'Succession'	104
3.4.1	The Challenges in Context	104
3.4.2	Emerging Apostles	105
3.5	Summary	107
 PART 4: CONCLUSIONS		 109
 BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES		 113

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ABSTRACT

One of the most distinct and significant Pentecostal-Charismatic developments of the last forty years has been the emergence of various groups insisting upon the validity of present-day apostolic ministry. Such claims are not without historic precedence, but the present movement has gained considerable momentum and an increasingly widespread acceptance. With it comes the danger of dilution; a watering-down of vital biblical truths, principles and patterns.

This thesis is concerned with the *authenticity* of apostolic ministry, which is so essential to the church's mission, and the investigation is carried out from three perspectives.

Firstly, there is a thorough examination of the *biblical* evidence concerning the nature, functions and hallmarks of apostolic ministry as found in the Gospels, Acts and Epistles. Lukan and Pauline concepts of apostleship are compared, Paul's self-understanding is probed, and a clear picture of authentic apostolic character, tasks and fruit emerges.

Secondly, there is a consideration of several *ecclesiological* matters, including the extent to which notions of ministry in general, and apostleship in particular, are shaped by views of the nature and mission of the church. This is followed by an overview of the historic development of modern concepts of apostolic ecclesiology.

The third perspective is a *practical* one, and here the thesis considers how those convinced of a continuing apostolic ministry are outworking their beliefs. The focus is on some of those associated with the Restoration Movement, together with others representing the wider 'New Apostolic Reformation'. This part of the thesis considers the grounds and process of apostolic recognition, the exercise of apostolic authority, the development of apostolic spheres or 'networks', the apostolic approach to the major tasks of the church, and the response of the new models to the pressing issues of apostolic 'succession'.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Amp	The Amplified Bible
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
Cf., cf.	Compare
ESV	English Standard Version
f(f).	The verse(s) following
Gk.	Greek
Heb.	Hebrew
Holman	Holman Christian Standard Bible
ICC	The International Critical Commentary
KJV	King James Version
LXX	Septuagint
lit.	Literally
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NEB	New English Bible
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIV	New International Version
NKJV	New King James Version
NLT	New Living Translation
NT	New Testament
NTC	New Testament Commentary
OT	Old Testament
PNTC	The Pillar New Testament Commentary
TDNT	Kittel and Friedrich, eds. <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> (Abridged in One Volume)
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
Wycliffe	The Wycliffe Bible
Young	Young's Literal Translation

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

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Books of the Bible are abbreviated using the standard NIV conventions.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

1 BACKGROUND

Ephesians 4 tells us the ascended Christ gave apostles and other gifts to the church, in order to equip believers for ministry, so that we might be built up, until we reach unity and maturity.

From its earliest days, the church has declared itself to be ‘one, holy, catholic and apostolic,’¹ but understandings of what this means have varied considerably. Amongst Protestants, reaction against Catholic claims of ‘apostolic succession’ meant that, apart from a few failed attempts to recover the apostolic office, notions of apostleship were set-aside for centuries.

The Restoration Movement in Britain, developing from the 1970s, introduced a ‘new’ ecclesiology: amongst other things it claimed apostolicity for some of its leaders and began to pioneer a practical outworking of apostleship. Since then, its concepts have matured, many of its ‘apostolic networks’ have grown considerably,² and its influence has been significant, especially amongst Pentecostal-Charismatics. Elsewhere more recently, fresh considerations of the church’s ‘missional’ imperative have also led to a growing emphasis on the need to be apostolic. Overall, concepts of apostleship are now more widely accepted. So much so that Peter Wagner has claimed a “New Apostolic Reformation” is underway, “changing the shape of Protestant Christianity around the world.”³

At the same time, though, there is a danger that important terminology and biblical patterns become diluted; ‘apostle’ is now a popular word, and in some cases a titular prefix ascribed to a successful pastor. If the apostolic gift is essential for the church today, and for its mission to the world, then so too is a

¹ Cf. the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed of AD 381.

² See William K. Kay, *Apostolic Networks in Britain: New Ways of Being Church* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007).

³ C. Peter Wagner, *Churchquake: How The New Apostolic Reformation Is Shaking Up The Church As We Know It* (Ventura: Regal Books, 1999), 5. He claims (p.7) that “the new apostolic churches [are] the fastest growing group of churches on six continents.”

properly researched understanding of these things. The concern of this thesis is to investigate the nature of *biblically authentic* apostleship: What is an apostle? What does he do? Are the biblical patterns relevant for today? Are contemporary expressions authentic? Our aim is to arrive at a truly biblical view of apostles and the apostolic ministry. As Moltmann warns, “theology has to remind the church of the lordship of Christ and has to insist that the church’s form be an authentic one.”⁴ This is as true for its forms of leadership and ministry as it is for any other aspect.

We will briefly consider the etymology of our key words, before explaining our structure and scope.

2 ETYMOLOGY

The noun *ἀπόστολος* (*apóstolos*) occurs 80 times in the NT, and is translated by the NIV as ‘apostle’ or ‘apostles’ on almost every occasion.⁵ It is used mostly by Paul (34 times) and Luke (34), though also by John (4), Peter (3), Mark (2), Matthew (1), Jude (1), and the writer to the Hebrews (1). The related word *ἀποστολή* (*apostolē*) occurs four times, and is rendered ‘apostleship’, ‘apostolic’ or ‘ministry of an apostle’.⁶ Both are derived from the verb *ἀποστέλλω* (*apostéllō*), a strengthening compound of *stéllō* meaning ‘to send out’ or ‘send forth’.

In secular Greek, *apóstolos* was a nautical term for a fleet sent out from their home-port. It differs from *pémpō* (to send) by its emphasis on the relationship between sender and sent and, in particular, by the implications of a *commission* and *authorisation*. Rengstorf links *apóstolos* with the Hebrew *šālūah*, an accredited or authorised representative or delegate of a religious authority,

⁴ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology* (London: SCM Press, 1977), 7.

⁵ The NIV also translates *apóstolos* as ‘messenger’ in Jn 13:16 and Phil 2:25, and as ‘representative’ in 2Co 8:23.

⁶ The NIV translates *apostolē* as ‘apostleship’ in Ro 1:5 and 1Co 9:2, as ‘apostolic’ in Ac 1:25 and as ‘ministry as an apostle’ in Gal 2:8.

entrusted and empowered to speak and act on their behalf,⁷ (used of rabbis travelling to Jews living outside Palestine).⁸ In the case of the *šālūah*, the one sent ‘is equivalent to the one who sent him’, carrying the sender’s authority and effectively their *presence*.⁹ Bittlinger suggests “all these interpretations are to an extent included in the New Testament concept of the word, at least in the imagination of those who read or heard of this concept at that time.”¹⁰

In the NT, then, *apostéllō* becomes a theological word for “sending forth to serve God with God’s own authority”¹¹ and *apóstolos* denotes ‘one commissioned’,¹² a person sent with full authority; “entrusted with a mission” and with “powers conferred upon him.”¹³

3 STRUCTURE & SCOPE

This thesis is in four parts:

- In Part 1 we examine the **biblical evidence** of apostleship. We will take a grammatical-historical approach to the text, though also drawing upon socio-rhetorical insights where appropriate. Here we aim to reach conclusions concerning the nature, function and hallmarks of apostolic ministry as presented in the New Testament.

⁷ Rengstorf, *TDNT*, 70. Cf. C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (London: A & C Black, 1962), 16; F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 74; Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 126.

⁸ Arnold Bittlinger, *Gifts and Ministries* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1974), 55 suggest Paul may have functioned in this way before his conversion (cf. Acts 9:14f).

⁹ See Bittlinger, *Gifts and Ministries*, 55; Bruce, *Galatians*, 74; Green, *Thessalonians*, 126.

¹⁰ Bittlinger, *Gifts and Ministries*, 56.

¹¹ Rengstorf, *TDNT*, 68.

¹² A.F. Walls, “Apostles,” in J. D. Douglas et al, eds. *New Bible Dictionary*. 2nd ed., (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1982), 59.

¹³ J.B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians* (London: Macmillan, 1892), 92.

- In Part 2 we examine some **ecclesiological models**. Our aim here is to consider how leadership and ministry philosophies in general, and concepts of apostolicity and apostleship in particular, are shaped by alternative ecclesilogies. Our approach will be largely deductive, as we review various models of the church presented in Systematic Theologies, and alternative views of apostolicity. We will also consider how some of the 'new' ideas have developed historically.
- In Part 3 we examine some of the **practical experience** of outworking concepts of apostleship, looking in particular at how the Restorationists and some of those associated with the 'New Apostolic' paradigm are expressing their convictions. We consider issues of recognition, authority and 'succession', and use a Practical Theology framework to consider how apostolic models address the 'tasks of the church'. We draw evidence mainly from populist literature (including the writings of contemporary 'apostles'), and our approach here will be inductive and reflective.
- Finally, in Part 4 we draw some **conclusions** concerning apostolic authenticity, and consider how the new models might thrive in the future.

The author writes from a Pentecostal-Charismatic perspective, and from a context within the Restoration Movement.

PART 1

BIBLICAL EVIDENCE

PART 1: BIBLICAL EVIDENCE

In this section we examine the NT evidence concerning apostles and apostleship. We wish to discover, amongst other things: how the NT writers understood apostleship; whether the NT presents different types of apostles; how apostles were recognised; and whether there is any biblical warrant for a continuing (present-day) apostolic ministry. Therefore:

- In 1.1 we consider the historical narratives, taking evidence from the Gospels and Acts.
- In 1.2 we examine the extensive material in the Pauline corpus, identifying a range of themes by which Paul understands his ministry.
- In 1.3 we briefly note some other NT evidence.
- In 1.4 we summarise our findings, providing a template against which to evaluate the ecclesiological models (Part 2) and the practical experience (Part 3).

1.1 THE HISTORICAL RECORDS

We will take the historical accounts first, in order to provide context for the epistles, though remain aware that the latter were mostly written and in circulation *before* the historical accounts were completed.¹⁴

1.1.1 MARK

The Synoptics describe Jesus's choosing of the Twelve. In the earliest,¹⁵ Mark tells us Jesus "called to him those he wanted, and...appointed twelve¹⁶ that they might be with him and that he might send them out (*apostéllō*) to preach and to have authority to drive out demons" (Mk 3:13-15, cf. Mt 10:1-2). Some manuscripts add "designating them apostles" (*apóstolos*).¹⁷ Either way, Mark makes clear that Jesus later "began to send them out" (*apostéllō*) two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits (Mk 6:7), and that upon their return "the apostles" (*apóstolos*) reported back (Mk 6:30, cf. Lk 9:10). Rengstorf argues that the essence of apostleship is in the commission (not the commissioned); hence "disciples" become "apostles" for the duration of their trip (Mk 6:7-13, Mt 10:fff), and are "disciples" again for the remainder of these Gospels.¹⁸

The two-fold function of the Twelve was to *be with* Jesus and to *be sent out* by Him; they were his personal representatives. And, since they were to announce the incoming of God's kingdom (cf. Lk 9:2) they were given "authority" (*exousía*, 'right' or 'power',¹⁹ cf. 2Co 10:8) to expel demons which had hitherto ruled. "Appointed" is *poiéō* (to create or make), used of many of the creative acts of

¹⁴ Based on widely accepted datings, the Pauline epistles (c. AD 48-66) mostly predate Mark (c. AD 55-65) and Luke-Acts (c. AD 55-65 or c. AD 70-85) and completely predate Matthew (c. AD 75-80) and John (after AD 85). Eg. F.F. Bruce, ed. *Zondervan Bible Commentary: One Volume Illustrated Edition*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008).

¹⁵ We assume Mark's Gospel was a source for both Matthew and Luke. Cf. William Hendriksen, *Luke* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1979), 26.

¹⁶ C.K. Barrett, *The Signs of an Apostle* (London: Epworth Press, 1970. Revised, Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996), 28 suggests slight variations in the Synoptics concerning the names of the Twelve may indicate "the make up of the group may not have been completely invariable".

¹⁷ Earlier versions of the NIV included this, as does Amp, ESV, Holman. NASB NKJV and Young omit. Most provide the alternative in a footnote.

¹⁸ Rengstorf, *TDNT*, 71.

¹⁹ *TDNT*, 238f.

Jesus.²⁰ In appointing the Twelve Jesus was *creating something new*; they were the nucleus of a new people built on apostolic foundations (cf. Eph 2:20),²¹ forerunners of a “world-wide missionary enterprise”.²²

1.1.2 MATTHEW

Matthew's only use of *apóstolos* is in his account of the choosing of the Twelve (Mt 10:1-2), who were “sent out” (10:5) to the lost sheep of Israel (10:6), to proclaim that the kingdom of heaven was near and to “heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy [and] drive out demons” (10:8), all in the immediate context of Jesus's compassion towards multitudes of “sheep without a shepherd” (Mt 9:36), and the urgent need to “send out workers” (10:38).²³ In the OT, Moses asked God to “appoint someone over [the] community” so that his people would “not be like sheep without a shepherd” (Nu 27:16-17); here in the NT, Jesus appoints apostles to that end.

Matthew and Luke both record the centurion's faith (Mt 8:5-13, Lk 7:1-10); but whereas Luke tells us the centurion “sent” (*apostéllō*) elders to Jesus (Lk 7:3), Matthew says he went himself (Mt 8:5), perhaps reflecting the Judaic understanding of apostolate: because the centurion sends men *on his behalf*, he is *himself present*.²⁴

1.1.3 LUKE

According to Luke, Jesus prayed all night (Lk 6:12) before choosing twelve whom he “designated apostles” (*apóstolos*) (6:13). Luke uses the term several

²⁰ Ibid., 895ff.

²¹ Hendriksen, *Luke*, 327 argues that the choosing of exactly *twelve* apostles “indicates that he had in mind the new Israel, for ancient Israel had twelve tribes and twelve patriarchs.” Cf. R.A. Cole, *The Gospel According to St. Mark: An Introduction and Commentary* (London: Tyndale, 1961), 79 who says that by appointing the Twelve “the Lord began to constitute his own church.”

²² Hendriksen, *Luke*, 332.

²³ Mark 3:7-12 provides a similar context.

²⁴ Bittlinger, *Gifts and Ministries*, 55f.

times thereafter.²⁵ In Luke 9 Jesus sends out (*apostéllō*) the Twelve, and in Luke 10 similarly the seventy-two, explaining “he who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me” (Lk 10:16).

In Luke 11 Jesus tells the Pharisees God “will send them prophets and apostles” (*apóstolos*) whom they will kill and persecute (11:49).²⁶ Whilst “prophets” are the OT prophets (11:50-51),²⁷ identity of the “apostles” is uncertain: perhaps a reference to God’s “envoys” in general and the NT apostles in particular.²⁸ In his parallel passage, Matthew has “prophets and wise men and teachers” (Mt 23:34), which (if Luke has redacted Matthew’s phrase),²⁹ makes “wise men and teachers” (*sophós* and *grammateús*) synonymous with “apostles”, providing an interesting link with the “wise master builder” (*sophós architekton*) of 1Co 3:10.

1.1.4 JOHN

Whilst John refers to “the Twelve”,³⁰ his only use of *apóstolos* in his Gospel occurs in Jesus’s discourse after washing his disciples’ feet, where no “messenger (*apóstolos*) is greater than the one who sent him” (Jn 13:16).³¹ However, John uses *apostéllō* frequently to refer to Jesus being “sent” by God.³² John 20:21 is of note, for here Jesus makes a vital link between his own ‘apostolic’ mission and that of his disciples: “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

²⁵ Cf. Lk 9:10, 11:49, 17:5, 22:14, 24:10 and the many occurrences in Acts.

²⁶ Jesus appears to be quoting from an ancient ‘wisdom’ text (though in the parallel passage Matthew ascribes the words directly to Jesus). For a discussion of possible sources, see I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1978), 502f.

²⁷ The order, “prophets and apostles”, probably confirms this, as in the NT the order is always reversed (1Co 12:28, Eph 2:20, 3:5, 4:11). Cf. Marshall, *Luke*, 504.

²⁸ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 475; cf. Hendriksen, *Luke*, 642. Cf. John Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34* (Dallas: Word, 1993), 668.

²⁹ There is no consensus as to which is the original (Cf. Marshall, *Luke*, 504; Nolland, *Luke*, 667).

³⁰ Jn 6:67, 70, 71; 20:14. He doesn’t provide a list of their names, leading Barrett, *Signs*, 25 to suggest that by the time of writing “the Twelve” had become fixed in tradition.

³¹ Young has “apostle”; Amp, NASB have “one who is sent”.

³² Jn 1:6; 3:17, 3:34; 4:38; 5:36, 38; 6:29, 6:57; 7:29; 8:42; 10:36; 11:42; 17:3, 17:8, 17:18, 17:21, 17:23, 17:25; 20:21.

1.1.5 ACTS

The account of the primitive church (covering c. AD 30-60) includes twenty-eight mentions of *apóstolos*,³³ together with numerous descriptions of their *actions*. We take Acts to have been written by Luke³⁴ some time after the Pauline literature.³⁵ In most cases, Luke uses *apóstolos* as a simple identification of some or all of the Twelve,³⁶ and we make little comment. We limit our discussion to the following:

1. Reconstituting the Twelve

Luke's account of the choosing of Matthias (1:15-26) states that the *qualifications* for this "ministry" (*diakonía*, service) (1:25)³⁷ were personal association with Jesus and witnessing his resurrection (1:21-22), thus ensuring the Twelve remained "reliable guarantors of the truth".³⁸ We must ask whether these qualifications were required uniquely of the Twelve or had continuing applicability.

For some, there can be no further 'eyewitnesses' and therefore no more apostles; "it was a unique, irreplaceable office...there could be no apostolic succession."³⁹ On this criteria, Paul would be disqualified, but since (as we shall see) Luke *does* recognise Paul's apostleship, we must conclude these criteria

³³ Hence Acts 1:2, 1:12, 1:26, 2:37, 2:42, 2:43, 4:33, 4:35, 4:36, 4:37, 5:2, 5:12, 5:18, 5:29, 5:40, 6:6, 8:1, 8:14, 8:18, 9:27, 11:1, 14:4, 15:2, 15:4, 15:6, 15:22, 15:23, 16:4. In addition, there are five occasions where the NIV uses the word "apostles" (Ac 4:2, 5:21, 5:26, 5:27, 5:41) to make better sense of 'them' or 'they', etc.

³⁴ Lukan authorship is accepted by most scholars. Eg, F.F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1962), 19; I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester: IVP, 1980), 44-45; John B. Polhill, *Acts* (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 23ff; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 57.

³⁵ Dating estimates for Acts vary from as early as AD 57 to as late as AD 150, with the majority favouring AD 70-80 (eg. Marshall, *Acts*, 48, Polhill, *Acts*, 31, Witherington, *Acts*, 62).

³⁶ Including the eleven after Judas's betrayal, and the restored circle after Matthias's appointment.

³⁷ NASB has "this ministry and apostleship", cf. ESV, KJV, NKJV, Young.

³⁸ Marshall, *Acts*, 63, who suggests (pp.65-66) "the real reason...for seeking a successor to Judas, lay not in the Old Testament prophecy [but] from the character of the task which required that the full number of the witnesses be made up."

³⁹ Polhill, *Acts*, 93. Though he notes (94, n61) that for Paul the term has a broader usage to denote those (like himself) who had received a special commission from the Lord.

were necessary because of the *particular task* of the Twelve: custodians of the eyewitness accounts and witnesses especially *to the Jews* after the resurrection.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the casting of lots was not hasty or erroneous, but had proper OT precedent as a way of enabling the Lord to choose (Num 26:55, Pr 16:33).⁴¹ It is therefore *not* the case that Matthias was the ‘wrong choice’ (subsequently reversed by God’s choosing of Paul): Luke gives no such evidence (and, in any case, Paul was ‘disqualified’). Paul clearly differentiates himself from the Twelve (1Co 15:5ff) and would surely have “dismissed as preposterous the idea that he was rightly the twelfth apostle.”⁴² In our view, therefore, we have a unique apostolic *office* restricted to the Twelve, but this is *not* to say that there are no further apostles.

2. Power to Witness

Jesus promised the Twelve they would “receive power” to “be...witnesses” (1:8), and throughout the narrative “many wonders and miraculous signs” are performed by them (2:43, cf. 5:12),⁴³ as they continue his supernatural ministry.

The apostles take up Christ’s commission (1:8) by preaching the gospel and *establishing churches*. Thus, the work in Judea expanded until there was “a church throughout Judea, Samaria and Galilee” (9:31); the first missionary journey concluded as Paul and Barnabas “appointed elders for them in each church” (Ac 14:23). Founding and building-up churches was a fundamental apostolic goal, and to accomplish this Paul spent *extensive time* in many places.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Marshall, *Acts*, 63, 65f.

⁴¹ Cf. C.K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 103; Marshall, *Acts*, 67; Polhill, *Acts*, 95.

⁴² Bruce, *Acts*, 52.

⁴³ Luke’s ‘summaries’ (Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-35, 5:12-16) generally describe *ongoing conditions* (cf. Barrett, *Acts I*, 299; Bruce, *Acts*, 117). Eg. Signs and wonders are noted amongst the Twelve (cf. 3:6ff, 4:30f, 5:15, 9:39ff), and with Paul (cf. 14:3, 15:12, 16:26, 19:11-12, 20:10, 28:5).

⁴⁴ Eg, a year in Antioch (11:26), several weeks in Pisidion Antioch (13:42ff), a “considerable time” in Iconium (14:3), a “long time” back in Antioch (14:28), eighteen months in Corinth (18:11), three years in Ephesus (19:8-10, 20:31) and a further three months in Corinth (20:1-3).

3. Apostolic Doctrine

Acts 2:42 describes the “devotion” of the primitive church to “the apostles teaching”. “Devotion” is *proskarteréō* (be strong towards, hold fast to), denoting persistent, constant attention,⁴⁵ and “teaching” is *didachē* (instruction or doctrine, cf. Ac 5:28);⁴⁶ Barrett suggests they “assiduously practiced what they heard.”⁴⁷ We later discover that “day after day” the apostles “never stopped teaching and proclaiming” (5:42); likewise, Paul “taught...publicly and from house to house” (20:20). In Acts 6, concern about neglecting “the ministry of the word of God” (6:2) leads to the appointment of the Seven, releasing the apostles to “devote” themselves (*proskarteréō*) to prayer and the word (6:4); in Acts 8:15ff and 11:22 we see them ‘checking the foundations’; and in Acts 15 settling a doctrinal dispute. As Bruce says, the early church was “constituted on the basis of the apostolic teaching.”⁴⁸

4. Barnabas and Paul

Acts 13 describes the Spirit’s instruction to “set apart” Barnabas and Saul “for the work to which I have called them” (13:2), after which they are “sent...off” with the laying on of hands (13:3) and “sent on their way by the Holy Spirit” (13:4). Luke proceeds to describe Paul and Barnabas as “the apostles” (14:4, 14), the only time he does so, and his only use of *apóstolos* outside designations of the Twelve. Whilst there is some textual uncertainty at v.14,⁴⁹ the same cannot be said of v.4, creating “a conundrum...that has long puzzled interpreters”,⁵⁰ especially those anxious to show that Luke elsewhere uses *apóstolos* only in a restricted, technical sense, of the Twelve.⁵¹

⁴⁵ *TDNT*, 417; W.E. Vine, *A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Original Greek Words and their Precise Meanings for English Readers* (Peabody: Hendrickson, n.d.), 238.

⁴⁶ *TDNT*, 166; Vine, *Dictionary*, 333.

⁴⁷ Barrett, *Acts I*, 163.

⁴⁸ Bruce, *Acts*, 79.

⁴⁹ See Barrett, *Acts I*, 678f.

⁵⁰ Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 204.

⁵¹ To put it differently, those who see no apostolic office outside the Twelve are forced to find another explanation for Luke’s use of the word in ch. 14.

Several explanations are offered,⁵² but most conclude Luke here uses *apóstolos* in a *different way* to his designations of the Twelve (in a broader, less technical sense). Thus: Barrett regards Paul and Barnabas as apostles (envoys) of *a church* (rather than *of Christ*)⁵³ and, moreover, believes “usage of the word ἀπόστολος was not uniform in the early church and it may be correct that when prophets were sent out on missions they were...known as apostles”;⁵⁴ Bruce regards these references as meaning “missionaries” or “commissioners”;⁵⁵ and Parsons suggests a *temporary* apostleship “for the purposes of succession”, with Paul and Barnabas “carry[ing] the apostolic authority necessary to transfer their pastoral ministry to the elders.”⁵⁶ Implicit in these views is the notion that Luke’s usual use of *apóstolos* (restricted to the Twelve) reflects a *different concept of apostleship* to Paul who, as we shall see, certainly didn’t *see himself* in these ways. The argument is that Paul used *apóstolos* in an earlier, wider, and less ‘technical’ sense, and that Luke later developed a more restricted sense of the word,⁵⁷ as a description of the Twelve.⁵⁸

In our view, Luke’s apparently more limited use of *apóstolos* does *not* indicate a different concept of apostleship to Paul’s. (i) First, it is unlikely Paul and Luke would have had something *different* in mind regarding this important word:

⁵² Eg (i) Luke was reliant on another source who used the word here, and did not correct it; (ii) Luke was careless and didn’t notice that his definition at Ac 1:21-22 excluded Paul; (iii) Luke knew he could not ‘define’ Paul as an apostle, but his admiration for him allowed the word to ‘slip through’ here; (iv) The use of the word at Ac 14:4 is a reference to the *message* of the Twelve, here carried by Paul and Barnabas (with which “some sided”); or (v) Paul and Barnabas were apostles *of the Antioch church* rather than apostles *of Christ* like the Twelve. For discussion see Barrett, *Acts I*, 671f.; Parsons, *Acts*, 204.

⁵³ Barrett, *Acts I*, 601, cf. 667, 671.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 602.

⁵⁵ Bruce, *Acts*, 287, n6 (though he thinks Barnabas may have been one of the hundred and twenty to witness the resurrection, Ac 1:15). See also F.F. Bruce, *Men & Movements in the Primitive Church: Studies in Early Non-Pauline Christianity* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1979), 16n4 where he suggests the use of *apóstolos* in Acts 14 is a reference to their having been sent out by the church.

⁵⁶ Parsons, *Acts*, 204.

⁵⁷ Perhaps reflecting the prevailing use at the time of his writing (cf. Barrett, *Signs*, 30).

⁵⁸ Eg. Morris Ashcraft, “Paul Defends His Apostleship: Galatians 1 and 2,” *Review & Expositor* 69 (Fall 1972): 461; Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 281; James D.G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1988), 9; Hendriksen, *Luke*, 327. Colin Brown, “Notes on Apostleship in Luke-Acts,” in Colin Brown, ed. *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1976), 135 notes that German scholars are more inclined to see differences between Lukan and Pauline concepts than English-speaking scholars.

Luke travelled with Paul⁵⁹ and would have been familiar with his concept of apostleship. (ii) Secondly, Luke's account speaks for itself: Paul has seen Christ (Luke narrates the Damascus Road encounter no less than three times)⁶⁰ and is now witnessing to the resurrection.⁶¹ (iii) Thirdly, having stated Paul's apostolicity in Acts 14 Luke has *no need* to refer directly to it thereafter: we must not miss the fact that Luke *only* uses *apóstolos* in the *plural*⁶² and therefore has greater need of the word in the first half of his narrative (concerning apostles) than he does in the second (concerning an apostle); Luke has *no occasion* (after Acts 15) to refer to more than one apostle at the same time.

In summary, then, the Gospels show Jesus choosing and sending the Twelve during his earthly ministry. The evidence in Acts supports the idea of a unique group (or *office*) of Twelve 'eyewitness', but extends the concept of apostleship to Paul and Barnabas. As Lightfoot suggests, the Twelve were "the Apostles of the Circumcision", representing the twelve tribes and "the extension of the Church to the Gentiles [was] accompanied by an extension of the apostolate."⁶³ We now turn to consider the ministry of the pre-eminent 'apostle to the Gentiles'.

1.2 THE PAULINE CORPUS

Paul provides an unparalleled self-understanding of apostleship. As Barrett puts it, he was "deeply, thoughtfully, and passionately convinced of his call to be an apostle", and the "scepticism of his rivals and the indifference of his

⁵⁹ Cf. Luke's "we" passages at Acts 16:10-17 (c AD 50-51), 20:5 - 21:18 (c AD 57-58), and 27:1 - 28:16 (c. AD 59) where he is evidently personally present.

⁶⁰ Acts 9:1-9, 22:3-16, 26:9-18.

⁶¹ We might add that Barnabas and Saul had already proved apostolic credentials in Antioch: after a year, "great numbers" had been taught (11:26), a church established, and a company of prophets and teachers raised-up (13:1).

⁶² There are no references to 'Peter the apostle', 'John the apostle', etc.

⁶³ Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 95.

converts", forced him to "work out what his apostleship meant, and on what grounds it rested."⁶⁴ Streeter regards Paul as "a genius of abnormal range",⁶⁵ and credits him with "the beginnings of that intellectual formation of belief out of which was gradually developed the theology of the Church".⁶⁶

We assume Pauline authorship throughout,⁶⁷ and take his epistles chronologically.⁶⁸

1.2.1 GALATIANS

In his earliest letter (AD 48-49),⁶⁹ Paul defends his apostleship against claims of Judaizers that he derived his commission from the Jerusalem leaders and, moreover, is now being unfaithful in its presentation.

1. *Divine Commission*

Emphasising the divine source of his commission, he begins by declaring himself "an apostle – sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father" (Gal 1:1).⁷⁰ His apostleship is not derivative. There *are* others sent *from*

⁶⁴ Barrett, *Signs*, 36.

⁶⁵ Burnett Hillman Streeter, *The Primitive Church: Studied with Special Reference to the Origins of the Christian Ministry* (London: Macmillan, 1929), 67ff.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 70. Howard Snyder, *Community of the King* (Downer's Grove: IVP, 1977), 82 argues that Paul's *teaching* about leadership should take priority over Luke's *descriptions*, since the epistles represent Paul's subsequent reflection and revelation concerning actions taken as leadership was emerging in the primitive church.

⁶⁷ Though we are aware of the uncertainties, eg concerning the pastoral epistles. Cf. Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles: An Introduction and Commentary* (London: Tyndale, 1957), 48-53; Lock, *Pastoral Epistles*, xxii-xxx).

⁶⁸ We assume the following dating: Galatians (AD 48-49, see below), 1 Thessalonians (AD 51), 2 Thessalonians (AD 51-52), 1 Corinthians (AD 53-54), 2 Corinthians (AD 55-56), Romans (AD 55-57), Ephesians (AD 60), Colossians (AD 60), Philemon (AD 60), Philippians (AD 61), 1 Timothy (AD 64), Titus (AD 64), 2 Timothy (AD 66). See, eg, F.F. Bruce, ed. *Zondervan Bible Commentary*. Of least certainty is Galatians, with scholars divided as to whether it is written: (i) to churches in *southern Galatia* c. AD 48-49; or (ii) to churches in *northern Galatia* in the mid-50s. For a discussion see James D.G. Dunn, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (London: A & C Black, 1993), 6-8; Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), xxii.

⁶⁹ See comments above. Contra Fee, *Empowering Presence*, xxii who considers that Galatians was written *after* the Thessalonian and Corinthian correspondence.

⁷⁰ As we shall see below, Paul's apostleship is set forth in the salutation of most of his letters.

men (cf. 2Co 8:23) but Paul is not one of them: he was commissioned *by Christ*, without any human intermediary,⁷¹ and is not inferior to those who were apostles before him (1:17). This is vital, for Paul's whole concept of apostleship centres around his call, his mission and his message.⁷² This is not an issue of prestige; rather, Paul must "commend his Gospel with the weight which he knows it deserves."⁷³

2. Paul's Company

His reference to "all the brothers with me" (1:2), reminds us he never worked alone. Bruce suggests he "attracted friends around him as a magnet attracts iron filings", and notes seventy named associates.⁷⁴ He will speak of "fellow workers",⁷⁵ "dear brothers"⁷⁶, "dear friends",⁷⁷ and "relatives";⁷⁸ and in every church is on first-name terms with his converts.⁷⁹

3. Paul's Revelation

Autobiographical details (1:11-2:14) continue Paul's defence of his apostleship. His gospel is not man-made, nor received from others; rather, he "received it by revelation from Jesus Christ" (NASB: "revelation of Jesus Christ")⁸⁰ (1:11-12) who commissioned him on the Damascus Road. There, God "was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles" (1:15-16). Paul's "revelation" (*apokálypsis*, a "disclosure given from heaven, with heavenly

⁷¹ As Bruce, *Galatians*, 72 speculates, they had probably been informed that Paul received his apostolic commission from the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, or from the leaders in Damascus or Antioch. Cf. Dunn, *Galatians*, 25.

⁷² Cf. Ashcraft, "Paul Defends His Apostleship", 460.

⁷³ William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1902), 4-5.

⁷⁴ F.F. Bruce, *The Pauline Circle* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1985), 8-9.

⁷⁵ Eg, Priscilla and Aquilla (Ro 16:3), Urbanus (16:9).

⁷⁶ Eg, Tychicus (Eph 6:21, Col 4:7), Onesimus (Col 4:9).

⁷⁷ Eg, Epenetus (Ro 16:5), Persis (16:12), Luke (Col 4:14).

⁷⁸ Eg, Andronicus and Junias (Ro 16:7), Herodion (16:11).

⁷⁹ Without exception, Paul's letters conform with the courtesies of ancient letter-writing ('X to Y: greetings'), but as Dunn, *Galatians*, 24 points out, Paul introduces himself with the name by which he would be familiar face-to-face.

⁸⁰ ESV, NKJV, NKJV, Young, Wycliffe have "received by revelation of Jesus Christ"; Holman, NIV, NLT have "revelation from Jesus Christ".

authority, usually of heavenly secrets")⁸¹ was *from* Christ and *of* Christ; and Jesus wasn't revealed simply *to* him but *in* him. And, as Bruce notes, "the gospel and the risen Christ were inseparable; both were revealed to Paul in the same moment."⁸² In Paul's eyes, "apostleship and preaching of the gospel were inextricably bound together."⁸³

4. Set Apart

Paul understands himself to have been "set apart" from birth (1:15). The word is *aphorízō* (to separate, sever or 'mark off by bounds'), used of divine separation accompanying divine calling⁸⁴ (cf. Ro 1:1, 2Co 6:17, Ac 13:2) and echoes of Jeremiah 1:5 and Isaiah 49:1ff are unmistakable. Paul's quote from Isaiah 49 in Galatia (Acts 13:47), is further evidence of his identification with the OT prophets, as he takes the gospel to the Gentiles. All this is "by his grace" (1:15), a fact that will recur frequently.

5. Apostolic Unity

Having been commissioned, Paul withdrew privately (presumably to reconstruct his theology in light of his revelation) rather than visiting those who "were apostles before I was" (1:17); three years later he met Peter and James in Jerusalem (1:18-19),⁸⁵ but saw "none of the other apostles" (1:19). It was fourteen years before he returned to set his gospel before them (2:1-2),⁸⁶ and they "added nothing" (2:6). Instead, they acknowledged he had been "entrusted" as "an apostle to the Gentiles" (2:8) and "recognized the grace given" to him (2:9).

⁸¹ Dunn, *Galatians*, 53, who notes that *apokálypsis* is a predominantly Pauline word.

⁸² Bruce, *Galatians*, 89.

⁸³ Dunn, *Galatians*, 53.

⁸⁴ *TDNT*, 728; Vine, *Dictionary*, 1027.

⁸⁵ Cf., probably, Acts 9:26-30.

⁸⁶ Cf., probably, either Acts 11 or Acts 15. For a discussion see Dunn, *Galatians*, 88f.

We make three points: (i) The others were apostles “before” him (1:17) chronologically, *not hierarchically*,⁸⁷ they are “esteemed as pillars” (2:9), but their connection with the historical Jesus does *not* give them *authority* over him.⁸⁸ He was authorised by Christ many years before he met them and, far from conferring authority on Paul (the “right hand of fellowship” symbolising acceptance not ‘ordination’),⁸⁹ the Jerusalem apostles acknowledged the authenticity of his ministry, and agreed a “demarcation of the respective spheres of service”.⁹⁰ (ii) Paul understood the importance of *unity* for the credibility of the twin-mission: he hadn’t ‘broken away’ to pursue his own circumcision-free gospel,⁹¹ he “did not invent a new gospel, but merely carried it to a new audience.”⁹² Authentic apostolicity guards the *original* apostolic witness (1Co 11:23). Paul walks a tightrope: he acknowledges their authority, yet insists upon his independence; he maintains unity, yet retains his freedom; he works *with* them but not *for* them. Overall, it would “be a grave injustice to Paul to think of him as a freelance apostle going his own way.”⁹³ (iii) Paul designates “James, the Lord’s brother” an *apóstolos* (1:19, cf. 1Co 15:5ff), the most natural way to understand Paul’s construction being “the only other apostle I saw was James” (not “I saw none of the other apostles, but I did see James”),⁹⁴ and, moreover, gives him primacy in 2:9.⁹⁵

⁸⁷ Bruce, *Galatians*, 94.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 118.

⁸⁹ Cf. Ashcraft, “Paul Defends His Ministry”, 467.

⁹⁰ Bruce, *Galatians*, 119. As he points out (p.120) their “two ministries are practically placed on a level here, and it is indicated that this situation was acceptable to both sides.” It is an intriguing question whether the acceptance of a ‘limited’ mission-field by the Jerusalem apostles represented a dilution of their commission to.

⁹¹ Ibid., 95, 102 suggests such an account had gained wide circulation in Galatia, leading to Paul’s vehement defence of his version of events (“I assure you before God...I am not lying”, Gal 1:20).

⁹² Oden, *Systematic Theology*, 353.

⁹³ Ashcraft, “Paul Defends His Apostleship”, 464.

⁹⁴ Bruce, *Galatians*, 100f. Dunn, *Galatians*, 76-77 is less certain (he denies the issue can be settled on syntactical grounds), and suggests Paul has been deliberately ambiguous about James’s apostolic status; indeed, that “Paul may have wished to drop a hint of doubt regarding the apostleship of James, without being openly discourteous to one whom others did call ‘apostle’.”

⁹⁵ The ‘James’ of Gal 2:9 cannot be the son of Zebedee, whose execution (Acts 12:2) *precedes* the mission to Galatia. The Lord’s brother evidently became a leading figure in Jerusalem (cf. Ac 12:17, 15:13ff).

6. Spheres and Entrustments

There is an important idea of apostolic *entrustments* and *spheres* here. Paul has been “entrusted” (from *pisteúō*, denoting reliance, trust or belief) with an apostleship to the Gentiles, as has Peter to the Jews (2:7), and agreement is reached concerning their respective ‘spheres’ (cf. 2Co 10:13). It seems unlikely the division was along strict ethnic or geographic lines;⁹⁶ rather a sense of being ‘responsible for’ the interests of Gentiles and Jews respectively.⁹⁷ Either way, the apostles recognise a distinction God had *already* made in their respective ministries.

7. Remembering the Poor

The apostles agree to “continue to remember the poor”, which Paul was “eager to do” (2:10). Bruce identifies “the poor” (*ptōchós*, destitute)⁹⁸ with those in Judea (cf. Ro 15:26, 1Co 16:1ff, 2Co 8-9),⁹⁹ but such a restriction is unnecessary: Paul’s eagerness (*spoudázō*, denoting haste and zeal)¹⁰⁰ is an apostolic burden reflecting Jesus’s own concern.¹⁰¹

8. A Parent’s Longing

Finally, the Galatians are Paul’s “dear children” (4:19) for whom he is “in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed” in them. He longs for their maturity, their freedom, and their life in the Spirit. He will return frequently to the ‘father-child’ motif to express his relationship with churches and leaders.

⁹⁶ If so, Paul’s success in winning Jewish converts (eg Ac 14:1) would have been seen as a trespass.

⁹⁷ For a discussion see Dunn, *Galatians*, 111.

⁹⁸ *TDNT*, 969.

⁹⁹ Bruce, *Galatians*, 126 also notes that there is some evidence that the Jerusalem church referred to its members collectively as “the poor”.

¹⁰⁰ *TDNT*, 1069.

¹⁰¹ Dunn, *Galatians*, 112-113 also notes that concern for the poor was an important Jewish covenant obligation, and the agreement reached effectively extended the same moral responsibility to Gentile converts.

1.2.2 THESSALONIANS

Paul and his colleagues visited Thessalonica in c. AD 50, but were soon forced to leave (Acts 17:1-10).¹⁰² They regrouped in Corinth (Ac 18:5, c. AD 51) from where they wrote to the fledgling church.¹⁰³

1. *Silas and Timothy*

Both letters are from “Paul, Silas and Timothy” (1Th 1:1, 2Th 1:1) and largely written in the third person, with the authors referred to as *apóstolos* in 1Th 2:6.¹⁰⁴ It is unclear whether Paul regards Timothy and Silas as apostles. The case seems stronger for Silas¹⁰⁵ than Timothy (who, in later salutations is *excluded* from the apostolate).¹⁰⁶ Bruce concludes that whilst Paul “associates his companions with his own apostolic ministry”, his concept of *apóstolos* “can scarcely be stretched to include Timothy”.¹⁰⁷ Grudem thinks the *exclusion* of Timothy from the “we” of 3:2 means he cannot be *included* at 2:6.¹⁰⁸ Green, however, takes it to mean all three as “co-founders of the church, were apostles”.¹⁰⁹

2. *Integrity*

Paul defends their ministry against charges of “error” (*plánē*, wandering, deceit, seduction, delusion),¹¹⁰ “impure motives” (*akatharsía*, impurity, uncleanness, especially regarding finance),¹¹¹ and attempts to “trick” their converts (*dolos*:

¹⁰² Acts 17:2 implies the visit lasted little more than three weeks.

¹⁰³ F.F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Word Biblical Commentary, 45) (Waco: Word Books, 1982), 8 suggests the first epistle was sent “a few weeks, or at most, a few months after their departure from the city.”

¹⁰⁴ Hereafter, all references are to 1 Thessalonians, unless stated.

¹⁰⁵ Gordon D. Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 64. Cf. Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 96.

¹⁰⁶ Thus “Paul, an apostle...and Timothy our brother” (2Co 1:1, Col 1:1). Elsewhere, when Paul conjoins Timothy’s name with his own he omits the apostolic title (eg Phil 1:1, Phm 1:1).

¹⁰⁷ Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, 31

¹⁰⁸ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Leicester: IVP, 1994), 909f.

¹⁰⁹ Green, *Thessalonians*, 125.

¹¹⁰ *TDNT*, 857ff; Vine, *Dictionary*, 281.

¹¹¹ *TDNT*, 381; though Vine, *Dictionary*, 1190 suggests sensuality and evil doctrine may be implied (cf. James Everett Frame, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1946), 95).

craft, deceit, guile)¹¹² (2:3).¹¹³ They are “approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel”, not seeking to please men “but God, who tests our hearts” (2:4b, cf. 4:5, Ac 1:24). They “never used flattery” (“words of glossing” or “cajolery”),¹¹⁴ falsehood or greed (2:5).¹¹⁵ Unlike so many itinerant orators, they were “not looking for praise from people” (2:6a).¹¹⁶ Far from exploiting their converts, they “worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone” (2:9, cf. 2Th 3:8ff; 1Co 4:12, 9:6). Thus, Paul reminds them “how holy, righteous and blameless” they were, and calls God as his witness (2:10).

3. Authority

Paul points out, however, that “as apostles of Christ” they “could have asserted [their] authority” (2:6b). The word is *báros* (weight, burden),¹¹⁷ and the phrase (lit. “we could have been ‘with weight’”)¹¹⁸ is also translated “could have made demands” (ESV, NKJV, NLT). Bruce takes this to be their right to *financial support*,¹¹⁹ which Paul chose not to take up (2Th 3:7-9, 1Co 9:3-18).¹²⁰ Hendriksen suggests they were “invested with authority over life and doctrine” and therefore in a position to make themselves “formidable”.¹²¹ However, as Fee says, “they were apostles who refused to ‘throw their weight around’”.¹²²

¹¹² Vine, *Dictionary*, 281.

¹¹³ These charges or insinuations appear to be part of the “strong opposition” of 1Th 2:2, brought, perhaps, by the jealous Jews of Ac 17:5ff. Cf. Frame, *Thessalonians*, 90.

¹¹⁴ The word is *kolakía*, used nowhere else in the NT (nor LXX), and implies self-interest (words designed to gain a hearing and a financial reward). See Vine, *Dictionary*, 447; TDNT, 451. Wycliffe has “words of glossing” and Frame, *Thessalonians*, 97 has “cajolery”.

¹¹⁵ NLT: “we were not pretending to be your friends just to get your money” (1Th 2:5).

¹¹⁶ As William Hendriksen, *I & II Thessalonians* (London: Banner of Truth, 1972), 62 notes, “The world of that day was full of roaming ‘philosophers’, jugglers, sorcerers, fakers, swindlers.”

¹¹⁷ TDNT, 95-96; Vine, *Dictionary*, 159.

¹¹⁸ Fee, *Thessalonians*, 64.

¹¹⁹ Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, 31.

¹²⁰ Nor in Corinth (1Co 9:15, 2Co 11:7-11), though he *did* accept financial support from Philippi (2Co 11:8-9, Phil 4:10ff). For a discussion see Hendriksen, *Thessalonians*, 66f.

¹²¹ Hendriksen, *Thessalonians*, 63f.

¹²² Fee, *Thessalonians*, 65.

4. Fathers and Mothers

In “a remarkable analogy, unlike anything else in the Pauline corpus”,¹²³ Paul insists they acted “gently” (or “like young children”)¹²⁴ (2:7a), caring for their converts “as a nursing mother cares for her children” (2:7b) and “as a father...with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging” them (2:11-12). The apostles gave *of themselves* (*psychē*, life or soul)¹²⁵ because they “loved [them] so much” (2:8), a rare term (*homeiromeno*) denoting strong affectionate yearning.¹²⁶

1.2.3 CORINTHIANS

Having established the Corinthian church during an eighteen month stay (Ac 15:40-18:22, c. AD 50-51), Paul made two further visits¹²⁷ and probably sent four letters, the extant epistles being the second and last of these, written from Ephesus (1 Co 16:8, c. AD 53-54) and Macedonia (2 Co 9:2-4, c. AD 55-56).¹²⁸ Corinth was a large status-conscious city, a “magnet for the socially ambitious”¹²⁹ with a culture of boasting¹³⁰ and ‘patronage’¹³¹ from which the

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Some manuscripts have *ēpīoi* (“gently”) whilst other have an extra letter to give *nēpīoi* (“infants”). Green, *Thessalonians*, 126 argues that the manuscript evidence favours the latter, despite it being the more difficult. For a discussion of the textual difficulties see Fee, *Thessalonians*, 66-72.

¹²⁵ *TDNT*, 1342.

¹²⁶ Variously rendered “affectionately desirous” (ESV), “having so fond an affection for you” (NASB), “affectionately longing” (NKJV), and “desiring you covetingly” (Wycliffe). Frame, *Thessalonians*, 101 suggests “yearning after you”.

¹²⁷ Cf. 2Co 2:1 and 2Co 13:1 (cf. Ac 20:1-3). For discussion see C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (London, A & C Black, 1973), 2ff.

¹²⁸ Assuming: (i) the ‘previous letter’ (1Co 5:9); (ii) 1 Corinthians; (iii) the ‘tearful/severe letter’ (2Co 2:3-4,9; 7:8,12); and (iv) 2 Corinthians (taken as a unified whole). See Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 30ff, and Ben Witherington III. *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 333ff.

¹²⁹ Witherington, *Conflict & Community*, 20.

¹³⁰ Public displays of boasting and rhetoric by Sophists (paid orators) were popular forms of entertainment. See David A. DeSilva, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods & Ministry Formation* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004), 557.

¹³¹ Financial gifts were reciprocated with honour (or votes), patrons thereby asserting superiority and power over their beneficiaries. Itinerant teachers and Sophists frequently supported themselves by accepting patronage, and to refuse an offer of patronage was seen as rejecting an offer of friendship. See Craig S. Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 79, 228f; Witherington, *Conflict & Community*, 341f, 414-419.

church was not immune.¹³² Expecting their apostle(s) to impress with displays of authority and rhetorical elegance, Paul falls short; and false apostles (who *do* meet Corinthian expectations) exploit the situation. Paul sets forth a robust defence of his apostleship, during which he “wears his heart on his sleeve and speaks without constraint, hiding neither his affection, nor his anger, nor his agony.”¹³³ There is an abundance of material here, and we limit our discussion as follows:

1. Called as an Ambassador

First, he is “called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God” (1Co 1:1, 2Co 1:1).¹³⁴ As a ‘called’ apostle (*klētós apóstolos*),¹³⁵ his ministry “is predicated on God’s call, which is but the expression of God’s prior will” and it is this that “fills the apostle with such confidence.”¹³⁶ He is “Christ’s ambassador” (2Co 5:20),¹³⁷ with authority (*exousía*, divinely-given authority)¹³⁸ for “building [them] up” rather than “tearing [them] down” (2Co 10:8, 13:10). He will exercise this if necessary, but does not “lord it over” their faith (1:24).¹³⁹ Throughout the correspondence Paul’s “delicately balanced authority”¹⁴⁰ will be challenged and misunderstood; here at the outset he establishes its divine source.

¹³² Keener, *Corinthians*, 45.

¹³³ Barrett, *Second Corinthians*, 32.

¹³⁴ Paul’s greeting (1:1) also refers to “our brother Sosthenes” (cf., perhaps, Acts 18:17), but he features nowhere else in the epistle. He may have been Paul’s “rhetorically proficient scribe” (Keener, *Corinthians*, 20) or perhaps a companion well-known to the Corinthians (Fee, *First Corinthians*, 30-31). The wording of 1:1 makes it highly unlikely, however, that he is to be regarded as a fellow-apostle.

¹³⁵ Cf. Romans 1:1.

¹³⁶ Fee, *First Corinthians*, 29. Paul is also “an apostle...by the will of God” at 2Co 1:1, Eph 1:1, Col 1:1.

¹³⁷ As Keener, *Corinthians*, 186 also points out, “the treatment of [ambassadors] revealed their receivers’ attitude towards those who sent them.”

¹³⁸ *TDNT*, 239; Vines, *Dictionary* 979.

¹³⁹ As Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 477 puts it he does not use his authority “to strengthen his hold over [them], but only to strengthen their grip on the gospel.”

¹⁴⁰ C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2nd ed. (London, A & C Black, 1971), 31.

2. Servants & Stewards

After Paul had established the work, Apollos (and perhaps Peter)¹⁴¹ laboured there, and the church became partisan.¹⁴² Paul must correct their misunderstandings: he and Apollos are “only servants” (*diákōnos*) to whom “the Lord has assigned...his task”; merely instruments “through whom” *God* has worked (1Co 3:5). Their tasks have been complementary (3:6) and they share “one purpose” (3:8); they are allies not rivals,¹⁴³ and *neither* takes any credit (3:6-7). The Corinthians impoverish themselves by preferring one over the other. (3:22).¹⁴⁴ In this regard, Apollos certainly appears to be one of “us apostles” (1Co 4:6, 9).¹⁴⁵

The apostles are “servants of Christ...entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed” (1Co 4:1). “Servant” here is *hypérétēs* (lit. ‘under rower’), a subordinate carrying out the will of another;¹⁴⁶ “those entrusted” are *oikonomos*, stewards or managers of a household (often slaves, cf. Mt 24:45);¹⁴⁷ and “mysteries” (*mystērion*) are secret things made known by divine revelation,¹⁴⁸ as Paul describes elsewhere (1Co 2:6-16, cf. Eph 3:2-3ff). As *oikonomos* they must prove “faithful” (NASB: “trustworthy”) (1Co 4:2) in their discharge of this entrustment.

¹⁴¹ Cf. 1Co 1:12 and 4:6. Apart from his mentions in 1:12 and 3:22, however, there is insufficient textual evidence to confirm whether Peter had been in Corinth.

¹⁴² Cf. 1Co 1:10ff, 3:1ff. The wider issue of Corinth’s divisions is complex (see Fee, *First Corinthians*, 47ff) and mostly outside the scope of this paper.

¹⁴³ Witherington, *Conflict & Community*, 130 suggests Apollos’s rhetorical skills unwittingly played into the hands of the Corinthians.

¹⁴⁴ Leon Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester: IVP, 1985), 70.

¹⁴⁵ Though Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 96 n.2, 98 notes that Clement of Rome, 47 specifically excludes Apollos from the apostolate, and therefore concludes that if Paul is here referring to anyone other than himself, it is to Silas (cf. 2Co 1:19).

¹⁴⁶ TDNT, 1232; Vine, *Dictionary*, 754. *Hypérétēs* is used by Paul only here.

¹⁴⁷ Vine, *Dictionary*, 1097. Hence ESV, KJV, NASB, NKJV have “stewards”; Holman has “managers”.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 779. As Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 99f. and Witherington, *Conflict & Community*, 139 point out, the ‘mysteries’ here are *not* to be understood as sacred rights or sacraments (the more usual meaning of *mystērion*).

3. Wise Master Builders

Paul is “an expert builder” (*architektōn*, denoting both architect and skilled craftsman)¹⁴⁹ (1Co 3:10) and by God’s grace, he has “laid a foundation” (*themélios*) (3:10), a concept he will develop. The foundation “is Jesus Christ”,¹⁵⁰ the one “already laid” by God (3:11), and the apostles are “fellow workers in God’s service” (3:9, cf. 2Co 6:1), indicating a partnership with God and one another.¹⁵¹ Each will be “rewarded according to his own labour” (3:8), and the “quality of [his] work”, tested at Christ’s return (3:13). Paul therefore cares little whether he is judged by men (4:3ff).

4. Last in Line

In a startling motif, Paul declares the apostles are “on display at the end of the procession, like those condemned to die in the arena” (1Co 4:9a).¹⁵² Using “words dripping with sarcasm”,¹⁵³ he contrasts Corinthian misconceptions with the apostles’ reality, providing “a grim though triumphant sketch of what apostolic ministry was like”:¹⁵⁴ they are objects of derision, “a spectacle” to men and angels, “fools for Christ”, “weak and “dishonoured” (4:9-10). Their hardships, humiliations and manual labour (so despised by the Greeks) (4:11-12), render them “scum” (*perikátharma*) and “refuse” (*perípsēma*) (4:13).¹⁵⁵

In the second letter he is their *dóulos* (bondservant, 2Co 4:5). As Barnett suggests, “a more anti-triumphalist statement is hard to conceive”.¹⁵⁶ Further catalogues of tribulation (2Co 4:7-11, 6:4-10, 11:23-33) read as the

¹⁴⁹ Vine, *Dictionary*, 729f suggests “principal artificer”. The word is used nowhere else in the NT.

¹⁵⁰ Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 87f. notes the possibility that Paul is here correcting an error in Corinthian thinking that *Peter* is the church’s foundation.

¹⁵¹ The meaning is ambiguous, hence: “God’s fellow-workers” (ESV, NASB, NKJV); “God’s coworkers” (Holman); “we are both God’s workers” (NLT). For discussion see Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 86; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 134; Keener, *Corinthians*, 42; Witherington, *Conflict & Community*, 132.

¹⁵² The image is of doomed gladiators, condemned to die at the end of a Roman display (cf. Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 110; Morris, *1 Corinthians*, 77; Witherington, *Conflict & Community*, 143).

¹⁵³ Keener, *Corinthians*, 45.

¹⁵⁴ Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 109.

¹⁵⁵ *TDNT*, 384, 833. Both words are used elsewhere for the ‘expiatory offering’ or ‘scapegoat’, and the terms were also used of criminals condemned to die (Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 112f; Keener, *Corinthians*, 46).

¹⁵⁶ Paul Barnett, *The Message of 2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness* (Leicester: IVP, 1988), 223.

‘occupational hazards’ of apostleship,¹⁵⁷ the proof of his authenticity.¹⁵⁸ By ‘boasting’ of weaknesses (2Co 11:30, 12:10), Paul derides his rivals,¹⁵⁹ insisting that authentic ministry is “cruciform, Christlike and servant shaped”,¹⁶⁰ and that true apostolic authority is manifested “only by the renunciation of all the commonly recognized marks of authority.”¹⁶¹ As Fee rightly says, “the scandal of the cross is written large over Paul’s vision of his own apostleship”.¹⁶²

5. Fathers

With an abrupt change of tone, and in what Fee considers “one of Paul’s finest hours”,¹⁶³ the apostle addresses his “dear children” (1Co 4:14, cf. Gal 4:19), and again reveals his fatherly heart: they may have other “guardians” but they “do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel” (4:15). A “guardian” (*paidagōgós*) had many responsibilities,¹⁶⁴ but never took the place of the father (*patēr*). As founder of the church, Paul is uniquely *their father*. As such, he seeks to “warn” rather than shame them (4:14),¹⁶⁵ his rhetorical question, “shall I come to you with a rod of discipline, or...in love and with a gentle spirit?” (4:21) highlights both his apostolic authority, and preference to act gently.¹⁶⁶

In the second letter he loves them deeply (2Co 2:4); and would “live or die” with them (7:3); they have caused him “great distress and anguish of heart and...many tears” (2:4); he has “opened wide [his] heart” towards them (6:11) and longs for them to reciprocate (6:13). This explains his intense daily “concern for all the churches” (11:28): it is the concern of *a father*, and we

¹⁵⁷ Cf., eg, Acts 5:41. Tribulation lists were common in Paul’s day, often being used by sages to demonstrate their devotion to the values they espoused (Keener, *Corinthians*, 45).

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Moltmann, *Church in Power*, 361.

¹⁵⁹ Keener, *Corinthians*, 188 suggests Paul’s list of hardships in 6:4ff “is worthy of any orator of his day.”

¹⁶⁰ Witherington, *Conflict & Community*, 442.

¹⁶¹ Barrett, *Second Corinthians*, 133.

¹⁶² Fee, *First Corinthians*, 175.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 157.

¹⁶⁴ Vine, *Dictionary*, 606. Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 115 and Witherington, *Conflict & Community*, 147 suggest the *paidagōgós* role was mainly guardianship rather than instruction.

¹⁶⁵ The word (*nouthetéō*) means to instruct, impart understanding or admonish, rather than provoke.

¹⁶⁶ Fee, *First Corinthians*, 156.

cannot understand Paul's apostolicity without grasping it. He longs for their devotion to Christ, and cannot bear to see them "led astray" (11:3).¹⁶⁷ It is also the context in which we understand Paul's approach to the thorny issue of patronage: as their father, he does not wish to be a burden to them (12:13-14); he wants their love and loyalty, not their possessions (12:14); fathers should support their children, not the other way around (12:15).

6. *Present in Spirit*

Paul's willingness to take strong action when necessary is demonstrated in 1Co 5:1-13, concerning a case of incest.¹⁶⁸ What is most striking, though, is his claim that though "not physically present" he *is* with them "in spirit" (cf. Col 2:5) and thus "present...in this way" to have judged the offender (5:3, cf. 1Ti 1:20). Barrett takes this to mean they are in his *thoughts*;¹⁶⁹ Keener, in his *heart*;¹⁷⁰ and Witherington suggests Paul will be "in some sense actually present", perhaps through his letter.¹⁷¹ Perhaps something more *literal* is in view: Fee agrees we may "miss the dynamic character of their gathering in the power of the Spirit".¹⁷² For him, Paul's statement (lit. "when you and my spirit are assembled in the Spirit") suggests that when they gather Paul, himself also 'in the Spirit', is present with them.

7. *Proofs of Apostleship*

The apostle offers further proofs of his ministry.¹⁷³ Firstly, he has "seen Jesus" (1Co 9:1), another reference to Damascus Road. Secondly, they *themselves* are "the result of [his] work" (9:1, cf. 2Co 3:3), "the seal" of his apostleship (9:2); the very existence of the church "authenticates, as nothing else could, the apostolic

¹⁶⁷ As Keener, *Corinthians*, 225 notes, "Fathers were responsible for protecting their daughters' virginity from sexual predators...Likewise, Paul is concerned lest they be spiritually corrupted."

¹⁶⁸ As Morris, *1 Corinthians*, 84 puts it, "The Corinthians had failed in their duty, but the apostle's attitude is in sharp contrast. Those who were present...had done nothing. He who was absent...was taking strong measures."

¹⁶⁹ Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 123.

¹⁷⁰ Keener, *Corinthians*, 49-50.

¹⁷¹ Witherington, *Conflict & Community*, 157f.

¹⁷² Fee, *First Corinthians*, 204, n37; *Empowering Presence*, 124.

¹⁷³ His rhetorical question "Am I not an apostle?" (9:1) is the first *direct* statement concerning what has already been hinted at: that his very apostleship is at stake in Corinth (see Fee, *First Corinthians*, 394f).

ministry of its founder”¹⁷⁴ (he “may not be an apostle” elsewhere (9:2), but if *they* deny him, they deny themselves). And thirdly, he has “persevered” in demonstrating “the marks of a true apostle, including signs, wonders and miracles” (2Co 12:12).¹⁷⁵ Such signs do not *prove* authenticity (Mk 13:22, 2Th 2:9), but are *included* as apostolic “marks”, alongside perseverance,¹⁷⁶ tribulation, and well-built churches.¹⁷⁷

By contrast, there are “false apostles” (*pseudoapóstolos*, 2Co 11:13). It is a moot point whether these are the “super-apostles” (*hyperéphanos apóstolos*, lit. “most eminent”) of 11:5 and 12:11.¹⁷⁸ Either way, the very fact that Paul needs to warn against them (cf. Rev 2:2) implies there were *genuine* apostles other than those named elsewhere. As Lightfoot says, “had the number been definitely restricted, the claims of these interlopers would have been self-condemned.”¹⁷⁹

8. Rights and Freedoms

Although Paul and Barnabas have a “right” (*exousía*) to support, and to travel with their wives (1Co 9:4-5) they have not taken it up, instead choosing to “work for a living” (9:6, cf. 4:12), for fear of hindering the gospel (9:12).¹⁸⁰ In this regard he claims “integrity and godly sincerity” (2Co 1:12), the words being *hagiótēs* (sanctification, sincerity or holiness)¹⁸¹ and *heilikríneia* (moral purity):¹⁸² he is not “fickle” (1:17);¹⁸³ he speaks and acts “plainly” (4:2, 5:11); he avoids anything that would discredit his ministry (6:3); he has “wrongsed no

¹⁷⁴ Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 201.

¹⁷⁵ The Amp. may offer a better translation: “Indeed, the signs that indicate a [genuine] apostle were performed among you fully and most patiently in miracles and wonders and mighty works.”

¹⁷⁶ Barrett, *Second Corinthians*, 320f thinks the emphasis here is on perseverance not manifestations.

¹⁷⁷ See Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 354ff.

¹⁷⁸ Most regard them as the same people, and identify them as (i) Judaizers, (ii) Gnostics or (iii) Hellenistic-Jewish propagandists. See Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 48-49. Contra Barrett, *Second Corinthians*, 31; *Signs*, 37f. who sees the ‘super apostles’ as the Jerusalem apostles with whom, he suggests, Paul had a difficult relationship.

¹⁷⁹ Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 97.

¹⁸⁰ Paul’s point, of course, is that he has a right to financial support as well as a ‘right’ to *refuse* such support. Keener, *Corinthians*, 77ff takes an altogether different approach, arguing that Paul is setting an example: as he has foregone his right to food and drink, so the Corinthians should forego food and drink offered to idols (cf. 1Co 8).

¹⁸¹ *TDNT*, 18 (from *hágios*; holy).

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 206.

¹⁸³ ESV, NASB have “not vacillating”.

one...corrupted no one...exploited no one" (7:2); and is anxious to "avoid any criticism" of financial mismanagement, "taking pains to do what is right" in the sight of God and men (8:20f).

Likewise, though free, he has chosen to be a "slave to everyone" (1Co 9:19) by accommodating his behaviour "for the sake of the gospel" (9:23).¹⁸⁴ Whilst he is "intransigent on matters that affect the gospel itself, whether theological or behavioral", he is willing to "become all things to all people in matters that don't count."¹⁸⁵

9. "First, Apostles..."

Discussing diversity of gifts (1Co 12), Paul states "God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers..." (12:28).¹⁸⁶ An 'order' is clearly intended, but in light of the foregoing, it is self-evidently *not* a 'hierarchy' of importance or esteem. Rather, is surely *functional*:¹⁸⁷ in ancient texts, such lists denote priority;¹⁸⁸ as Fee remarks "it is not so much that one is more important than the other...but that one has precedence over the other in the founding and building-up of the local assembly."¹⁸⁹ Paul is writing to a local church and describing 'normal' church life, where the ministry of apostles was to be expected and experienced.

10. Other Apostles

Paul tells us the resurrected Jesus appeared "to Cephas, and then to the Twelve" (1Co 15:5),¹⁹⁰ then to "more than five hundred" (15:6), then "to James, then to

¹⁸⁴ In vv. 9:20-22 Paul delineates his approach of "becoming like" (i) Jews; (ii) those under the law; (iii) those without the law; and (iv) the weak, in order to win them all for Christ.

¹⁸⁵ Fee, *First Corinthians*, 431.

¹⁸⁶ He proceeds to list "miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues" (1Co 12:28).

¹⁸⁷ Contra: Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 294 who thinks the present verse shows the apostles' pre-eminent position in the church"; and Witherington, *Conflict & Community*, 261 who an order of authority or responsibility.

¹⁸⁸ Keener, *Corinthians*, 104.

¹⁸⁹ Fee, *First Corinthians*, 619-620.

¹⁹⁰ Paul's only use of "the Twelve". Scholars are generally in agreement that vv. 3-5 represent an early creed, to which Paul has appended several other resurrection appearances. Eg, Barrett, *First*

all the apostles" (15:7), and that "last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born." (15:8). Here again, James¹⁹¹ is one of "all the apostles" (cf. Gal 1:19), and the distinction between "the Twelve" and "all the apostles" suggests the latter was a wider group:¹⁹² Paul clearly conceives of a circle of apostles wider than the Twelve.¹⁹³

Although Paul's "last of all" should be taken *chronologically*¹⁹⁴ (and certainly *not* that he was the last apostle),¹⁹⁵ he likens himself to "one abnormally born" (*éktrōma*, an untimely birth, miscarriage, abortion, or freak),¹⁹⁶ seeing himself joining the apostolic company through an abnormal process.¹⁹⁷ His profound sense of unworthiness (he is "the least of the apostles", 15:9), and indebtedness to "the grace of God" (15:10) meant he "worked harder" than others (15:10) (*kopiáō*, to 'become weary')¹⁹⁸ discharging his entrustment.

The men chosen to carry the offering to Jerusalem (2Co 8:18ff) are "representatives (*apóstolos*) of the churches" (8:23, cf. Phil 2:25),¹⁹⁹ with a commission *from men*, rather than Christ.²⁰⁰

Corinthians, 341, *Signs*, 39; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 718; Keener, *Corinthians*, 123; Witherington, *Conflict & Community*, 299. The list is not exhaustive (eg, the women are omitted, Mt 28:9, Mk 16:9).

¹⁹¹ Though not stated, scholars generally identify him as the Lord's brother. Cf. Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 343; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 731; Morris, *1 Corinthians*, 203; Witherington, *Conflict & Community*, 300.

¹⁹² Perhaps comprising: (i) the Twelve plus James; or (ii) a wider category who had seen the risen Lord (Ac 1:3) and been commissioned by him (eg, perhaps including the seventy-two sent out (*apostéllō*) in Lk 10); or even (cf. Bruce, *Galatians*, 94f) the five hundred who saw the risen Christ. See Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 95; Dunn, James D.G. *Romans 9-16* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1988), 894f; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 732; Keener, *Corinthians*, 124.

¹⁹³ As Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 95 observed: "twelve is a typical number, but so is seven also. And if the first creation of the diaconate was not intended to be final as regards numbers, neither is there any reason to assume this of the first creation of the apostolate." Cf. also Fee, *First Corinthians*, 403, 729; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 9.

¹⁹⁴ The phrase is ambiguous (especially cf. 15:9), but "last of all" *chronologically* is the most natural reading (following the series of "then..." statements of 15:6-7). Cf. Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 344.

¹⁹⁵ Eg. Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 294.

¹⁹⁶ *TDNT*, 220. The word is used nowhere else in the NT and is possibly a term of scorn others used of Paul (see Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 344; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 732-733; Witherington, *Conflict & Community*, 300).

¹⁹⁷ Morris, *1 Corinthians*, 203. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 733, however, follows others in suggesting 'the abortion' ('the freak') may have been a term of derision used the Corinthian to describe Paul.

¹⁹⁸ *TDNT*, 453.

¹⁹⁹ ESV, Holman, NASB, NKJV have "messengers".

²⁰⁰ Bruce, *Galatians*, 74.

11. Apostolic Spheres

Finally, Paul does not boast “beyond our measure” (2Co 10:13, NASB, cf. Gal 2:7f), but only within “the measure of the sphere” God has “assigned” him.²⁰¹ As their faith grows his “sphere of activity” will expand (10:15) so he can preach beyond Corinth (10:16) rather than “in someone else’s territory” (10:16, NASB: “the sphere of another”). “Measure” is *métron* (proportion, determined extent),²⁰² and “sphere” is *kanōn* (rule, standard),²⁰³ here with the sense of “the limits of responsibility...measured and appointed by God.”²⁰⁴ Whilst *kanōn* may refer to a geographic area,²⁰⁵ this seems unlikely.²⁰⁶ Paul is setting forth a *rule* or *standard* for his apostleship: he will pioneer in unreached territories, within his God-ordained limits, preaching “where Christ [is] not known”, and not “on someone else’s foundation” (Ro 15:20).²⁰⁷ Furthermore, within his own sphere Paul teaches uniformly in “all the churches” (1Co 7:17, 4:17, 14:33).

1.2.4 ROMANS

Paul’s *magnum opus*, written c. AD 55-57²⁰⁸ to a church he had neither founded nor visited, contains additional evidence:

1. Christ’s Slave for the Gentiles

Firstly, he “introduces himself to the capital of the empire not as a citizen proud of his freedom but as a slave of a crucified Jewish messiah.”²⁰⁹ As Christ’s *doúlos* (1:1), Paul is “completely at the disposal of his...Lord”;²¹⁰ and as one called

²⁰¹ NIV: “Sphere of service”; also “area of influence” (ESV), “area of ministry” (Holman), “area of authority” (NLT), or “field” (earlier NIV).

²⁰² Vines, *Dictionary*, 734; *TDNT*, 590f.

²⁰³ *TDNT*, 414.

²⁰⁴ Vines, *Dictionary*, 910.

²⁰⁵ Keener *Corinthians*, 222.

²⁰⁶ H.B. Beyer in *TDNT*, 414.

²⁰⁷ Cf. his opponents, who are trespassing in ‘his’ sphere and boasting beyond proper limits.

²⁰⁸ C.E.B. Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1985), xi.

²⁰⁹ Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 22.

²¹⁰ Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 41.

(*klētós* cf. 1Co 1:1),²¹¹ and “set apart” (*aphorízō*, cf. Gal 1:15, Acts 13:2), he now really *is* what he previously *thought* he was,²¹² his past being “fore-ordained by God with a view to his apostolic service.”²¹³ He has “received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles” (1:5). Dunn prefers “grace embodied, manifested in apostleship”,²¹⁴ and his vast goal is the conversion of all the Gentiles. Here we see Paul’s sense of destiny, his ever-present *eschatological* perspective, reaching something of a climax: he is entrusted with reaching the Gentiles before Christ returns. As Ashcraft says, “his apostleship was an integral part of the eschatological plan of God...This mission was as vital to Paul as life itself.”²¹⁵

2. *Andronicus and Junia*

The description of “Andronicus and Junia” as “outstanding among the apostles” (16:7), has left scholars anxious to determine whether Junia was a man or woman, and whether (s)he is being personally described as an *apóstolos*. Though the Greek can suggest *either* male (“Junias”, a contraction of Junianus) or female (“Junia”), depending on how it is accented,²¹⁶ there are grounds for preferring “Junia”: it was a common Roman woman’s name (whereas “Junias” has been found nowhere else);²¹⁷ the feminine was widely assumed from the early Church Fathers until the Middle Ages (“Junias” being preferred only from the thirteenth century until recently);²¹⁸ and the natural reading is that

²¹¹ Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 8.

²¹² As Barrett, *Romans*, 17 remarks, “Paul had been a Pharisee (Phil 3:5), supposing himself to be set apart from other men for the service of God; he now truly was what he supposed himself to be – separated, not, however, by human exclusiveness but by God’s grace and election.”

²¹³ F.F. Bruce, *The Letter of Paul to the Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*, 2nd ed. (Leicester: IVP, 1985), 67.

²¹⁴ Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 17.

²¹⁵ Morris Ashcraft, “Paul’s Understanding of Apostleship.” *Review & Expositor* 55 (Oct. 1958): 409. For a wider discussion on Paul’s eschatological perspectives see Andrew C. Clark, “Apostleship: Evidence from the New Testament and Early Christian Literature.” *Vox Evangelica XIX: Biblical and Historical Essays from London Bible College*. 1989: 49-82.

²¹⁶ Amp, NASB, earlier NIV, Young have “Junias”; whereas ESV, Holman, NIV, NKJV, NLT, Wycliffe have “Junia”. Most provide the alternative rendering in a footnote.

²¹⁷ Cf. Bruce, *Romans*, 258; Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 894; Moo, *Romans*, 922.

²¹⁸ Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 894; Moo, *Romans*, 922. Eg Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 423 prefer the masculine “Junias”.

“Andronicus and Junia” are husband and wife (cf. “Priscilla and Aquila”, 16:3).²¹⁹ Most modern scholars assume a Jewish couple.²²⁰

“Outstanding” is *epísemos* (distinguished, prominent, highly regarded)²²¹ and “amongst the apostles” (*en apóstolo*) may denote in, with, or within.²²² Thus, the meaning may be ‘outstanding *in the eyes of* the apostles’,²²³ though most prefer ‘outstanding *amongst* the apostles’;²²⁴ that is, distinguished *as apostles*. If so, we have the possibility of a *female* apostle, and need to reconcile this with Paul’s teaching elsewhere concerning male headship and authority (cf. 1Ti 2:12).

Scholars take various approaches. Dodd sees no difficulty in a woman apostle,²²⁵ and Dunn believes “we may firmly conclude that one of the foundation apostles of Christianity was a woman and a wife”.²²⁶ On the other hand, Bruce suggests Paul is using *apóstolos* “in the wider, Pauline, sense of the word”,²²⁷ and Moo (concerned that “many contemporary scholars are eager to justify Junia(s) as a woman [to] support the notion that the NT places no restriction on the ministry of women”) thinks the term is used in the sense of “travelling missionaries” rather than “an authoritative leadership position”.²²⁸ In our view, to conclude that Junia is a female apostle of equal authority with the others is to do damage to Paul’s overall teaching,²²⁹ and to make too much of an isolated text. *If* this is a woman, we must conclude she is either a ‘messenger’

²¹⁹ Bruce, *The Pauline Circle*, 83; Cranfield, *Romans*, 377.

²²⁰ “Fellow Jews” is *suggenes*, denoting either a blood-relative or a fellow-countryman. Most prefer the latter (see Barrett, *Romans*, 283; Bruce, *Romans*, 258; Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 894; Cranfield, *Romans*, 377; Moo, *Romans*, 921, n.29).

²²¹ *TDNT*, 1024; Vine, *Dictionary*, 798.

²²² *TDNT*, 233; Vine, *Dictionary*, 1247.

²²³ ESV (“well known to the apostles”), Holman (“noteworthy in the eyes of the apostles”).

²²⁴ NASB, NIV, NKJV (“of note among the apostles”), NLT (“highly respected among the apostles”), Young (“of note among the apostles”). For discussion see Barrett, *Romans*, 283; Bruce, *The Pauline Circle*, 83; Cranfield, *Romans*, 377; Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 894; Moo, *Romans*, 923; Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 423.

²²⁵ Dodd, C.H. *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932), 239.

²²⁶ Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 895. He argues that to conclude otherwise is a “striking indictment of male presumption regarding the character and structure of earliest Christianity”.

²²⁷ Bruce, *Romans*, 258.

²²⁸ Moo, *Romans*, 923-924.

²²⁹ Cf. 1Ti 2:12 and 3:1-7. If Paul prohibits female elders it is difficult to see how he could accommodate a female apostle.

(cf. 2Co 8:23, Phil 2:25), or simply (and most likely) the wife of an apostle, here named alongside him because they *functioned as a couple* (cf. 1Co 9:4-5).

1.2.5 EPHESIANS & THE CAPTIVITY EPISTLES

During imprisonment in Rome (Acts 27-28, c. AD 60-61), Paul wrote four epistles.²³⁰ Each contains relevant material but particularly Ephesians, to which we turn first.

1. Apostles & Prophets

The church is “God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets” (2:20a). The “foundation” is *themélios* (cf. 1Co 3:10),²³¹ and “foundation of” can mean *laid by* apostles,²³² or *comprising* apostles. Most prefer the latter; apostles and prophets constitute the foundations in the church. Talbert may be right to see an “order of authority” here,²³³ in keeping with the *functional order* of 1Co 12:28, where they are “the first stones to be laid in the new building”.²³⁴ Paul is speaking of *two types* of continuing NT ministry.²³⁵

Jesus is “the chief cornerstone” (2:20b, cf. Isa 28:16,²³⁶ 1Pe 2:6), where *akrogōniaios* may be *foundation* stone or *capstone*;²³⁷ either way, he is the “keystone” (NEB margin) against which all others are aligned. Ecclesiastical offices or hierarchies are nowhere in view; as Fee insists, “apostles and prophets are not ‘offices’ upon which the organizational structure of the church

²³⁰ Tradition has it that all four epistles were written during the same period of captivity (cf. Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 635).

²³¹ *TDNT*, 322.

²³² Vine, *Dictionary*, 468; this is the NEB translation.

²³³ Charles H. Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 84.

²³⁴ F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 304.

²³⁵ Cf. Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 687, n. 97, 98; Best, *Ephesians*, 281f, 307. We find no justification for seeing “apostles and prophets” as one and the same (apostles who are prophets), nor “prophets” as OT prophets, nor “apostles” as the Twelve plus Paul (Best, *Ephesians*, 281ff). Such views contradict the sense Eph 4:11 and 1Co 12:28.

²³⁶ Where the LXX uses *akrogōniaios*.

²³⁷ *TDNT*, 137. Most scholars are inclined towards the idea of a cornerstone/foundation stone (rather than a ‘capstone’). See Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians*, 84; Best, *Ephesians*, 284f.

is built, but...ministries that are necessary for the founding (therefore, 'foundational') of the church."²³⁸

Apostles and prophets are again linked in 3:5, where we see that part of their foundational role derives from their entrustment with revelation of the "mystery" of Christ, namely the Gentile inclusion (3:5-6).²³⁹ Fee identifies Paul's *prophetic* ministry (Ac 13:1) as the grounds of his revelation,²⁴⁰ but this is unnecessary, for as we see elsewhere (1Co 4:1, Col 1:25ff), apostles are *themselves* entrusted with revelation.²⁴¹

2. Ascension Gifts

In Ephesians 4 Paul explains that "to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it" (4:7) and (interpreting Psalm 68:18)²⁴² that "when he ascended" Christ "gave gifts to his people" (4:8b),²⁴³ enumerated as "the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers" (4:11). We make several comments concerning these 'fivefold' ministries.

First, they are *gifts of Christ*: "Christ himself" gave and apportioned them (4:7, 11). "Gifts" here is *doma* (not *chárisma*), which "lends greater stress to the concrete character of the gift, than to its beneficial nature";²⁴⁴ these are divinely-given *gifts to* the church, not humanly-appointed *offices of* the

²³⁸ Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 688. He adds that "to find 'ministerial offices' in this passage...is to read back into this text the realities of a later time."

²³⁹ That Gentiles would be blessed was revealed to OT prophets; but that they would form a new community alongside Jews was unforeseen. And, though it was first revealed to the Twelve, it is Paul who is the principle pioneer of the new revelation. See Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians*, 315; Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians*, 98.

²⁴⁰ Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 692.

²⁴¹ It is notable that on the Damascus Road Paul was promised further 'revelation' (Ac 26:16).

²⁴² Paul interprets Psalm 68 (David's description of God scattering his enemies, taking captives and coming triumphantly into his sanctuary) as Christ's ascension into glory and bestowal of gifts upon people.

²⁴³ Paul here deviates from Psalm 68:18 (which has "you *received* gifts from men"), leading to suggestions that either Paul has altered (interpreted) the text to bring out its Christological meaning, or that he quoted from a different OT textual source (see Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians*, 110 for discussion). Whatever the explanation, as Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians*, 342f notes, Paul's text "circulated as an acceptable interpretation in the first century AD."

²⁴⁴ Vine, *Dictionary*, 487.

church.²⁴⁵ Moreover, the gifts are *people*,²⁴⁶ those *gifted* by Christ, and *given* to the church.

Second, Paul's enumeration does not correspond directly with any other list.²⁴⁷ Many have sought to distinguish pastors and teachers from apostles, prophets and evangelists (suggesting the former are "local" and the latter "itinerant"),²⁴⁸ but Paul makes no such distinctions; he presents them *as a group*,²⁴⁹ with a common task and purpose.

This purpose, thirdly, is "to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (4:12). KJV has "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ", implying the fivefold ministries have *three* distinct tasks. Most see *one* task: "to equip" God's people, so *they* can carry out works of ministry which will build up the church (cf. 4:14-16).²⁵⁰ "Equipping" is *katartismós* (perfecting, furnishing, or preparing fully),²⁵¹ and the emphasis is on the *process* of maturing.²⁵² The fivefold gifts exercise their ministry in such a way that the *whole church* is empowered to exercise *theirs*.²⁵³

Fourthly, various explanations are offered of the relationship between the "each one" to whom grace has been given (4:7) and the "some" who are fivefold ministries (4:11).²⁵⁴ Eg: (i) those receiving gifts in v.7 are *restricted* to the

²⁴⁵ Contra: William Barclay, *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians* (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1976), 145ff, who sees an ecclesiastical office.

²⁴⁶ Best, *Ephesians*, 376; Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians*, 345.

²⁴⁷ That is, "apostles and prophets" appear in 2:20 and 3:5, and "apostles, prophets, and teachers" in 1Co 12:28f, but here they are punctuated by "evangelists" and "pastors".

²⁴⁸ Eg, Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 708; cf. T.K. Abbott, *The Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1897), 118.

²⁴⁹ Best, *Ephesians*, 389.

²⁵⁰ Hence Amp, ESV, Holman, NASB, NIV, NKJV, NLT. The meaning depends upon our understanding of the prepositions "to" (*pros*), "for" (*eis*) and "so that" (*eis*). For discussion see Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 706; Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians*, 113f.

²⁵¹ Vines, *Dictionary*, 857; also Best, *Ephesians*, 395. Barclay, *Galatians and Ephesians*, 149 suggests the basic idea is "putting a thing into the condition in which it ought to be."

²⁵² Best, *Ephesians*, 396.

²⁵³ Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians*, 345f; Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 706.

²⁵⁴ Best, *Ephesians*, 376f.

people of v.11; or (ii) all believers are in view in v.7, each receiving *one or other* of the gifts of v.11; or (iii) all believers are in view in v.7, with v.11 providing *an example* of the diversity of gifts. Since (i) is against the plain reading of the passage, and (ii) is contrary both to the far wider spectrum of gifts indicated elsewhere²⁵⁵ and the far more restrictive view of apostles, prophets and teachers given in 1Co 12:28ff, the idea of (iii) is most likely.²⁵⁶ A better explanation, perhaps, is that grace has been given to *each one* precisely *in the form of* those (relatively few) given to the church as fivefold ministries. The gifted ministries are *expressions of God's grace* to all believers.

Fifthly, the equipping will continue “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” (4:13). Unity, maturity and fullness are three expressions of the same thing,²⁵⁷ ultimately attained only when Christ returns, and the work of the fivefold gifts will continue “until” (*mechri*, as far as) that day.²⁵⁸

This brings us to the heart of the debate concerning whether these verses give warrant for *present-day apostles*. Three broad views prevail.²⁵⁹ (i) There is *no continuing apostleship*. Thus, Barclay believes “apostles were bound to die out” because of the required qualifications of Acts 1:21-22.²⁶⁰ Such views confuse the original apostolic *office* with any ongoing *gift* of apostleship. (ii) Apostolic functions are *now carried out by others*. Thus, Bruce argues apostles “were not perpetuated beyond the apostolic age”, but the functions they discharged “continued to be performed by others – notably by the evangelists and the pastors and teachers.”²⁶¹ Best takes a similar view.²⁶² Such an argument is

²⁵⁵ Cf. Ro 12:6ff, 1Co 12:28ff.

²⁵⁶ Eg, Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians*, 112 (who suggests that “out of the many gifts Christ gave to the church, these are mentioned because of their relevance for the unity of the church”).

²⁵⁷ Cf. Best, *Ephesians*, 403.

²⁵⁸ Thayer and Smith, “Greek Lexicon entry for *Mechri*”.

²⁵⁹ As we shall see in Part 2, these views correspond with the varying concepts of the nature of the church’s apostolicity.

²⁶⁰ Barclay, *Galatians and Ephesians*, 146. He also suggests that prophets “vanished from the Church” in the post-NT age.

²⁶¹ Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians*, 347.

based on a mistaken view that “the primary function” of an apostle “was the preaching of the gospel”, an activity now undertaken by evangelists.²⁶³ As we’ve seen, apostles “equip...people for works of service” (4:12); they are *not* merely gospel-preachers or scripture-writers; rather, founders, builders and equippers of churches, functions that *cannot* be assumed by others. (iii) There are *present-day apostles*. Thus, Fee believes that if we take a “functional understanding of apostleship” there are “certainly...modern counterparts...who found and lead churches in unevangelized areas”.²⁶⁴ Talbert thinks all the fivefold gifts must “endure until the church reaches its goal, which has not yet happened”.²⁶⁵ This is our view also, not least because the text does not permit us to come to different conclusions regarding the different gifts; Paul presents them as a group with a common continuing task.

3. The Other Captivity Epistles

The other ‘captivity epistles’ (Philippians, Colossians and Philemon) provide little *new* material, instead re-emphasising earlier themes: hardship and servitude (Col 1:24), the apostolic commission (Col 1:25), stewardship of the gospel mystery (Col 1:26), Paul’s ‘presence’ when absent (Col 2:5), his fatherly love (Phm 8-10),²⁶⁶ and longing for their maturity (Col 1:28),²⁶⁷ his sense of partnership and shared mission with the churches (Phil 1:5).

What stands out is the relationship between Paul and his co-workers: Timothy is a “brother” (Col 1:1) without equal (Phil 2:20) who has “proved himself, because as a son with his father, he has served with me” (Phil 2:22), and whom Paul will send on his behalf (Phil 2:19, 23); Epaphras is his “dear fellow servant”

²⁶² See Best, *Ephesians*, 388-398.

²⁶³ Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians*, 346.

²⁶⁴ Fee, *First Corinthians*, 397. He adds, “only when ‘apostle’ is used in a non-Pauline sense of ‘guarantors of the traditions’ would the usage be narrowed to the first century.”

²⁶⁵ Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians*, 117f.

²⁶⁶ Onesimus is Paul’s “very heart” (v.12), where *splánchnon* (lit. ‘bowels’) is “an expression of the total personality at the deepest level” (TDNT, 1068); in sending Onesimus Paul is sending ‘part of himself’.

²⁶⁷ As Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians*, 88 puts it, “his apostolic work did not rest with the conversion of his hearers...the quality of his ministry would...be tested by the quality and maturity of those whom he could present as his spiritual children.”

(Col 1:7) and “fellow prisoner” (Phm 23); Epaphroditus²⁶⁸ is Paul’s “brother, co-worker and fellow soldier” (Phil 2:25) and the Philippians’ “messenger” (*apóstolos*) (Phil 2:25, cf. 2Co 8:23) taking their gifts to Paul (Phil 4:18). These men are Paul’s “lieutenants”, assisting in “the twofold task of preaching the gospel and planting churches.”²⁶⁹

1.2.6 PASTORAL EPISTLES

This brings us to Paul’s final epistles,²⁷⁰ three semi-private letters²⁷¹ from the ageing apostle to younger men he has left in Ephesus (1Ti 1:3) and Crete (Tit 1:5). Timothy and Titus are “true son[s]” (1 Ti 1:2, Tit 1:4); Timothy is a “dear son” (2 Ti 1:2) and Paul has “no one else like him” (Phil 2:20).

Much of the material again reinforces earlier themes. In addition, Paul now instructs and authorises his “sons” concerning: the appointment of elders; preaching and teaching; the correction of error; order, conduct and unity in the churches; and pastoral care. They are encouraged to stir up their gifts, remain strong in faith, and guard what has been entrusted to them.²⁷² All this, together with the fact that Timothy and Titus evidently have oversight towards several churches or congregations, leads us to regard them as “apostolic delegates”,²⁷³

²⁶⁸ It is unclear whether Epaphras and Epaphroditus are the same person. We assume (with Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians*, 43ff) a distinction on the grounds that Epaphras is evidently a Colossian (Col 4:12), whereas Epaphroditus appears to be a Philippian (Phil 2:25, 4:18).

²⁶⁹ Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians*, 38.

²⁷⁰ We assume Pauline authenticity [cf. Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 88] but are aware of the objections, including the supposed forms of church government implied (with bishops, elders and deacons) which, it is argued, require a date after Paul’s death. See William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon* (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1975), 1-13 who concludes they are a later composition of genuine Pauline fragments; I. Howard Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Pastoral Epistles* (London: T&T Clark, 1999), 58ff who concludes they were composed shortly after Paul’s death (perhaps by a group including Timothy and Titus themselves), based on authentic Pauline material.

²⁷¹ As Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 11 says, “many of the injunctions are clearly personal. Yet much of the material appears to be designed for the communities to which Timothy and Titus were ministering.” Cf. Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 52.

²⁷² See the many references throughout these epistles.

²⁷³ The term is used by Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 31 and Walter Lock, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1924), xix. Lock also describes them as “Vicars Apostolic” and suggests “they form the transition to the monarchical Episcopate of the 2nd century.” (p. xix).

tasked to “represent the absent apostle as his delegates in the church and mission settings to which they were sent.”²⁷⁴

Perhaps we can go further, however, and see them as men *emerging in their own apostolic callings*. As Marshall acknowledges, “Timothy and Titus perform functions similar to those of Paul himself”.²⁷⁵ Despite Luke’s relatively limited use of *apostellō*, he does employ the word to describe Paul’s sending of Timothy to Macedonia (Ac 19:22), and Paul himself hints at Timothy’s apostolicity in 1Th 2:6. Many scholars struggle to ‘fit’ such a scenario into the presumed ecclesiastical systems of the day,²⁷⁶ but the confusion usually arises where it is assumed apostolic ministry discontinued after Paul’s death.²⁷⁷ No such difficulties arise if we assume Paul envisaged Timothy and Titus (and others like them) would emerge as apostles. Indeed, if Paul believed in a continuing apostolic ministry, it seems inevitable that he would have looked for emerging gifts in others and, having identified it, would have trained, instructed and equipped them to emerge fully.

In summary, the Pauline corpus provides us with extensive and invaluable material. Paul saw himself as an apostle of Christ, of equal standing with the Twelve, entrusted with carrying the gospel to the Gentiles as part of God’s eschatological purpose. His understanding of the *nature* of this apostleship is critical to our present study.

²⁷⁴ Towner, *Timothy & Titus*, 52. We note Timothy ‘represented’ Paul in Thessalonica (1Th 3:1-6), Corinth (1Co 4:16-17) and Philippi (Phil 2:19-23), and that Titus was also sent to Corinth (2Co 7:6ff, 8:17ff).

²⁷⁵ Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 77.

²⁷⁶ Eg, it is questioned why Timothy and Titus have an implied authority over elders, when such a system of supervision or ‘hierarchy’ did not develop until the second century. For discussion see Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 24f.

²⁷⁷ Eg see the discussion in Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 74-76.

1.3 OTHER EVIDENCE

There are eight further occurrences of *apóstolos* (Heb 3:1, 1Pe 1:1, 2Pe 1:1, 2Pe 3:2, Jude 1:17, Rev 2:2, 18:20, 21:14). Most have been discussed in passing or are not material to our study.

We finish with Hebrews 3:1, where Jesus is as “our apostle (*apóstolos*) and high priest”, having been “sent” (*apostéllō*) by the Father (cf. Jn 17:3-25, Jn 20:21) to represent Him so completely (Jn 14:7-11). We note that the writer would have been unlikely to describe Jesus as an *apóstolos* if the word had developed a limited, technical meaning by this time. Moffatt considers *apóstolos* here “carries the usual associations of authority...an ambassador or representative sent with powers, authorized to speak in the name of the person who has dispatched him”,²⁷⁸ but Rengstorf reminds us, “this ambassador is not a man, not even primal or preexistent man, but the Son in whom the Father manifests his presence”.²⁷⁹ Jesus is the ‘Chief Apostle’, to whom all others “are only helpers in his work”.²⁸⁰

1.4 SUMMARY

We now summarise the biblical evidence, as follows:

1. During his earthly ministry, Jesus commissioned the Twelve and sent them out as his representatives, with authority over the works of the devil. They were an extension of his compassionate ministry towards multitudes of sheep without a shepherd. These ‘apostles of the Lamb’ constituted a unique apostolic *office* of eyewitness, and in appointing

²⁷⁸ James Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1924), 41.

²⁷⁹ Rengstorf, “*apóstolos*”, 74.

²⁸⁰ G. Sass, *Apostolat und Kirche* (1939), 141. Quoted in Clark, “Apostleship”, 77, n4.

them Jesus laid the foundations for his new community and his worldwide mission.

2. After his ascension, Jesus gave the *gift* of apostleship to others, including James and Paul, others named or implied as apostles in the NT, and a wider group as evidenced by the need for the churches to test those claiming apostleship.
3. Luke's use of *apóstolos* appears to be more limited than Paul's, but we find no grounds for the view that they have different concepts of apostleship: both regard the Twelve as occupying a unique apostolic office, and both accept a continuing apostolic gift. There are other, straightforward reasons for Luke's more limited use of the word.
4. Paul provides a thorough self-understanding of apostleship. He was a bondservant of Christ and the church; called, set-apart and commissioned as part of God's eschatological purpose. He was entrusted with a revelation of the mysteries of the gospel and charged with its preaching. He lived with a profound sense of unworthiness, indebted to God's grace.
5. Paul functioned and felt like a father, expending himself for the sake of his children, whom he loved deeply and intensely. He exercised authority but preferred to act gently. He remembered the poor. He maintained the utmost integrity. His hardship, humilities, weakness and perseverance 'proved' his authenticity and undergirded his authority.
6. Paul understood apostolic ministry as foundational and functionally 'first'; he worked as a wise master-builder laying the foundation of Christ, and the resulting churches, equipped and built-up by his ministry, were further proof of his authenticity. He operated within a God-given

'sphere' of relational authority. He valued his extensive team of close friends and co-workers, and prized unity with the other apostles. He empowered and made space for his spiritual 'sons', including those emerging in apostleship.

7. The Chief Apostle continues to express grace to the church and compassion for the lost by giving the apostolic gift and setting-apart men for this work; apostleship is a vital expression of Christ's continuing ministry through his church. Apostles work with the other fivefold gifts to equip and empower the whole church for its ministry, and this equipping is necessary until the church reaches unity, maturity and fullness at the return of Christ.
8. Every apostle exists to serve the Chief Apostle. None is greater than his master, and when he returns all apostolic ministry will be tested and rewarded.

PART 2

ECCLESIOLOGICAL MODELS

PART 2: ECCLESIOLOGICAL MODELS

In this section we consider some *ecclesiological aspects* of apostleship. We discuss how leadership and ministry philosophies generally, and notions of apostolicity and apostleship in particular, are shaped by alternative concepts of the church, and we look at how some of these ideas have developed historically.

Our approach is as follows:

- In 2.1 we look at some systematic models of the church, and consider what types of leadership are inherent in or implied by them.
- In 2.2 we focus more specifically on concepts of apostolicity, and examine several 'classical' views, together with that of the 'new' apostolic paradigm.
- In 2.3 we consider how some of these 'new' concepts of apostleship have developed historically.
- In 2.4 we summarise our findings.

2.1 MODELS OF THE CHURCH

Ministry philosophies and leadership concepts are determined by ecclesiology: our view of the nature and mission of the church will inform our view of ministry and shape our approach to leadership. In this section we discuss motifs and models of the church and consider the leadership implications.

2.1.1 BIBLICAL IMAGES

The bible does not 'define' the church, but provides metaphors and motifs by which we may grasp something of its nature and mission. She is, at once, for example,²⁸¹ the People of God, the Body of Christ, the Temple of the Spirit, the Bride of Christ, the Family of God, the Flock of God, the City of God, and a Royal Priesthood.²⁸² Each image emphasises an aspect of the church and its vital relationship with Christ, and any authentic 'model' of the church and its ministry must be in harmony with these things.

2.1.2 MODELS & TYPES

1. Brunner's Typology

Reformed theologian Emil Brunner (1889-1966) used historical terms to suggested three "definitions" of the church, each serving to indicate complementary aspects.²⁸³ His approach has been taken up by others, notably Methodist scholar Thomas Oden (b. 1931) who suggests a 'typology' of the characteristics of each model.²⁸⁴ The church is viewed as:

²⁸¹ This list is not intended to be exhaustive, though these are, perhaps, the principal metaphors.

²⁸² Cf. People of God (Tit 2:14, 1Pe 2:9), Body of Christ (Ro 12:5, 1Co 12:27, Eph 1:22-23, Eph 4:12, Col 1:18), Temple of the Spirit (1Co 3:16, Eph 2:21-22, 1Pe 2:5), Bride of Christ (2Co 11:2, Eph 5:23-24, Rev 21:2,9), Family of God (Jn 1:12-13, Ro 8:23, Eph 1:5), Flock of God (1Pe 5:2-4), City of God (Rev 21:9-10), Royal Priesthood (1Pe 2:9).

²⁸³ Emil Brunner, *Dogmatics III: The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith and Consummation*, Trans. David Cairns and T.H.L. Parker, (1962; reprint, Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2002), 23-27.

²⁸⁴ Thomas C. Oden, *Systematic Theology, Volume Three: Life in the Spirit* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006), 263f.

- (i) The **Body of Christ** (*corpus Christi*). Here, the ground of the church is *fellowship* with Christ. He is the Head and we are the members of his body, to whom he assigns *charisma* and service. The church is tangible, experiential, social and altogether ‘visible’. Oden suggests this model: emphasises authority, doctrine and apostolicity; sees the church as being *above* culture; and is historically found in Catholic, Orthodox and some Anglican churches.
- (ii) The **Company of the Elect** (*coetus electorum*). Here, the ground of the church is eternal *election*; fellowship with Christ and one another is based wholly on the eternal loving will of God. The church is a new humanity; the chosen and ‘invisible’ people of God. Oden suggests this model: stresses conversion, discipleship and holiness; sees the church as being *against* culture; and is typically expressed amongst Evangelical churches.
- (iii) The **Communion of Saints** (*communio sanctorum*). Here, the ground of the church is the *faith* of individual Christians. Christ calls people out of the world and adds them to the community of believers, who experience *fellowship* with one another and a Spirit-given desire to share their faith and see others similarly added. Oden suggests this model: stresses unity, social change and reconciliation; sees the church as *transforming* culture; and is typically predominant in mainline and liberal Protestant churches.

As Brunner emphasises, all three views are essential; any in isolation leads to a disfigurement of the true church, for “only in their unity do they represent the Ekklesia.”²⁸⁵ Oden warns that when the three perspectives become separated “they lose equilibrium and vitality and cease to be mutually corrective.”²⁸⁶

²⁸⁵ Brunner, *Dogmatics III*, 27.

²⁸⁶ Oden, *Systematic Theology*, 261.

2. Dulles's Models

Catholic theologian Avery Dulles (1918-2008) proposed five models of the church, which he suggested had “become paradigmatic in modern theology.”²⁸⁷ Again, the models are not mutually exclusive; each calls attention to particular aspects. We summarise the models, noting the essence of *ministry* and *leadership* implied by each:²⁸⁸

- (i) In the ‘**Institution**’ model,²⁸⁹ the church is seen “primarily in terms of its *visible* structures, especially the rights and powers of its officers.”²⁹⁰ Historically, this is the Catholic concept, where the Church is a ‘perfect society’, subordinate to no other and lacking nothing for its own institutional completeness. Authority is hierarchical, the Church’s major functions (teaching, sanctifying and governing) being carried out by the hierarchy²⁹¹ who transmit the doctrine, grace and indeed the very life of Christ to the laity. The church is “a society of unequals”,²⁹² with power “concentrated in the hands of a ruling class that perpetuates itself by cooption.”²⁹³

- (ii) In the ‘**Mystical Communion**’ model,²⁹⁴ the biblical images of ‘body of Christ’ and ‘people of God’ are drawn together, so that the concept of community is both horizontal and vertical. The emphasis is on democracy not hierarchy, and “the immediate relationship of all

²⁸⁷ Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 2nd ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 32. His approach (p. 204) was to draw out the five major models discernible in the various writings of Protestant and Catholic ecclesiologists before and after Vatican II (1962-1965).

²⁸⁸ Dulles, *Models*, 161ff.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 34ff.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 34 (italics mine).

²⁹¹ In the Roman Catholic context, through the pope, bishops and priests.

²⁹² Dulles, *Models*, 38, quoting from the Vatican I schema.

²⁹³ Ibid. Dulles argues that “Catholics...should not wish to defend a primarily institutional view of the Church”, though insists such a view “is valid within limits” (p10). In his later 2nd edition, however, he admits (p205) that his original critique “may have been somewhat too severe”, being influenced by the context of the 1960s and early 1970s, “when institutions of all kinds were under critical scrutiny.”

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 47ff, who refers to the writings of Rudolph Sohm, Emil Brunner, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, together with those of several Catholic theologians.

believers to the Holy Spirit, who directs the whole Church.”²⁹⁵ The church is not primarily a visible, organised institution; rather, an *invisible* community of believers²⁹⁶ joined organically, spiritually or mystically. Leadership and ministry will exist for the “fostering of fellowship” and the building-up of the community.²⁹⁷

- (iii) The concept of the church as a ‘**Sacrament**’,²⁹⁸ goes some way towards harmonising tensions between the respective ‘external’ and ‘internal’ dimensions of the first two models. Here, the church is a tangible, visible *sign* of God’s invisible grace, revealing the present reality of His love in the world, which extends to both believers and unbelievers.²⁹⁹ Leaders function as ‘priests’, being themselves “a sign and sacrament of Christ”,³⁰⁰ mediating between God and men, thus enabling men to encounter God.

- (iv) The ‘**Herald**’ model is thoroughly *kerygmatic*:³⁰¹ the church is “gathered and formed by the word of God”, and its mission is “to proclaim that which it has heard, believed, and been commissioned to proclaim.”³⁰² The church is ‘complete’ whenever it gathers locally (not dependent on wider structures) and congregations express unity by responding to the same gospel. The church here is inherently missionary, responsible for evangelising the nations. Its leadership, in turn, will be focused on community-formation through proclamation and preaching.³⁰³

²⁹⁵ Ibid., *Models*, 53.

²⁹⁶ In his 2nd edition, Dulles develops a variation of this model in which he sees the Church as a “Community of Disciples” (Dulles, *Models*, 204ff.).

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 164.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 63ff. He notes that this model has been developed primarily by twentieth-century Catholic theologians.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., *Models*, 71.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., *Models*, 169.

³⁰¹ Ibid., *Models*, 76ff. identifies Karl Barth (drawing on Luther) as the chief proponent of this model, followed by Hans Küng and Rudolph Bultmann. Cf. Darrell Guder, “*Missio Dei*: Integrating Theological Formation for Apostolic Vocation,” *Missiology: An International Review*. Vol. XXXVII, No. 1 (Jan 2009): 70ff who also shows the extent to which Barth’s ecclesiology is inherently ‘missional’.

³⁰² Ibid., *Models*, 76.

³⁰³ Ibid., 172.

- (v) In the previous models the church acts as a mediator between God and the world:³⁰⁴ the church is the active *subject* and the world is the *object* she acts upon or influences. In the ‘**Servant**’ model,³⁰⁵ however, she *serves* the world by “fostering the brotherhood of all men.”³⁰⁶ This requires respect and humility; the church’s mission is reconciliation, and “it must not rule by power but attract by love”.³⁰⁷ Leaders in the Servant model will be outward-looking, able to identify with the oppressed.

There are clearly ‘overlaps’ between Brunner-Oden and Dulles; in some ways Dulles expands on Brunner’s types.³⁰⁸ Each of the models has some merit, and each reflects one or more of the biblical metaphors. As we have said, they are ‘types’, each highlighting various aspects, and none being satisfactory by itself.

Our particular interest is in the *type of leadership and ministry* implied by each of the models and, at the risk of oversimplification, we may summarise this using a few ‘typifying’ words, as follows: in an Institution model leaders will be *rulers* and *dispensers*; in a Mystical Communion model they will be *builders* and *edifiers*; in a Sacrament model they will be *priests* and *mediators*; in a Herald model they will be *preachers* and *proclaimers*; and in a Servant model they will be *servants* and *missionaries*.

This leads to an alternative ‘missing’ model, for in our view none of the others give sufficient weight to the *role of the Spirit*, nor to the ‘Temple of the Spirit’

³⁰⁴ As Dulles, *Models*, 89 puts it, “God comes to the world through the Church, and the world likewise comes to God through the Church”.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 89ff. He notes, especially, the contributions of Teillard de Chardin and Dietrich Bonhoeffer towards this model of the church.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 92.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 96 paraphrasing Catholic theologian Robert Adolfs.

³⁰⁸ Thus, arguably, the Institutional model shares its ‘visibility’ with Brunner’s ‘Body of Christ’; the Mystical Community model reflect aspects of his ‘Company of the Elect’; the Herald and Servant models most closely resemble Brunner’s ‘Communion of Saints’; and the Sacramental model arguably harmonises aspects of all three.

motif. As Snyder says, however, “in order for the Church to be alive and growing, it must be based on a charismatic model”.³⁰⁹ We propose:

- (vi) In a ‘Charismatic’ model, the church is *formed* by the Spirit (1Co 12:13), *empowered* by the Spirit (Ac 1:8), and is the very *dwelling* of the Spirit (Eph 2:22). She *exists for* the Spirit’s activity on earth, the Great Commission (Jn 20:21). To this end, the Spirit gives *diverse gifts* to the whole church (1Co 12:7ff) and *separates* some to distinct charismatic *ministries* (Ac 13:2, Eph 4:11-12). And, as this charismatic community works together, everyone playing their part, the whole body is built up (Eph 4:16). Leaders in this model might be typified as ‘*equippers*’.

Having considered some types of *leadership* implied by different ecclesiologies, we now discuss alternative views of *apostolicity*. In this following section we will see further overlaps with the models presented here.

2.2 CONCEPTS OF APOSTOLICITY

As early as the Niceno–Constantinopolitan Creed of AD 381, the ‘true church’ was understood to be “one, holy, catholic and apostolic”. There is considerable divergence, however, concerning what this means: What makes the church apostolic? What *type* of apostolicity (hence apostleship) is perceived? Once again these things are determined by our ecclesiology. We suggest there are four views, the first three being ‘classical’ models,³¹⁰ and the fourth representing the ‘new’ model. These are:

³⁰⁹ Snyder, *Community of the King*, 62.

³¹⁰ For a discussion of the ‘classical’ models of apostolicity, drawing on primary source documents from the Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Church of England, Church of Scotland, and Baptist Union of Great Britain, see Roger Aubrey, “Apostles Today: An Ecclesiological Enquiry in the Light of the Emergence of New Apostolic Reformation Groups” (Ph.D. Thesis, Cardiff University, 2002), chs. 1-5. For a more general discussion of alternative forms of church government see Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 923-936.

- The ‘Episcopal’ view, that apostolicity is preserved through a direct *line of succession* from the Twelve to bishops.³¹¹
- The ‘Presbyterian’ view, that the church’s apostolicity is preserved through the *apostolic writings* of the NT.³¹²
- The ‘Congregational’ view, that apostolicity is expressed through the ‘apostolic’ ministry of *the whole church*.³¹³
- The belief that there is a continuing apostleship in the church, seen in the ministry of present-day *apostles*; apostleship is in the apostles.

We will describe each of these views, using literature from Systematic Theology, and offer a brief critique:

2.2.1 APOSTOLICITY THROUGH BISHOPS

The idea that bishops were direct successors of the Twelve emerged towards the end of the second century,³¹⁴ and became fundamental in Catholic doctrine. Whilst Vatican II (1962-65) signified some shifts in Catholic thinking (describing the Church as the Body of Christ and People of God),³¹⁵ the Church’s institutional nature and hierarchy were reaffirmed,³¹⁶ together with the doctrine of apostolic succession.³¹⁷

³¹¹ Eg, held in varying forms by Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox and some Anglican churches. Cf. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1976), 563. Many Methodist churches claim an ‘episcopal’ form of polity, but do *not* uphold the concept of apostolic succession.

³¹² Eg, typically held by Reformed and Presbyterian churches.

³¹³ Eg, typically held by Baptist, Congregational, Pentecostal and some Evangelical churches. Cf. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 928-936.

³¹⁴ Victor De Waal, “Apostolic Succession,” in Alan Richardson and John Bowden, eds. *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1983): 35; R.E. Higginson, “Apostolic Succession,” in Walter A. Elwell, ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 73.

³¹⁵ See the extensive use of the ‘body’ metaphor in Ch. I (7), and Ch. II (“On the People of God”), Second Vatican Council, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*. Dulles, *Models*, 53 suggests the ‘People of God’ motif is the “principal paradigm of the Church in the documents of Vatican II”.

³¹⁶ See especially Ch. III (“On the Hierarchical Structure of the Church and in Particular on the Episcopate”).

³¹⁷ Eg, see the statements at Ch. III (20), III (24), and III (28).

Whilst succession claims support in the Church Fathers,³¹⁸ it has no biblical basis. The closest approximation (though concerning Paul not the Twelve), is probably 2 Timothy 2:2 but (whilst we may have other grounds for regarding Timothy as an apostle) we have no evidence that Paul laid hands on him as a ‘successor’ in any way.³¹⁹

2.2.2 APOSTOLICITY THROUGH SCRIPTURE

Reformed theologians generally regard apostolicity as *faithfulness to the apostolic writings*. For example:

- (i) Louis Berkhof (1873-1957) insists “Scripture clearly shows that the apostolic office was not of a permanent nature”³²⁰ and that “before the end of the first century the Apostolate had disappeared entirely.” He restricts the apostolate to the Twelve plus Paul³²¹ and believes they are the apostles to the church *today*, as they were to the primitive church. He delineates five “special qualifications” he sees as uniquely bestowed on them.³²²
- (ii) Wayne Grudem³²³ (b. 1948) regards apostleship as an *office* (rather than a *gift*)³²⁴ and argues forcibly that it does not continue today. For

³¹⁸ In particular, Clement of Rome’s Letter to the Corinthians says the apostles appointed bishops and deacons (s. 42) and made provision for them to appoint successors (s. 44). See J.B. Lightfoot and J.R. Harmer, *The Apostolic Fathers*, edited and revised by Michael W. Holmes (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1989), 51-52.

³¹⁹ Timothy did have hands laid on him by Paul (2Ti 1:6) and by “the body of elders” (1Ti 4:14) but in neither case is there any evidence that this was to ‘impart’ an apostolic ministry.

³²⁰ Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 580.

³²¹ Ibid., 585; he does, however, acknowledge certain other “apostolic men who assisted Paul in his work, and who were endowed with apostolic gifts and graces”.

³²² Namely, they: (i) received their commission directly from God; (ii) were eye-witnesses of the life and resurrection of Jesus; (iii) were conscious of being inspired by the Spirit; (iv) had power to perform miracles; and (v) were richly blessed in their work as a sign of divine approval. See Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 585.

³²³ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 16 describes himself as holding “a traditional Reformed position” on key doctrinal points.

him, a two-fold criteria (having seen Jesus and been commissioned by Him), together with a unique authority to write Scripture, preclude any continuing office.³²⁵ Ephesians 4:11 describes a ‘one-time’ outpouring at Pentecost giving apostles to the early church,³²⁶ and Grudem restricts their number to “perhaps fifteen or sixteen or a few more”³²⁷ and takes Paul’s “last of all” as signifying the end of the office. In place of apostles today we have the apostolic *writings* of the NT.³²⁸

We have several objections to this view: (i) It assumes the primary task of apostleship was Scripture-writing, whereas it is plain from the biblical evidence that: (a) not all the apostles (nor even all the Twelve) wrote Scripture;³²⁹ (b) large parts of the NT were written by men *not* designated apostles;³³⁰ (c) the hallmarks of biblical apostleship do *not* include Scripture-writing; and (d) the predominant activity of the NT apostles was preaching, church-planting and community-formation. (ii) The idea that the “special qualifications” cannot be held today is only reasonable from a ‘cessationist’ perspective.³³¹

2.2.3 APOSTOLICITY THROUGH THE CHURCH

The ‘congregational’ view is that apostolicity is preserved not only in the NT writings but also *in the witness of the whole church*. For example:

- (i) Reformed theologian Jürgen Moltmann (b. 1926) sees the church as a priesthood of all believers,³³² a “free and a liberating power in the

³²⁴ Ibid, 16, 905, 1031 n21.

³²⁵ Ibid, 911.

³²⁶ Ibid, 911 n10.

³²⁷ Ibid, 911. He includes the Twelve, plus Paul, Barnabas and James, and possibly Silas “and maybe even Andronicus and Junias or a few unnamed others”.

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Only *five* of the named NT apostles contributed to the NT canon (Matthew, John, James, Peter and Paul, assuming their authorship of the books bearing their names).

³³⁰ Mark, Luke, Acts, Jude, and probably others.

³³¹ Whilst being an eyewitness cannot be claimed by present-day apostles, neither could it be fully claimed by Paul.

³³² Moltmann, *Church in Power*, 302.

world.”³³³ The church’s identity cannot be understood apart from its commission, and ‘apostolic’ describes “both the church’s foundation and its commission”:³³⁴ the role of the first apostles in *witnessing* is now passed to the *whole church* and “it is only in fulfilling the mission itself that the church can be called apostolic.”³³⁵ Individual ministries exist only to serve the ministry of the whole church,³³⁶ and as for the Ephesians 4 gifts (he does not deny them), their ‘rule’ is legitimate only if it reflects Christ’s own rule, by bringing liberty, freedom and hope to the church and the world.³³⁷ This picture of the church and its ministries “cannot be represented by a hierarchy...but only through the brotherly order of a charismatic community.”³³⁸ For Moltmann, then, “the apostolic succession of the whole church and the apostolic succession of particular offices cannot be alternatives”.³³⁹

(ii) Oden sees the church as apostolic “insofar as it stands in historic continuity with [the] primitive *ekklēsia*”,³⁴⁰ and “because it is sent into the world even as the Son was sent.”³⁴¹ He understands “the time of the apostolate begins with the ascension and ends only with the Parousia”,³⁴² and equates “the apostolate” with the *whole church*.³⁴³ Like Moltmann, he sees a “line of succession” from the original apostles to the present “apostolic witness”.³⁴⁴

The merit of this perspective is the recognition that the *mission dei* embraces the whole church, which is vital to our self-understanding. However, in our view it

³³³ Ibid, 5.

³³⁴ Ibid, 358.

³³⁵ Ibid, 312.

³³⁶ Ibid, 300ff.

³³⁷ Ibid, 293, where he notes that Christ’s ascension is linked directly with his release of captives (Eph 4:8).

³³⁸ Ibid, 294; moreover (p.295), “the gifts of grace...lead to ready, courteous service. Claims and privileges cannot be deduced from them.”

³³⁹ Moltmann, *Church in Power*, 313.

³⁴⁰ Oden, *Systematic Theology*, 354.

³⁴¹ Ibid, 297.

³⁴² Ibid, 350.

³⁴³ Ibid, 349.

³⁴⁴ Ibid, 354.

is not enough to suggest that NT 'apostles' are succeeded by the whole church (nor by 'missionaries' as others suggest). Neither does full justice to the biblical evidence.

2.2.4 APOSTLICITY THROUGH APOSTLES

The last perspective is that there is apostolicity not only through the apostolic writings and the apostolic witness of the church, but also because the ascended Christ *is still giving the apostolic gift* to men. For example:

- (i) Rodman Williams (1918-2008) writes as a Charismatic Presbyterian and, whilst stressing the priesthood of all believers,³⁴⁵ sees a continuing need for their equipping by the ministries of Ephesians 4: "the fact that Christ 'gave' cannot refer only to the past, because the gifts are for the ongoing work of equipping the saints for all times and places for their work of ministry."³⁴⁶
- (ii) Wesleyan scholar Howard A. Snyder insists "we have no biblical warrant to restrict the *charismata* to the early church" and believes "arguments against gifts generally arise from secondary, not biblical, considerations and a fear of excesses or abuses."³⁴⁷ He is unequivocal: "for Paul the Church is a growing, grace-filled body, and the apostles are a permanent part of that body's life....Scripture teaches that the Spirit continually and charismatically gives to the Church the function of the apostle."³⁴⁸

³⁴⁵ J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology, Volume III: The Church, the Kingdom, and Last Things* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 159-163; he points out (p.162) that the word 'clergy' derives from *klēros*, meaning 'lot' or 'inheritance', and used to describe *the congregation* over whom elders are appointed (rather than the elders themselves) in 1Pe 5:1-3.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 164.

³⁴⁷ Snyder, *Community of the King*, 77.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 88.

In our view, this perspective alone is faithful to the biblical evidence gathered in Part 1.

To summarise, we have considered four views of apostolicity: the three ‘classical’ models share a common conviction that apostolicity continues without apostles; the fourth model argues that Jesus is *still giving* the apostolic gift, and in our view is the only position consistent with the biblical evidence. We will now consider some of the historical developments of this conviction.

2.3 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Whilst a detailed survey is outside our scope, a brief overview will help place some of the ‘new’ apostolic models in context.

2.3.1 PRE-TWENTIETH CENTURY

1. Apostolic Fathers and Waldensians

The Apostolic Fathers generally represent the church as the people of God, and provide evidence that ‘apostles’ were functioning in the early churches.³⁴⁹ But when emerging heresies forced them to identify characteristics by which the *true* church could be identified, these tended to be outward, visible factors: the church came to be seen as an institution ruled by bishops, and concepts of apostolic succession followed.³⁵⁰ During the Scholastic Period the hierarchies

³⁴⁹ Cf. Didache, 11.3 “Now concerning the apostles and prophets...”

³⁵⁰ Irenaeus (130-202) first promoted the view that apostolic authority was preserved by bishops, as successors of the NT apostles, concepts developed by Cyprian (c. 200-258) and Augustine (354-430). For discussion, see Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 558f; Higginson, “Apostolic Succession”, 73; Williams, *Renewal Theology*, 36f.

intensified, the doctrine of papacy became established and the all-powerful Church dispensed blessing through the sacraments.³⁵¹

Amongst many dissenters,³⁵² the Waldensians (c. 1177 onwards) are of note: Broadbent suggests they maintained “a tradition close to that of apostolic days.”³⁵³ It included believers’ baptism, appointment of elders, and the recognition of apostles who “travelled continually, visiting the churches.”³⁵⁴ The Waldensian apostles “had no property or goods or home or family”, choosing a life of “self-denial, hardship and danger”. They travelled in “utmost simplicity” and “always went two and two, an elder and a younger man.”³⁵⁵

2. Anabaptists

Although Luther (1483-1546) and Calvin (1509-1564) rejected a hierarchical priesthood and saw the church as a spiritual community and priesthood of all believers, neither rejected the link between Church and State,³⁵⁶ nor the underlying notion of the church as an institution.³⁵⁷ The Anabaptist groups (1523 onwards) were more radical:³⁵⁸ insisting on the right and necessity of the church to be a separate, distinct community,³⁵⁹ they denounced infant baptism and declared their independence from Rome and its hierarchies. Though martyred for their beliefs,³⁶⁰ their emphasis on a simple ‘free-church’, with a non-hierarchical priesthood of all believers was to become paradigmatic for

³⁵¹ Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 559f. notes that “home and school, science and art, commerce and industry” all came under the control of the Catholic Church.

³⁵² See E.H. Broadbent, *The Pilgrim Church*, 2nd ed. (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1935) for accounts of many of the dissenters and ‘sects’ during the period (eg. Paulicians, Bogomils, Waldenses, Albigenses, Lollards, Hussites).

³⁵³ Ibid., 97-98.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 99.

³⁵⁵ Ibid., 100.

³⁵⁶ Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 560 considers that Luther “virtually made the Church subject to the State in everything except preaching the Word” and that Calvin, likewise, “in a measure fostered the idea of the subjection of the Church to the state.”

³⁵⁷ Snyder, *Community of the King*, 35.

³⁵⁸ See Robert G. Clouse, “Anabaptists,” in J. D. Douglas and Earle E. Cairns, eds. *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 38. Cf. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, eds. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 55.

³⁵⁹ Snyder, *Community of the King*, 35.

³⁶⁰ By Catholics and protestants alike. See Broadbent, *Pilgrim Church*, 153ff.

many subsequent movements, including several of the present-day ‘missional’ groups (see below).

3. Evangelical Missionaries

Nevertheless, institutionalism prevailed throughout the ‘Christendom’ era,³⁶¹ with the inevitable loss of any sense of missionary duty.³⁶² Not until the 18th Century Enlightenment, and the corresponding emergence of Evangelicalism, did missionary activity resume, and with it, to use Moltmann’s phrase, “the layman seized the chance of his call to apostleship.”³⁶³

4. Irvingites

During this period, Edward Irving (1792-1834) founded the Newman Street Church in London in 1832,³⁶⁴ which became “a haven for laity and clergy who...accepted the restoration of apostolic authority within the modern church”.³⁶⁵ The first apostles to be recognised, John Cardale (1802-1879) and Henry Drummond (1786-1860), helped shape the Catholic Apostolic Church (CAC), and by 1835 twelve apostles had been recognised, seen as a restoration of the ‘apostles of the Lamb’.³⁶⁶

Convinced their mission was to unite Christendom under a restored apostolate before the imminent Parousia,³⁶⁷ twelve geographic regions were identified, and each placed under the authority of one of the apostles. The German region

³⁶¹ We use the term in the widely accepted sense of the ‘state church’ concept that dominated in Europe after the Edict of Milan (AD 313).

³⁶² As Moltmann, *Church in Power*, 9 points out, the “Christian Society”...continually reproduces itself through infant baptism.”

³⁶³ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁴ This followed his expulsion from the Church of Scotland for encouraging spiritual gift, and beliefs concerning the ‘sinfulness’ of Christ’s human nature. See Andrew Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom: The Radical Christianity of the House Church Movement*, 2nd ed. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1988), 231f.

³⁶⁵ D.W. Dorries, “Catholic Apostolic Church,” in Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. Van Der Maas, eds. *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 459.

³⁶⁶ Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 236f, who notes the CAC ‘order’ in the church was apostles, prophets, angels (bishops), priests, evangelists, deacons and readers.

³⁶⁷ Williams, *Renewal Theology*, 167 n36.

flourished, but their request for indigenous apostles was refused (the CAC's eschatology required no further apostles),³⁶⁸ and the New Apostolic Church ('NAC') was founded as a breakaway group in 1863. Although the CAC has now died out,³⁶⁹ the NAC survives, with a simpler expression of church-life,³⁷⁰ led by a succession of eight 'Chief Apostles'.³⁷¹

Some of Irving's beliefs influenced early American Pentecostals,³⁷² and Walker suggests that "socially and historically speaking" the CAC was also "a forerunner, a prefiguration" of Restorationism.³⁷³ Arthur Wallis (see below) rejected any influence,³⁷⁴ and Ollerton concurs,³⁷⁵ though Aubrey acknowledges a shared belief in a *charismatic* apostolate.³⁷⁶

2.3.2 TWENTIETH CENTURY

1. Early Pentecostalism

In Britain, two expressions of early Pentecostalism laid emphasis on apostleship. The Apostolic Faith Church, founded by W.O. Hutchinson (1864-1928) in 1908 believed God was restoring apostles and prophets to the church,³⁷⁷ and the breakaway Apostolic Church, established by Daniel Powell

³⁶⁸ Since Christ was expected to return during the lifetime of the 'twelve'.

³⁶⁹ The last apostle died in 1901, and the last priest in 1971. See Dorries, "Catholic Apostolic Church", 459; D.W. Dorries, "New Apostolic Church," in Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. Van Der Maas, eds. *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 929; Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 238.

³⁷⁰ The CAC had developed an elaborate high-church style.

³⁷¹ See New Apostolic Church, "Information and History". Available from <http://www.nacukie.org/>. Internet; accessed 2nd May 2012. The group claims 10 million adherents (mostly in Germany and Switzerland), though Wagner, *Churchquake*, 43 put the figure at only 0.5 million in 1999.

³⁷² Dorries, "New Apostolic Church", 929 notes the influence on Dowie and Parham.

³⁷³ Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 246 n.18. He also cites Brethrenism and Classic Pentecostalism as key influences on the Restorationists (see chapter 11, pp.226-246).

³⁷⁴ Wallis, "The Last Word", in Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 347.

³⁷⁵ David R. J. Ollerton, "The Development of Patterns of Apostolic Ministry in Wales with Special Reference to Howell Harries, D.P. Williams and Bryn Jones" (M.Th. Dissertation, Regents Theological College, 2010), 24, thinks the CAC "had little or no effect on the apostolic movements of the twentieth century except, perhaps, by raising awareness of the possibility of a functioning apostolic ministry."

³⁷⁶ Aubrey, "Apostles Today", 136ff.

³⁷⁷ Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 241f. Also Barney Coombs, *Apostles Today: Christ's Love-Gift to the Church* (Sovereign World, 1996), 202f. who quotes from an early edition of the Apostolic Faith

Williams (1882-1947) and his brother William Jones Williams (1891-1945) in Wales in 1916, saw a restored apostolate in the order of Ephesians 4, expressed in “church government by apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, elders and deacons.”³⁷⁸ One of the Apostolic Church’s apostles, Arthur Lewis, was to have a significant influence on Keri Jones (see below).³⁷⁹

2. Latter Rain Movement

The Latter Rain Movement (from 1948), influenced wider Pentecostalism and became a catalyst for the Charismatic Movement. Alongside its emphasis on healings and miracles, the laying on of hands, personal prophecy and local church autonomy, was the recognition of present-day apostles and prophets.³⁸⁰ Cecil Cousen (1913-1989), a former apostle in the Apostolic Church who had been involved with Latter Rain, was certainly an influence on Wallis, being a contributor at several conferences hosted by him in the 1950s-60s, including the ‘Devon Conferences’ (1958-1962), which, in Hocken’s estimation, were forerunners of the Charismatic Movement in Britain.³⁸¹

3. Other Early ‘Restorationists’

Two other influences on the Restorationists must be mentioned:³⁸² (i) Anglican Roland Allen (1868-1947) published *Missionary Methods: St Paul’s or Ours*

Church’s *Showers of Blessing* magazine, which stated “God is gradually restoring these wonderful gift to the restored body...which has lain ill for many centuries.”

³⁷⁸ See “Apostolic Church in the United Kingdom, History.” Available from <http://www.apostolic-church.org/index.php?history>. Internet; accessed 14th June 2012.

³⁷⁹ Lewis mentored Jones at the Bible College of Wales, and through him Jones felt the ‘seeds of apostleship’ were sown. Discussions with author, 15th May 2012; cf. Aubrey, “Apostles Today”, 319f.

³⁸⁰ R.M. Riss, “Latter Rain Movement,” in Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. Van Der Maas, eds. *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 832.

³⁸¹ Hosted by Arthur Wallis and David Lillie. Cf. Peter Hocken, *Streams of Renewal: The Origin and Early Development of the Charismatic Movement in Great Britain* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997), 14-20; Jonathan Wallis, *Arthur Wallis: Radical Christian* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1991), 129ff.

³⁸² I do not discuss the extent of influence by the American ‘Shepherding Movement’ on the Restorationists. Such discussions have been taken up by Walker (*Restoring the Kingdom*, 85-93) and Aubrey (“Apostles Today”, 148-153) and both conclude that in terms of concepts of *apostolic ministry*, there was little influence. As Aubrey points out (p 149), the American emphasis was on “covering” and “covered relationships”, rather than on apostleship. Significantly, perhaps, Kay (*Apostolic Networks*, ch. 2) makes no mention of the Americans in his discussion of the antecedents of the Restoration movement.

(1912), as a plea for a return to Pauline apostolic methods. For Allen, “the heart of the matter” and “the first and most striking difference between his action and ours is that he founded ‘Churches’ whilst we found ‘Missions’.”³⁸³ These churches “were not independent of the Apostle who was their common founder [and] were not independent of one another”;³⁸⁴ rather, their unity was expressed “by their common recognition of the Apostle’s authority” for “they were all of his flock.”³⁸⁵ (ii) Brethren G.H. Lang (1874-1958), similarly argued that denominations, hierarchies and one-man rule had no scriptural basis, and he called for a return to the simple ‘apostolic’ patterns of the NT.³⁸⁶ “Every departure from apostolic details”, he argued, “is pregnant with calamities.”³⁸⁷

Whilst neither advocated the restoration of apostles, both called for a return to the patterns of the primitive apostolic church, and their writings influenced both Arthur Wallis³⁸⁸ and Bryn Jones.³⁸⁹

4. The Restoration Movement

Arguably the most significant development in the modern expression of apostleship was the emergence of the Restoration Movement in Britain. Hocken sees it as a sub-group within the wider Pentecostal-charismatic movement, which (unlike the earlier Pentecostal groups who embraced the ministry gifts), “generally managed to give scope to these ministries without institutionalizing

³⁸³ Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St Paul’s or Ours: A Study of The Church In The Four Provinces*. (London: Paternoster, 1912; reprint, Martino Publishing, 2011), 111, 112.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 166; he suggests (p167) that “in each province the Churches were probably bound together by some form of external organization and government.”

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 168.

³⁸⁶ G.H. Lang, *The Churches of God: A Treatise for the Times* (London: Paternoster, 1959), 31ff. By contrast, he argued (p.32) that “much of the weakness of modern missionary work is to be traced to the hopeless and unapostolic attempt to impose...worldly, western, artificial, imperial, not to say hierarchical and sacerdotal, organization upon communities to which it is essentially foreign and necessarily irksome.”

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 39.

³⁸⁸ Arthur Wallis, “Springs of Restoration 1”, *Restoration*. July/Aug 1980: 22, records that he met Lang in 1947, and that “one of his pamphlets, *Church Federation*, shook me out of my complacency and neutrality concerning the church, and convinced me that there were some clear principles laid down in Scripture.”

³⁸⁹ Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 47.

them.”³⁹⁰ It is Ollerton’s assessment that the New Apostolic Churches are “a late-twentieth century outworking of the principles established by Bryn Jones’s generation of leaders.”³⁹¹

The origins of the movement have been well documented, notably by Peter Hocken,³⁹² Andrew Walker³⁹³ and William Kay,³⁹⁴ and Aubrey provides a valuable ‘insider’s’ perspective.³⁹⁵ All agree that Arthur Wallis (1922-1988) was pivotal: Walker describes him as “the architect of Restorationism”,³⁹⁶ and Kay’s assessment is that:

Wallis...defend[ed] a radical theology of the church that largely ignored or denied the ecclesiastical forms and practices that had grown up in two millennia of church history. By making the argument as he did, Wallis strengthened the case for a restoration of New Testament order that was centred upon the purposes of God rather than the lessons of church history or the ecumenical aspirations of committees or councils.³⁹⁷

The essential presupposition was that the church needed restoring: the charismatic renewal did not go far enough - the new wine needed a radical *new wineskin*, a return to flexible NT patterns, including the ministries of apostles and prophets.³⁹⁸ There was no justification in embracing gifts of the Spirit whilst resisting the gifts of Christ.³⁹⁹ Moreover, apostles and prophets are given *until* and *so that* the church reaches unity and maturity.⁴⁰⁰ But a restored

³⁹⁰ Peter Hocken, *The Glory and the Shame: Reflections on the 20th Century Outpouring of the Holy Spirit* (Guildford: Eagle, 1994), 78.

³⁹¹ David R. J. Ollerton, *The Development of Patterns of Apostolic Ministry in Wales with Special Reference to Howell Harries, DP Williams and Bryn Jones* (M.Th. Dissertation, Regents Theological College, 2010), 8.

³⁹² Peter Hocken, *Streams of Renewal: The Origins and Early Development of the Charismatic Movement in Great Britain* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1986).

³⁹³ Andrew Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom: The Radical Christianity of the House Church Movement*, 2nd ed. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1988).

³⁹⁴ Kay, *Apostolic Networks*. See especially Part I (pp1-42).

³⁹⁵ Aubrey, “Apostles Today”.

³⁹⁶ Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 92.

³⁹⁷ Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 17.

³⁹⁸ Cf. Terry Virgo, “Revival or Restoration,” *Restoration*, July/Aug, 1978, 26; Arthur Wallis, *The Radical Christian* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1981), 135f.

³⁹⁹ Wallis, *Radical Christian*, 182; Hocken, *Streams of Renewal*, 207.

⁴⁰⁰ Cf. Bryn Jones, *The Radical Church: Restoring the Apostolic Edge* (Shippensburg: Destiny Image, 1999), 118f; Terry Virgo, *The Spirit-Filled Church: Finding Your Place in God’s Purpose* (Oxford: Monarch, 2011), 147.

church, vitally dependent on the recovery of apostolic ministry, was not an end in itself. For Wallis, it was the necessary prerequisite for an *end-time revival* that would usher the return of Christ.⁴⁰¹ For Jones, who saw the kingdom of God as the only hope for the world,⁴⁰² God was actively restoring his church “in order to use it as a tool to extend his rule across the nations”.⁴⁰³

In the early 1970s, Wallis convened gatherings with several younger leaders,⁴⁰⁴ during which a mutual recognition of apostolic and prophetic ministries took place, (though Wallis himself was never so recognised).⁴⁰⁵ By this time Jones was working with three fellowships in Bradford and “there was open talk of apostles”,⁴⁰⁶ and in 1975 these groups merged and recognised his apostolic role towards them.⁴⁰⁷ The influential *Restoration* magazine was also launched in 1975, and carried its first articles on apostles and prophets later that year.⁴⁰⁸ As many independent groups began to align themselves with the apostles, their sphere of ministry expanded rapidly.⁴⁰⁹

Restorationists typically identified three categories of apostle:⁴¹⁰ (i) Jesus Himself (Heb 3:1); (ii) the Twelve, eyewitnesses and “apostles of the Lamb” (Rev 21:14), commissioned by Jesus during his *earthly* ministry; and (iii) those commissioned by the *ascended* Christ (Eph 4:8ff) of whom Paul is pre-

⁴⁰¹ A postmillennial eschatology is of course implicit here. For a discussion of Restorationist eschatology see Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 29f.

⁴⁰² Cf. Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 52. The author’s own close involvement with Bryn Jones over more than fifteen years confirms this.

⁴⁰³ Quoted in Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 30.

⁴⁰⁴ Seven gathered during 1972 (Arthur Wallis, Peter Lyne, Bryn Jones, David Mansell, Graham Perrins, Hugh Thomson and John Noble), and a further seven (George Tarleton, Gerald Coates, Barney Coombs, Maurice Smith, Ian McCullough, John MacLaughlin and Campbell McAlpine) joined them the following year. See Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 67-69; Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 24; Wallis, *Arthur Wallis*, 198-211.

⁴⁰⁵ According to Keri Jones, whilst Wallis was never named as an apostle, all the younger men looked to him as a ‘father’. Discussions with author, 15th May 2012.

⁴⁰⁶ Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 49.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., 49.

⁴⁰⁸ The Sept/Oct 1975 theme being “Apostles and Prophets Today”. Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 22 notes that *Restoration* “quickly assumed both a national profile and an international readership.”

⁴⁰⁹ Wallis, *Arthur Wallis*, 223f.

⁴¹⁰ See Wallis, “Apostles Today?”, 16ff; Jones, *Radical Church*, 119f; David Devenish, *Fathering Leaders, Motivating Mission: Restoring the Role of the Apostle in Today’s Church* (Milton Keynes: Authentic Media, 2011), 27; Virgo, *Spirit-Filled Church*, 145ff.

eminent,⁴¹¹ and including those others who did *not* witness Christ's life or resurrection. It is to this last category that all subsequent apostles also belong.

Kay discusses twelve so-called "restorationist networks".⁴¹² In Part 3, where we consider the *outworking* of some of the Restorationist ecclesiology, we will limit our discussion mainly to Wallis and three of the apostolic groups to emerge from his circle: those of Bryn Jones, Terry Virgo and Barney Coombs.

Meanwhile, we will mention two recent developments, which are vital to our overall picture of present-day apostolic concepts, not least because of their current widespread influence, particularly in North America.

5. The 'Missional' Perspective

Lesslie Newbigin (1909-1998) argued that the church cannot be understood apart from its *eschatological* and *missionary* dimensions, and that the present "overlap of the ages" is "the time given for the witness of the apostolic Church to the ends of the earth".⁴¹³ His essay, *The Other Side of 1984*, urged "a genuinely missionary encounter with post-Enlightenment culture."⁴¹⁴ Building on this work, Guder et al⁴¹⁵ emphasised "the essential nature and vocation of the church as God's called and sent people";⁴¹⁶ the church "can become truly apostolic" only when it discards a Christendom mind-set and sees itself *sent into*

⁴¹¹ Eg, Jones, *Radical Church*, 120 regards Paul as "unique amongst that first generation of post-ascension apostles in that he was part of the body of writers who gave us the New Testament revelation that clarifies our gospel – the inclusion of Gentiles in God's Church an restoration plan."

⁴¹² Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 41 and Part II (43-187) where he offers a critique of Bryn Jones (Covenant Ministries), Terry Virgo (Newfrontiers), Barney Coombs (Salt and Light), Tony Morton (Cornerstone), Roger Forster (Icthus), Gerald Coates (Pioneer), Stuart Bell (Ground Level), Colin Dye (Kensington Temple), Noel Stanton (Jesus Fellowship), John Wimber (Vineyard), Colin Urquhart (Kingdom Faith), and Hugh Osgood (Churches in Community).

⁴¹³ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God: Lectures on the Nature of the Church* (London: SCM, 1953), 135.

⁴¹⁴ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Other Side of 1984: Questions for the Churches* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1984), 31. Available from <http://www.newbigin.net>. Internet; accessed 1st May 2012. Newbigin's essay was originally intended for discussion in the UK, but its impact was ultimately much wider.

⁴¹⁵ The six collaborative authors represent a spectrum of North American Reformed-Presbyterian scholars. See Darrell L. Guder, ed. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), v-viii.

⁴¹⁶ Guder, *Missional Church*, 11.

the world; the “apostle to the world” continuing Christ’s apostolic work.⁴¹⁷ Whilst the emphasis is on the apostolicity of the *whole church*, (all God’s people are “his apostles”),⁴¹⁸ there is also an acknowledged need for “apostolic leadership.”⁴¹⁹ Whereas the Restorationist focus is on planting *new* churches, Guder’s denominational context leads him to consider the challenges of moving *existing* denominational, ecclesiastical systems towards an apostolic approach.⁴²⁰ Similarly, Gibbs & Coffey discuss the wholesale “structural re-engineering” required to move denominations from bureaucratic hierarchies to apostolic networks.⁴²¹

Several missional ‘strands’ have emerged over the last fifteen years,⁴²² but there is broad agreement that a fundamental shift towards ‘apostolic’ leadership (variously defined) is essential. For example: (i) Alan Hirsch believes “any talk about missional church that doesn’t also legitimize apostolic ministry is doomed to frustration”,⁴²³ and sees the growing acceptance of *missional* concepts as a stepping-stone towards “apostolic movements” in which many apostles will emerge, who will be “always thinking about the future, bridging barriers, establishing the church in new contexts, developing leaders, networking trans-locally”.⁴²⁴ (ii) Mark Driscoll distinguishes the NT apostolic office from ongoing apostleship,⁴²⁵ characterised by an ability to plant and establish local churches, minister cross-culturally and lead a movement.⁴²⁶

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 110.

⁴¹⁸ Guder, “*Missio Dei*”, 73.

⁴¹⁹ Guder, *Missional Church*, 215.

⁴²⁰ Ibid., where they suggest the formation of leadership teams (cf. Eph 4) where “a leader among the leaders with overall apostolic gifts could provide oversight within the team of leaders” who together would function towards several connected congregations.

⁴²¹ Gibbs, Eddie and Ian Coffey, *Church Next: Quantum Changes for Christian Ministry* (Leicester: IVP, 2001), 70ff.

⁴²² Ed Stetzer, “Understanding the Emerging Church”, *Baptist Press*, January 6, 2006 suggests three broad strands which he terms ‘relevant’ (conservative evangelicals updating *styles*, eg Mark Driscoll, Todd Proctor), ‘reconstructionists’ (rethinking church *structures*, eg Neil Cole, Wolfgang Simpson, Frank Viola, Michael Frost, Alan Hirsch), and ‘revisionists’, (questioning the *substance* of evangelical doctrine, eg Rob Bell, Brian McLaren, Tony Jones, Doug Pagitt).

⁴²³ Alan N. Hirsch and David W. Ferguson, *On The Verge: A Journey into the Apostolic Future of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 133.

⁴²⁴ Alan Hirsch, “Three Overlooked Leadership Roles,” *Leadership*, Spring 2008, 34.

⁴²⁵ Mark Driscoll, *Church Leadership* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008), 74.

⁴²⁶ Ibid., 75.

6. The Bethel Perspective

Finally, we note that the singular mission of Bethel Church (Redding, USA) is ‘revival’,⁴²⁷ expressed as “heaven invading the earth”,⁴²⁸ and the concept of apostolic ministry held by its leaders⁴²⁹ is born out of this. Bill Johnson believes “apostles are first and foremost fathers by nature”, and that “people have started to gather around fathers instead of doctrine.”⁴³⁰

Understanding the “fivefold anointings” is seen as essential for sustaining an outpouring of the Spirit:⁴³¹ each is “a mindset” or perspective.⁴³² Thus: “apostolic leaders are focused on Heaven, and their mission is to see Heaven’s supernatural reality established on the earth”.⁴³³ There is a consequent “apostolic government” and the ‘order’ of 1Corinthians 12:28 is understood as a *hierarchy* of anointings,⁴³⁴ relating to a “flow of the supernatural supply of Heaven” to earth.⁴³⁵ Silk superimposes this ‘order’ over the fivefold ministries to suggest a “funnel” by which “Heaven’s flow” reaches the lost,⁴³⁶ stating:

this order is related to the realms of the supernatural that correspond to each particular office...the anointing on the apostle and prophet creates a perspective that is primarily focused on perceiving what is going on in Heaven and bringing it to earth.⁴³⁷

⁴²⁷ ‘Revival’ is defined as “the personal, regional, and global expansion of God’s Kingdom through His manifest presence”. See <http://www.ibethel.org/our-mission>. Internet; accessed 9th April 2012.

⁴²⁸ As Danny Silk, *Culture of Honor: Sustaining a Supernatural Environment* (Shippensburg: Destiny Image, 2009), 74 puts it, “The Kingdom of Heaven invading the earth is the goal, not unsaved people invading the Church.”

⁴²⁹ Bethel’s “Senior Management Team” is headed by Bill Johnson (apostolic), Kris Vallotton (prophetic) and Danny Silk (pastoral). See <http://www.ibethel.org/staff>. Internet; accessed 7th May 2012.

⁴³⁰ Johnson, “Apostolic Teams”, 1.

⁴³¹ Silk, *Culture of Honor*, 47ff.

⁴³² *Ibid.*, 56.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, 67 where Silk states “the teacher is generally accepted as the highest anointing level in the American church. But the truth is that it is not the highest anointing, but only the third level of anointing. It is a ‘C’ in a grade scale, and it is what keeps the church only *average* in its effects and influence.”

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, 57 (italics his).

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, 56. He continues, “the teacher is focused on being able to describe everything...and the evangelist and pastor are focused on the people...The areas of heavenly focus come first and influences the earthly focus.

The result of all this will be “cultural transformation”, integral to apostolic ministry:⁴³⁸ apostleships are “developed around the principle of training, equipping and deploying the saints to *radically alter society*”.⁴³⁹

To summarise, we have traced a brief history of some of those who have concluded (albeit with differing concepts and approaches), that there is a continuing apostolic gift in the church. In Part 3 we will look at some of the practical expressions and outworking of these things.

2.4 SUMMARY

In this section we have looked at concepts of leadership and apostleship from three *ecclesiological* perspectives: models of the church; notions of apostolicity; and historical movements. We now summarise our findings as follows:

1. The church cannot be described or defined in a single model or motif: she is, after all, God’s instrument for the display of his “complicated, many-sided wisdom...in all its infinite variety and innumerable aspects”, Eph 3:10 Amp). The biblical metaphors and systematic models point to particular characteristics, and must be considered together. Any such model, however, must have proper regard for the essential *charismatic* nature of the church.
2. Concepts of ministry are shaped by concepts of the church, and a spectrum exists. At one end, the church is seen as an institution, with leadership that is elite, hierarchical, powerful and authoritative, administering a ‘downward-flow’ of grace to God’s people. At the other,

⁴³⁸ Kris Vallotton, *Heavy Rain: How You Can Transform the World Around You* (Ventura: Gospel Light, 2010), 68 suggests the church has “for the most part...only empowered her apostles to be church planters” and insists “apostles were never meant merely to be church planters: they were called to be world changers!”

⁴³⁹ Ibid., 69 (italics mine).

the church is a brotherhood of equals, without hierarchy or difference, whose 'leaders' enact the will of the people through democracy. Between the extremes, the church is a diversely-gifted body, actively sharing a common mission, and with some members functioning to equip, proclaim, teach, liberate and enable others.

3. The church's apostolicity is classically seen as being expressed either in its hierarchy, its faithfulness to scripture, or the witness of its people. These views are at worst unbiblical, and at best 'sub-biblical': whilst the church must certainly remain faithful to the apostolic writings, and mobilise the whole body for its apostolic task, so also it must be equipped and built-up through apostles. The 'new' models rightly see apostolicity as including Christ's continuing gift of apostleship.
4. Many of the hierarchical, institutional expressions of church that dominated during Christendom, are now giving way to alternative ecclesiologies and expressions. As earlier evangelical movements restored a sense of 'apostolicity' *to the people* in missionary endeavour, so the 'new' apostolic models seek to give expression *to present-day apostles*.
5. It is clear, even from our brief historical overview, that there are significant differences of expression between those claiming or endorsing apostleship; we will explore this more fully in Part 3.
6. These ecclesiological perspectives, read in conjunction with the biblical evidence, will help inform our understanding of apostolic *authenticity*. We have seen that Paul was a humble bondservant and devoted father, who empowered from the 'bottom-up', and prized unity and interdependency. Any 'apostolic' models that do not share these and other biblical values should give us cause for concern.

PART 3

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

PART 3: PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

In this section we will focus our discussion on the contemporary *practical experience* of apostleship. We are seeking to discover *how* new apostolic models are expressing their ecclesiology, and *how authentic* this is. We will evaluate the practical experience against the biblical evidence. Our approach is as follows:

- In 3.1 we discuss the *recognition* of modern apostles and the concept of apostolic spheres or ‘networks’.
- In 3.2 we consider the nature and exercise of apostolic *authority* and accountability.
- In 3.3 we examine the apostolic *tasks*, seeking to discover how modern apostles function. Here we have regard for the four classical fields of Practical Theology.
- In 3.4 we consider the issues concerned with apostolic ‘*succession*’ in the new models.
- In 3.5 we summarise our findings.

We draw evidence mainly from the populist literature of some of those associated with the Restoration Movement⁴⁴⁰ (namely Arthur Wallis, Bryn Jones,⁴⁴¹ Keri Jones,⁴⁴² Terry Virgo,⁴⁴³ David Devenish,⁴⁴⁴ Barney Coombs⁴⁴⁵ and

⁴⁴⁰ The leaders here are all from what Walker (*Restoring the Kingdom*, 30-33) describes as the “R1” stream of the Movement. Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 245 argues that this group had more definite and emphatic concepts of apostles and apostleship.

⁴⁴¹ Bryn Jones (1940-2003) founded a group of churches and ministries known as Covenant Ministries International (CMI). See Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, ch. 3.

⁴⁴² Keri Jones worked as a fellow-apostle with Bryn Jones until the latter’s death, and now leads a group of churches and ministries known as Ministries Without Borders.

Dave Harvey⁴⁴⁶) and some others associated with the wider and later ‘New Apostolic Reformation’ groups (including Peter Wagner,⁴⁴⁷ David Cannistraci,⁴⁴⁸ Lawrence Khong,⁴⁴⁹ Bill Johnson⁴⁵⁰ and Alan Hirsch). Most of these men claim apostleship, and for ease we will sometimes refer to them collectively as “modern apostles”.⁴⁵¹

Three points must be made before we begin: (i) These writers represent only a small part of the new apostolic paradigm; nevertheless, they provide us with a valuable spectrum of views. (ii) Many of these groups are still working out aspects of their ecclesiology. As their understanding matures, so their praxis is developing; many seek to retain flexibility. (iii) In most cases, literature is more extensive for the Restorationists. This is to be expected since they pre-date the wider groups by some twenty-five years and have undertaken more self-reflection. This ‘imbalance’ of sources is inevitably reflected in our critique.

⁴⁴³ Terry Virgo is the founder of Newfrontiers, an extensive apostolic ‘family’ of over 800 churches in over 60 nations. See Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, ch. 4.

⁴⁴⁴ David Devenish functions as an apostle within the Newfrontiers group. He works with churches in Russia and Ukraine, and has responsible for developing Newfrontiers’ missions policy for unreached people groups. See http://www.woodsidechurch.com/Groups/50136/Woodside_Church_Bedford/About_us/Whos_who_at/Eldership_and_Leadership/Eldership_and_Leadership.aspx. Internet; accessed 25th June 2012.

⁴⁴⁵ Barney Coombs is the apostolic founder of *Salt and Light Ministries*, a network of churches in several nations, and was part of Arthur Wallis’s circle in the early 1970s. See Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, ch. 5.

⁴⁴⁶ Dave Harvey serves as part of the senior leadership team of Sovereign Grace Ministries, founded in 1982 by C.J. Mahaney and Larry Tomczak, who had close connections with the British Restoration Movement. Sovereign Grace Ministries currently comprises about 95 churches in 21 nations (predominantly USA). See <http://www.sovereigngraceministries.org/about-us/default.aspx> Internet; accessed 7th June 2012.

⁴⁴⁷ C. Peter Wagner, formerly Professor of Church Growth at Fuller Theological Seminary is now ‘Presiding Apostle Emeritus’ of the International Coalition of Apostles. See <http://www.coalitionofapostles.com/about-ica/>. Internet; accessed 25th June 2012.

⁴⁴⁸ David Cannistraci is Senior Pastor of GateWay City Church (San Jose, USA) and a member of the International Coalition of Apostles. See <http://www.davidcannistraci.org/about.html>. Internet; accessed 25th June 2012.

⁴⁴⁹ Lawrence Khong is the founding pastor of Faith Community Baptist Church (Singapore), and a member of the International Coalition of Apostles. See <http://www.fcbc.org.sg/fcbc/en/about-us/about-fcbc>. Internet; accessed 25th June 2012.

⁴⁵⁰ We also draw on the writings of Johnson’s colleagues, Danny Silk and Kris Vallotton.

⁴⁵¹ This is not to endorse all their claims.

3.1 APOSTOLIC RECOGNITION

If there are apostles today, how are they recognised? Those who believe in continuing apostleship must answer this question, made all the more difficult by the fact that apostleship is seen as a functional *gift* not an ecclesiastical *office* (as Aubrey points out, “apostleships do not become vacant on the death of an incumbent...therefore the lack of formal procedures to recognise them should not surprise us”).⁴⁵²

The need to discern genuine apostles is paramount: Jones warns of “hundreds of ministries...staking their claim to apostleship who do not pass the biblical tests of authenticity”;⁴⁵³ and Cannistraci believes “Satan will endeavor to infect this [new apostolic] movement with a countermovement of deceivers”.⁴⁵⁴ In this section we consider the process of recognition, and the related issue of apostolic spheres or ‘networks’.

3.1.1 CRITERIA

As we have seen, the ‘recognition’ of NT apostles involved *personal awareness* of an apostolic gift and calling (Ac 26:17-18), the *recognition by other apostles* of the gift and its fruit (Gal 2:9), and recognition by *the church* (1Co 9:1, 2Co 3:3) with a *setting apart* for the ministry (Ac 13:1-3).⁴⁵⁵ How are these things expressed today? And does the practice always line up with the principles?

1. *Divine Appointment*

The fact that Christ *himself* gives the fivefold gifts, is understood by most to rule out ecclesiastical ‘appointments’. As Jones puts it, apostles are “called and appointed by Christ...not chosen by congregations, or even by fellow

⁴⁵² Aubrey, “Apostles Today”, 282.

⁴⁵³ Jones, *Apostles Today*, 1. Throughout this section, ‘Jones’ refers to Bryn Jones unless stated.

⁴⁵⁴ David Cannistraci, *Apostles and the Emerging Apostolic Movement: A Biblical Look at Apostleship and How God is Using It to Bless His Church Today* (Ventura: Renew, 1996), 130.

⁴⁵⁵ Cf. also Bittlinger, *Gifts and Ministries*, 58ff.

ministries".⁴⁵⁶ He believes every true apostle "will have had a personal encounter with the resurrected Lord" and "will have been personally commissioned to an apostolic task";⁴⁵⁷ the apostle's call "springs out of a deep encounter with Jesus Christ and the receiving of a revelation from God regarding his task and commission".⁴⁵⁸ Cannistraci likewise believes the primary requirement of an apostle is "a definite and personal call from God".⁴⁵⁹ Several have spoken candidly about their own call and commission, and the subsequent recognition of ministry.⁴⁶⁰

2. Recognition by Others

In time, an authentic calling will be recognised and affirmed by others. Here, Virgo suggests, the task is to "observe and note the grace of God on people, [to] see the anointing and respect the gift of God".⁴⁶¹ Jones notes there may be a lengthy interval between a person's *calling* and subsequent recognition and release to *fulfil* the task.⁴⁶² The need for recognition *by other apostles* is widely acknowledged (Galatians 2:9 being frequently cited).⁴⁶³ As Gibbs & Coffey observe, apostles cannot be self-appointed, nor simply recognised by local churches;⁴⁶⁴ recognition by those 'who were apostles before them' is essential. Aubrey suggests this "tends to result from the observation by other apostles of one's functioning and development in life and ministry within local church settings and then on a wider scale".⁴⁶⁵ What exactly are they looking for? Two sets of observable biblical criteria prevail:

- (i) Firstly, important *character prerequisites*. Devenish highlights the apostolic 'marks' not only of signs and wonders, but perseverance and

⁴⁵⁶ Jones, *Radical Church*, 124.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., 129.

⁴⁵⁸ Jones, "Apostles Today – For Tomorrow's Church", *Restoration*, Sept/Oct 1985, 32.

⁴⁵⁹ Cannistraci, *Apostles*, 90.

⁴⁶⁰ Eg, see Aubrey, "Apostles Today", 319f. (re Keri Jones); Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, 206-208; Terry Virgo, *A People Prepared* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1996), 174f.

⁴⁶¹ Terry Virgo, *Does the Future Have a Church?* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 2003), 109.

⁴⁶² Jones, *Radical Church*, 124 cites the seventeen years between Paul's Damascus Road 'calling' and subsequent setting apart as an example.

⁴⁶³ Eg, Cannistraci, *Apostles*, 91; Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, 200.

⁴⁶⁴ Gibbs and Coffey, *Church Next*, 79 (italics mine).

⁴⁶⁵ Aubrey, "Apostles Today", 282.

suffering;⁴⁶⁶ Jones emphasises grace, perseverance, humility and integrity.⁴⁶⁷ Cannistraci insists “apostleship is a matter of *character* above any other single quality”.⁴⁶⁸ Whilst clearly not proving apostolicity, the *absence* of these things almost certainly *disproves* authenticity.

- (ii) Secondly, the *fruit of apostleship*. For Devenish, this includes truth well taught, churches well planted and the emergence of a “fathering authority”, evidencing the beginnings of a new apostolic sphere.⁴⁶⁹ Jones enumerates several “hallmarks”, including effective equipping of the saints, revelation and stewardship of the mysteries of God, an astute use of the ‘plumbline’ to measure everything against the end purpose, and right use of apostolic authority.⁴⁷⁰ For Coombs, “two words - *foundation* and *fatherhood* – taken in the context of establishing relationally-based churches, sum up the uniqueness of apostolic ministry” and must be observable.⁴⁷¹

It is widely acknowledged that apostles differ. Coombs recognises “different kinds of apostles, but also varying measures of faith and grace that accompany each ministry gift.”⁴⁷² Jones argues for “different kinds of apostles for different tasks and situations”, each with different underlying *gifting* to accomplish their commission.⁴⁷³ He also sees different *orders of apostleship*, such that some may lead a team and be a “catalyst for other ministries”, whilst others may be “an apostle built into another apostle’s sphere” (cf. Barnabas with Paul).⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁶⁶ Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, 311-324.

⁴⁶⁷ Jones, *Radical Church*, 128.

⁴⁶⁸ Cannistraci, *Apostles*, 107 (italics mine).

⁴⁶⁹ Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, 203.

⁴⁷⁰ Jones, *Radical Church*, 128ff.

⁴⁷¹ Coombs, *Apostles Today*, 200 (italics his).

⁴⁷² Ibid., 28. He describes “equipping apostles”, “local apostles”, “fathering apostles”, “ethnic apostles” and “serving apostles”.

⁴⁷³ Jones, *Radical Church*, 121. He warns against apostles seeking to function in a situation where the required gift is not their own.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid., 129.

3. Recognition by Churches

Recognition also involves the *church*; the people of God are the ‘seal of apostleship’, and as Kay observes, “evidence of the genuineness of ministry is in the flesh and blood of the congregations where people have worked”.⁴⁷⁵ This is borne out by Virgo’s comment that “the modern apostle will be regarded by some as simply a brother or a preacher, while to others he functions as an apostle.”⁴⁷⁶ The witness of the church does not bestow apostleship, but certainly confirms it. As Hirsch says, “apostolic ministry [is] the property of the Spirit. Apostles are merely stewards...but their calling can be recognised by the church.”⁴⁷⁷

4. Practical Outworking

What does all this mean in practice? As Walker notes, the original recognition of apostleship amongst the Restorationists in the early 1970s “was legitimated by an appeal [to] the *de facto* leadership that had already emerged”:⁴⁷⁸ they were *already* bearing the fruit, and thus “ordained each other not in any formal ceremony, but by mutual recognition of ministry, prophecy, and the laying on of hands.”⁴⁷⁹

Since then, emerging apostles in Jones’s circle have generally been recognised on public occasions, accompanied by prayer and the laying on of hands by a body of apostles and prophets,⁴⁸⁰ in accordance with a self-imposed “collegial principle” by which Jones sought to operate.⁴⁸¹ Aubrey discusses the ‘legitimacy’ of occasions when these principles were *not* upheld, and rightly observes that the immediate impact on the churches and the apostolic team was

⁴⁷⁵ Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 252.

⁴⁷⁶ Virgo, *Spirit-Filled Church*, 153.

⁴⁷⁷ Alan Hirsch and Tim Catchim, *The Permanent Revolution: Apostolic Imagination and Practice for the 21st Century* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2012), 102.

⁴⁷⁸ Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 69-70.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., 70; he adds that, “in no sense...did these men have delusions of grandeur that led them to believe that they were the only apostles in the world.”

⁴⁸⁰ The author has been present at several such occasions.

⁴⁸¹ See Aubrey, “Apostles Today”, 285. By “collegial principle” he means agreement and ordination by a plurality of other apostles.

not wholly positive.⁴⁸² Devenish's apostolic ministry was recognised by other apostles (on the basis of his effective planting and oversight of churches), but *without* any public ceremony, or laying on of hands.⁴⁸³ We are not aware of the recognition 'protocols' amongst other groups, but suggest this would be a valuable area of further study.

3.1.2 APOSTOLIC SPHERES

Closely linked with this are apostolic spheres,⁴⁸⁴ or networks, which are significant for all the modern apostles, though terminology and concepts clearly differ.⁴⁸⁵ In Kay's estimation, "apostolic networks are new and unusual structures" in the Body,⁴⁸⁶ and it is here that the distinct approaches to polity and mission are found.

1. *Relational 'Networks'*

So-called 'apostolic networks' are based on *relationships*, primarily between an apostle, and leaders and churches that recognise his ministry. As Wagner rightly says, "networks stand or fall on personal relationships".⁴⁸⁷

For the Restorationists, such networks are primarily the fruit of church-planting, and are therefore characterised not only by relationships, but also by common recognition of apostolic *authority* (we will discuss this more fully in the next section); thus, Jones speaks of an "apostolic sphere of authority",⁴⁸⁸ and the churches 'related to' him recognised his authority towards them. Bethel's leaders describe a movement in which churches are 'gathering around

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, 208.

⁴⁸⁴ See at 2Co 12ff and Gal 2:8ff above.

⁴⁸⁵ They are variously described as "spheres", "networks", "groups", or "families" of related or connected churches. Kay's research (*Apostolic Networks*) has given added currency to the term "networks", which is now widely accepted, and therefore used here though with reservations.

⁴⁸⁶ Kay, *Apostolic networks*, 241.

⁴⁸⁷ Wagner, *Churchquake*, 128.

⁴⁸⁸ Bryn Jones, "Questions and Answers Concerning Apostles, Elders and the Practice of Authority in the Church of God" (Coventry: CMI, May 1996), 12.

fathers',⁴⁸⁹ and though their concepts do not necessarily imply a sphere of apostolic authority, they do insist "relationship is the foundation of God's government" and have established 'Global Legacy' as an "apostolic, relational network...whose purpose is to bring Heaven to earth" and "establish Kingdom government".⁴⁹⁰

Wagner may have something else in mind: he sees apostolic networks "composed of local churches that, for one reason or another, voluntarily decide to affiliate with the network."⁴⁹¹ Cannistraci describes "a band of autonomous churches and individual ministries that are voluntarily united in an organized structure" for the purposes of "connecting relationships and combining resources," aided by "frequent time together in conferences, events and gatherings."⁴⁹² Without belittling this, the biblical picture is of something altogether more *purposeful*: apostles and their colleagues co-labouring to plant and build churches.

2. *Geographic Spheres?*

There are differing views concerning any *geographic* dimensions to apostolic spheres. On the one hand, Wagner believes "God usually assigns certain territorial spheres" to apostles,⁴⁹³ and Cannistraci suggests the Spirit acts to "divide regions among [apostles] so that geographic areas (such as continents) can be uniformly penetrated."⁴⁹⁴ This is seen as God's strategy to counteract "territorial spirits".⁴⁹⁵ On the other hand, Devenish insists apostles are "not apostles to regions or countries [but] apostles *to churches*."⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁸⁹ Cf. Vallotton, *Heavy Rain*, 23ff.

⁴⁹⁰ See <http://www.igloballegacy.org>. Internet; accessed 9th April 2012).

⁴⁹¹ Wagner, *Churchquake*, 126.

⁴⁹² Cannistraci, *Apostles*, 190, 191.

⁴⁹³ Wagner, *Churchquake*, 127.

⁴⁹⁴ Cannistraci, *Apostles*, 155.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁶ Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, 214 (italics mine).

In our view, the NT spheres may well have been represented geographically, but this was *not* their basis: Paul's sphere extended wherever he was *recognised* as an apostle and his *authority* accepted (hence he can speak of those things uniformly taught "in all the churches"),⁴⁹⁷ but there is no evidence he was the *only* apostle working in such regions (indeed, the evidence is otherwise). Moreover, as the history of the Catholic Apostolic Church perhaps shows, 'dividing up' territories amongst apostles involves some dangerous human presumptions that override the very nature of the divinely-given gift. It is certainly the case in the UK today that apostolic spheres overlap geographically.⁴⁹⁸

3. Unity Across Spheres

As apostles develop relationships with one another, unity can be expressed across spheres and churches. Aubrey believes "it is incumbent upon [apostles] to seek active collegial and relational unity in small inter-linking interdependent groups or networks which have mutual accountability towards one another."⁴⁹⁹ Keri Jones goes further, noting "the true nature and mission of the church *cannot* be seen in separation of apostleships."⁵⁰⁰

Wagner argues for a distinction between so-called "vertical" apostles (those leading a network) and "horizontal" apostles (those "graced by God to give apostolic leadership and direction to certain spheres of the body of Christ as a whole", by bringing vertical apostles together).⁵⁰¹ He co-founded the 'International Coalition of Apostles' (ICA) in 1999, to "raise the integrity of apostolic ministry around the world" by exercising "mutually agreeable 'quality control'."⁵⁰² The aims may be commendable, but the methods are in danger of institutionalising charismatic activity. Moreover, his distinctions cannot be

⁴⁹⁷ 1Co 7:17, 4:17, 14:33; see at 1.2.3 (11) above.

⁴⁹⁸ Eg. in Leicester there are churches representing Newfrontiers, Salt & Light, Vineyard, Kingdom Faith and Ministries Without Borders.

⁴⁹⁹ Aubrey, "Apostles Today", 315.

⁵⁰⁰ Keri Jones, discussions with author, 15th May 2012.

⁵⁰¹ C. Peter Wagner, "Joining Forces, Blazing Trails," *Renewal*. 291 (July 2000): 31.

⁵⁰² Wagner, "Joining Forces, Blazing Trails", 32.

maintained biblically,⁵⁰³ and we question the helpfulness of introducing non-biblical terms. Our concerns are compounded by fact that Wagner sees apostleship as an *office*,⁵⁰⁴ and the ICA leaders have given themselves the titles of Presiding Apostle, Ambassadorial Apostle, Convening Apostle and Presiding Apostle Emeritus.⁵⁰⁵

These concerns highlight the need for effective 'apostolic forums', where ministries can dialogue openly, draw from each other's gift, and be held accountable for their teaching and practice. We will return to this idea later.

In summary, the recognition of authentic apostleship is a critical issue, and faithfulness to the biblical patterns is vital. Humility, accountability and considerable care are paramount.

3.2 APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY

Inherent in our understanding of apostleship is the fact that an apostle is *sent with authority*; as Lightfoot put it, "he is entrusted with a mission and has powers conferred upon him".⁵⁰⁶ The biblical evidence has shown us Paul's "delicately balanced authority".⁵⁰⁷ Translating these things into a contemporary

⁵⁰³ Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, 56; Aubrey, "Apostles Today", 261. Wagner's argument for 'horizontal apostles' is based on the presumed role of James in Acts 15.

⁵⁰⁴ Cf. Wagner, *Churchquake*, 46, 109 where he explains that he sees an "office" as the public recognition by the Body of Christ that an individual has a gift and is authorised to minister in an "official" capacity.

⁵⁰⁵ The ICA website explains: "That year [2000], John Kelly was directed by the Lord to ask C. Peter Wagner to assume the roll of Presiding Apostle. In 2001...John Kelly continued to serve ICA as the Ambassadorial Apostle, representing ICA globally...In 2009, on the eve of his 80th birthday, C. Peter Wagner was directed by the Lord to ask John P. Kelly to again assume the roll of Presiding (now Convening) Apostle over ICA...With an official handing of the baton ceremony at the 2010 Annual November Gathering, Dr. Wagner was installed as the Presiding Apostle Emeritus of ICA and John P. Kelly became the new Convening Apostle." See <http://www.coalitionofapostles.com/about-ica/history-of-ica/>. Internet; accessed 14th February 2012.

⁵⁰⁶ Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 92.

⁵⁰⁷ Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 31; see at 1.2.3 (1) above.

context is notoriously controversial: Grudem speaks for many when he says claims of modern-day apostleship “immediately raise suspicion that they may be motivated by inappropriate pride and desires for self-exaltation, along with excessive ambition and a desire for much more authority in the church than any one person should rightly have.”⁵⁰⁸ Virgo acknowledges that “the restoration of spiritual authority opens a way fraught with dangers”, but insists “this must not drive us away from God-given principles. Leaders must have freedom to lead the church, or we shall never advance.”⁵⁰⁹ How, then, do modern apostles understand the *nature* of apostolic authority, and what *safeguards* protect against its abuse?

3.2.1 NATURE

The modern apostles tend to identify four characteristics of apostolic authority:

- (i) It is *spiritual*, not resting on human power or influence (as Bittlinger puts it, an apostle, “has no chance whatever to achieve anything with the devices of this world.”)⁵¹⁰ Since “God has not established the *office* of apostle...authority can neither be conferred nor transferred, except as this is done by the Holy Spirit.”⁵¹¹ For Coombs, this means it cannot be *enforced* as such, but is instead “dependent on God to back it up”.⁵¹² Jones warns that in order to exercise authority, apostles must maintain credibility, integrity and consistency.⁵¹³

- (ii) It is *relational*, appealing to people on the basis of love and friendship, and therefore can *only* be exercised in churches which have a

⁵⁰⁸ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 911.

⁵⁰⁹ Virgo, *A People Prepared*, 130. As Dave Harvey, *Polity: Serving and Leading the Local Church* (Gaithersburg: Sovereign Grace Ministries, 2004), 21 puts it, “war stories of apostolic abuse are poor evidence against legitimacy of present-day apostles.”

⁵¹⁰ Bittlinger, *Gifts and Ministries*, 64.

⁵¹¹ Snyder, *Community of the King*, 89f (italics mine).

⁵¹² Coombs, *Apostles Today*, 195.

⁵¹³ Jones, “Questions and Answers”, 11.

relationship with the apostle.⁵¹⁴ Furthermore, since apostles differ in their *measure* of rule, each must know the 'limits' of his authority.⁵¹⁵ Cannistraci believes each apostle is given "a unique measure of rule (or sphere of authority)".⁵¹⁶ Apostolic networks therefore place limits on apostolic authority:⁵¹⁷ Virgo believes his authority derives from his *working relationship* with churches and individuals,⁵¹⁸ and functions when people "have happily yielded themselves to it", requiring hearts to be won and trust to be gained.⁵¹⁹ It is Wagner's observation that a key in explaining the growth of apostolic networks is that apostles are widely *trusted* by those they lead.⁵²⁰ Humility is vital: Cannistraci believes apostles "must be prepared to take on the form of a servant and experience the cross."⁵²¹ For Jones, "a true apostle is not abrasive, cold or dictatorial. He doesn't lord it over the heritage of God...he can be authoritative – but never authoritarian."⁵²² Kay observes, and our experience confirms, that amongst the Restorationists, "the apostle did not sit on top of the pyramid issuing orders"; rather, relationships were "easy and informal...the apostle was the first among equals."⁵²³

(iii) It is *constructive*, 'building-up' not tearing-down.⁵²⁴ For Jones, this also means it extends to "all things necessary to the achieving, maintaining and completion" of the apostolic task (though this is again tempered by the fact that, "at no time [is] ownership in view, but rather stewardship.")⁵²⁵ Cannistraci suggests apostles have been given "real

⁵¹⁴ Coombs, *Apostles Today*, 196; Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, 186. Cf. Jones, "Questions and Answers", 2 who points out that whilst authority is not *based on* relationships (the source of all authority is God) it *functions within* them.

⁵¹⁵ Jones, *Radical Church*, 121f; "Questions and Answers", 8.

⁵¹⁶ Cannistraci, *Apostles*, 153.

⁵¹⁷ Cf. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 9 who suggests Paul saw his authority as being "circumscribed by his sphere of mission and...to be exercised only in relation to the churches founded by him".

⁵¹⁸ Virgo, *Spirit-Filled Church*, 149f.

⁵¹⁹ Virgo, *A People Prepared*, 131.

⁵²⁰ Wagner, *Churchquake*, 116f.

⁵²¹ Cannistraci, *Apostles*, 146.

⁵²² Bryn Jones, "Apostles – Do They Measure Up?" in David Matthew, ed. *Apostles Today* (Bradford: Harvestime, 1988), 102.

⁵²³ Kay, *Apostolic networks*, 251.

⁵²⁴ Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, 185.

⁵²⁵ Jones, "Questions and Answers", 7.

authority to govern and influence everything from doctrinal questions to the practical issues of living for God.”⁵²⁶ In particular, apostles are seen as having authority to set vision,⁵²⁷ appoint elders and leaders, and settle doctrinal matters, which Virgo regards as “one of God’s great provisions to safeguard his church from going astray”.⁵²⁸

(iv) It is *real*, which for Devenish means, “it should be listened to and generally put into practice.”⁵²⁹ Coombs adds the vital caveat that modern apostles do *not* possess the *same* degree of authority as the NT apostles (functioning before the NT was canonised), and clearly cannot go beyond the Scriptures.⁵³⁰ It is a moot point whether apostles have *more* authority (a ‘greater measure’) than other ministries: many think *they do*, based on the functional ‘order’ of 1Corinthians 12:28 and the distinction made at 2 Peter 3:2.⁵³¹ In it all, however, as Virgo says, “the modern apostle makes no claim to infallibility”.⁵³²

These principles certainly have biblical support, but a proper biblical *balance* is essential. Wagner suggests apostolic authority is the distinguishing feature of the New Apostolic Reformation, and defines apostles as those “with an *extraordinary* authority in spiritual matters”, and who “possess and exercise *unusual* authority”.⁵³³ In our view, we would be hard-pushed to claim from the *biblical* evidence that the overriding characteristic or mark of the NT apostles was their *authority*.

⁵²⁶ Cannistraci, *Apostles*, 155.

⁵²⁷ Lawrence Khong, *The Apostolic Cell Church: Practical Strategies for Growth and Outreach* (Singapore: TOUCH, 2000), 109.

⁵²⁸ Virgo, *Spirit-Filled Church*, 149.

⁵²⁹ Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, 185.

⁵³⁰ Coombs, *Apostles Today*, 196.

⁵³¹ Keri Jones, discussions with author, 15th May 2012.

⁵³² Virgo, *Spirit-Filled Church*, 153.

⁵³³ Wagner, *Churchquake*, 105, 112 (italics mine).

3.2.2 ACCOUNTABILITY

All seem agreed that apostolic authority must be exercised in a context of effective *accountability*. Coombs suggests apostles are accountable to the Lord and the Scriptures, to fellow apostles, and to their local church.⁵³⁴ We will comment briefly:

- (i) Above all, apostles are accountable to the One who sends them, and the ultimate check lies in their relationship with the Lord. Khong suggests God is willing to ‘take risks’ by delegating His authority, and makes the sobering observation that “God is more than able to bring down His erring servants just as quickly as He raises them up”. As a result, true apostles “will feel a deep responsibility to look to God for direction in ministry, because the lives of many others rest in their hands.⁵³⁵ Keri Jones points out that an apostle will be judged by the gospel itself; if he abandons orthodoxy he falls under “God’s curse” (Gal 1:8-9), and should be rejected by the churches.⁵³⁶
- (ii) Peer accountability is also essential, and here again the idea of a ‘forum’ comes into play. Wagner believes “apostolic leaders, virtually without exception, recognize that they need genuine accountability”,⁵³⁷ and that “peer-level accountability is the one level on which the future integrity of the New Apostolic Reformation will stand or fall.”⁵³⁸ In Cannistraci’s words, “the fathers must gather together in true relationship and openness, holding one another accountable to the Word and Spirit of Christ for the good of His people.”⁵³⁹
- (iii) Coombs believes an apostle’s local elders are best placed to monitor his lifestyle and care for his own family. In this regard, we agree with

⁵³⁴ Coombs, *Apostles Today*, 212f.

⁵³⁵ Khong, *Apostolic Cell Church*, 110.

⁵³⁶ Keri Jones, discussions with author, 15th May 2012.

⁵³⁷ Wagner, *Churchquake*, 122.

⁵³⁸ Ibid.

⁵³⁹ Cannistraci, *Apostles*, 156.

Scotland's observation that amongst Restorationists the language has changed from 'submission' and 'coming under covering' in the 1970s, to a more balanced emphasis on 'relating' together.⁵⁴⁰ In our view, there is also now a greater emphasis on *plurality* of ministry and leadership.⁵⁴¹

3.2.3 HIERARCHIES & AUTHORITARIANISM

The risk and dangers of hierarchies and authoritarianism developing are real and present. History may not be on the side of the new models: Clark's assessment is that "a paradigm and ethos that emphasises leadership, especially apostolic leadership, will always tend eventually to dwell and hinge upon the prerogatives, dignity, power and authority of leaders rather than upon the needs of the so-called led."⁵⁴² Walker warns that the Apostolic Church developed a "dominating apostolate",⁵⁴³ and makes the general point that if charisma disappears "you are left with the legalistic authority of the office: the charismatic apostolate too easily becomes the priestly magisterium."⁵⁴⁴

We concerned by some of the examples of institutional thinking, and by concepts of a 'hierarchy of anointings', and a "funnel" of downward blessing.⁵⁴⁵ As Clark points out, without mature theological reflection and attentiveness to the biblical patterns, 'apostolic' leadership models can all too easily result in 'episcopal' hierarchies.⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴⁰ Nigel Scotland, *Charismatics and the New Millennium: The Impact of Charismatic Christianity from 1960 into the New Millennium*, 2nd ed. (Guildford: Eagle, 2000), 103. A similar point is made by Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, 10. Cf. also Aubrey, "Apostles Today", 153.

⁵⁴¹ Keri Jones, discussions with author, 15th May 2012.

⁵⁴² Mathew Clark, "Contemporary Pentecostal Leadership – The Apostolic Faith Mission of SA as case study" (2007), 12.

⁵⁴³ Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 251, 252.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid., 252f.

⁵⁴⁵ Silk, *Culture of Honor*, 73; see 2.3.2.6 above.

⁵⁴⁶ Mathew Clark, "Apostles or Bishops? An evaluation of the 'New Apostolic Paradigm' in Pentecostal-Charismatic churches" (Aug 1999), 13ff.

Effective safeguards *can* be put in place, however. Moreover, in our view one of the most effective correctives will be a biblically balanced emphasis on the *five-fold ministries as a whole* (and the giftedness of *the church* as a whole, cf. Eph 4:16), rather than a limited focus on the recovery of apostleship.

In summary, authority and accountability go hand-in-hand, and both must function *relationally*. Here, as elsewhere, the motif of the apostle as a *father* is most helpful: his authority must be expressed through the heart of a loving father who wants only the best for his children; the paternal bond, in turn, provides accountability.

3.3 APOSTOLIC TASKS

We now consider what a modern apostle *does*, and will use a Practical Theology framework for our discussion. Practical Theology has traditionally understood itself to be concerned with the four ‘tasks’ of the church (and its leaders),⁵⁴⁷ and classically divides itself into corresponding fields of: (i) *Homiletics* (preaching and proclamation); (ii) *Liturgies* (worship and fellowship); (iii) *Catechetics* (teaching and instruction); and (iv) *Poimenics* (nurture, counselling and pastoral care).⁵⁴⁸ We will consider how *apostolic* models of leadership approach the four tasks. However, since these fields were developed within *non-apostolic* contexts, some aspects of apostolic ministry do not easily ‘fit’ within a narrow interpretation of the four areas; an *apostolic* perspective demands that we take a broader view, in order to have a framework more suitable for our purposes.

⁵⁴⁷ Traditionally understood to be: (i) *kerygma* (proclamation); (ii) *koinonia* (fellowship); (iii) *didaskalia* (teaching); and (iv) *poimeneia* (pastoral care).

⁵⁴⁸ For a discussion of the historical development of the fields of Practical Theology see Dietrich Rössler, “Practical Theology,” in Erwin Fahlbusch, ed. *The Encyclopedia of Christianity, Volume 4* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 315-317.

3.3.1 APOSTLESHIP AND HOMILETICS

How is an apostle's role understood in terms of the church's *preaching and proclamation*? This takes us to a distinctive feature of the new apostolic models, for apostles see these tasks as the means to a greater end: the *planting of churches* in fulfillment of the Great Commission, for as Keri Jones observes, mission and apostleship are inseparable; we cannot understand one without the other.⁵⁴⁹

1. *Church-Planting*

Lang suggested the early apostles "founded churches, *and they founded nothing else*, because for the ends in view nothing else was required or could have been so suitable."⁵⁵⁰ It is widely held that the apostolic gift still "leaves churches in its wake".⁵⁵¹ For Virgo's team, mission must be centred on church-planting,⁵⁵² the only proper context for making disciples;⁵⁵³ put differently, "apostolic ministry is for the sake of the nations...for the sake of world mission...for the sake of planting many more churches."⁵⁵⁴ For Jones, the emphasis is the *kingdom* rather than the church, but the method is the same: an apostle will "break new territory and establish the Church as an expression of the Kingdom in new cities and towns".⁵⁵⁵ Likewise, Cannistraci believes "apostles plant churches because [they] are the building blocks of the kingdom."⁵⁵⁶

2. *Mission-Minded Churches*

Paul's involving of the churches in his mission (cf. Ro 15:24) leads Allen to make the case that "when he had occupied two or three centres he had really and

⁵⁴⁹ Keri Jones, discussions with author, 15th May 2012.

⁵⁵⁰ Lang, *The Churches of God*, 10 (italics his).

⁵⁵¹ Skye Jethani, "Apostles Today?" *Leadership* Spring 2008, 38.

⁵⁵² Virgo, *Spirit-Filled Church*, 151.

⁵⁵³ Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, 46.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 164.

⁵⁵⁵ Jones, *Radical Church*, 125.

⁵⁵⁶ Cannistraci, *Apostles*, 100.

effectively occupied the province.”⁵⁵⁷ Virgo suggests he “lifted the sights of local churches and gathered them into his world vision”.⁵⁵⁸ Likewise, modern apostles want churches to become *involved with them* in the wider mission. Apostles reproduce after their own kind, so the whole church becomes ‘apostolic’ (a vital emphasis in the Missional argument).⁵⁵⁹ Devenish seeks to encourage and equip missionary-minded people to emerge in the churches he oversees, and pointedly observes, “most of our initiatives are not ‘top-down’...but result from people hearing God and going.”⁵⁶⁰ Our own experience is the same.⁵⁶¹ This is important, for the Restorationists do *not* see the church as existing for the apostles, or even for *their* mission; rather, for the Great Commission.

3.3.2 APOSTLESHP AND LITURGY

Secondly, how is the role of an apostle understood in terms of the church’s *fellowship and worship*? Here we must broaden the concept of ‘liturgy’ to include notions of community-formation, and ask: what *kind* of community will an apostle build?

1. *Community Foundations*

Wallis saw the Twelve providing *historical* foundations, and post-ascension apostles providing an ongoing *experiential* foundation “that has to be freshly laid for every redeemed community”.⁵⁶² For Keri Jones, the apostle’s foundational role is “revealing the Cornerstone”, and this must be done

⁵⁵⁷ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 19. His point is that those churches would in turn send out preachers and proclaimers to reach the rest of the province.

⁵⁵⁸ Virgo, *A People Prepared*, 179.

⁵⁵⁹ See 2.3.2 (5) above.

⁵⁶⁰ Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, 172.

⁵⁶¹ In the author’s own context, close working relationships with several international apostolic teams means members of the local church are frequently reminded of the ‘bigger picture’; many have taken part in short-term missions trips alongside these apostles. Additionally (and consequentially), passion for local mission is also high; many fruitful initiatives have come from the church, very few of these being led by elders or pastors.

⁵⁶² Arthur Wallis, “Apostles Today – Why Not!,” in David Matthew, ed. *Apostles Today* (Bradford: Harvestime, 1988), 20.

continually, not just at the founding of the church.⁵⁶³ Virgo argues that at Pentecost the new believers were “being added to the *apostles* and what they said”; their responsibility was “to tell new Christians who they were, and what were their privileges and responsibilities.”⁵⁶⁴ Devenish sees his foundation-laying role as ensuring believers understand the grand *purposes* of God, their *identity* in Christ, and the *nature* of the community.⁵⁶⁵

2. Fathers and Families

No aspect of this is regarded as more significant than the church’s identity as a *family*. As Virgo puts it: “the early apostles laid a foundation of love and friendship in the churches by their style. They were not remote rabbis or distant priests. Paul came among the churches as a father, and when he left them they wept.”⁵⁶⁶ As Wagner observes, “apostolic networks frequently like to consider themselves a family, the apostle being the father”.⁵⁶⁷

There are various results: Johnson believes true apostles will want their children to surpass them in every way, and this lack of jealousy means “stability is the primary fruit of the ministry of the apostolic team.”⁵⁶⁸ Jones emphasises security: apostles “strengthen and establish the Church of God when everything in our world is shaking.”⁵⁶⁹ Cannistraci foresees the restoration of fatherhood will bring “wisdom and maturity, a firm hand to guide us, balance to preserve us and experience to comfort us.”⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶³ Keri Jones, discussions with author, 15th May 2012.

⁵⁶⁴ Virgo, *Future Church?*, 121 (italics mine).

⁵⁶⁵ See Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, chs 6-8 where he enumerates eight foundational doctrines he seeks to lay in the churches he works with, namely understanding the church as: (i) the people of God; (ii) a family; (iii) people devoted to God; (iv) a Spirit-filled community; (v) led by a team; (vi) a missional community; (vii) an agent of the kingdom; and (viii) a suffering community.

⁵⁶⁶ Virgo, *Spirit-Filled Church*, 137.

⁵⁶⁷ Wagner, *Churchquake*, 119.

⁵⁶⁸ Johnson, “Apostolic Teams”, 1.

⁵⁶⁹ Jones, *Radical Church*, 127f.

⁵⁷⁰ Cannistraci, *Apostles*, 117.

3. Joining a Family

How do churches become part of such a family? The newly-founded NT churches were all *born into* an apostolic sphere, but in our own day concepts of ‘adoption’ become important for churches not so birthed. Apostolic networks today usually comprise churches both *founded* and *adopted* by the apostle; it is Khong’s assertion that when such churches ‘join’ a network, a pastor’s “anointing for leadership will increase” and their “church will come alive.”⁵⁷¹

Devenish describes a process (‘friendship’, ‘engagement’, then ‘adoption’) for churches wishing to become part of the Newfrontiers “family of churches”, where the emphasis is on developing and testing *relationships*, and ensuring the nature of apostolic *authority* is understood.⁵⁷² A similar process exists within Sovereign Grace,⁵⁷³ and Coombs describes the issues he addresses before deciding whether to respond to requests for his apostolic input.⁵⁷⁴

On the other hand, Wagner refers to apostolic leaders seeking to “recruit pastors” to their networks,⁵⁷⁵ and notes “a certain kind of marketing approach is frequently used” to show how membership can “add value to local churches.”⁵⁷⁶ In like manner, the ICA promotes the benefits to apostles of joining a network of peer ministries.⁵⁷⁷ There are some secular ‘networking’ connotations here (affiliation for personal gain) that do sit easily alongside the Pauline model. Gibbs & Coffey are also concerned that “growth of new apostolic movements seems to have come about as much through franchising among existing churches as through planting new churches.”⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷¹ Khong, *Apostolic Cell Church*, 114. He makes his point based on the principles of authority and submission in Luke 7:8.

⁵⁷² Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, 208ff.

⁵⁷³ Harvey, *Polity*, 26.

⁵⁷⁴ Coombs, *Apostles Today*, 206ff. In particular, he focuses on the context of the church’s original ‘birth’, previous relationships (eg with other groups or networks), giftedness and suitability of the leadership, and changes he believes will be necessary.

⁵⁷⁵ Wagner, *Churchquake*, 128.

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 132.

⁵⁷⁷ See <http://www.coalitionofapostles.com/>. Internet; accessed 25th June 2012.

⁵⁷⁸ Gibbs and Coffey, *Church Next*, 79.

4. Unity

True apostles will build a *unified* community, “challeng[ing] any sectarian attitude or denominational spirit that threatens the unity of the Body.”⁵⁷⁹ And Coombs points out that because “apostles think architecturally”, they are “gifted in putting people’s lives and ministries together so that they are formed into a cohesive, vibrant, balanced community.”⁵⁸⁰

5. Fathers and Mothers?

Finally, and briefly, there are differing views concerning the role of women. On the one hand, Wagner argues that the *mother* motif of 1Thess 2:7, “sets the tone for gender-inclusive apostolic roles”,⁵⁸¹ and Cannistraci concludes “women may serve Christ in governmental and apostolic positions”.⁵⁸² On the other, many Restorationists have women serving *as part of* apostolic teams but *not* carrying overall government to churches.⁵⁸³ We have discussed the biblical evidence at 1.2.4 above.

3.3.3 APOSTLESHP AND CATECHETICS

Thirdly, we ask how contemporary apostles understand their task regarding *teaching and instruction* of the church. We find that the emphasis here is on *equipping* people so the church is *built-up*, and that this is done in conjunction with other ministries, especially teachers (Eph 4:11-12). The Restorationists appear to have given more consideration to this than the wider group.

1. Doctrinal Foundations

As we saw in Part 1, apostolic work involves establishing churches on solid foundations of both community life and *doctrine*. Integral to the idea of

⁵⁷⁹ Jones, *Radical Church*, 126.

⁵⁸⁰ Coombs, *Apostles Today*, 64.

⁵⁸¹ Wagner, *Churchquake*, 120.

⁵⁸² Cannistraci, *Apostles*, 89.

⁵⁸³ Eg, see Coombs, *Apostles Today*, 155-175; Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, 329ff.

foundations is that of the builder's *plumbline*; part of the apostle's role is to "bring the measuring line to church life to see if it matches up to biblical standards."⁵⁸⁴ Virgo believes the apostle is "able to bring objectivity to his appraisal of a local church's condition."⁵⁸⁵ For Jones, apostles will "continuously measure the life and testimony of God's people" against their revelation of Christ and, where necessary, will bring judgment so as to put things in order.⁵⁸⁶ In this regard, Coombs describes the type of 'apostolic reviews' undertaken within his network to ensure churches are well-built,⁵⁸⁷ and Devenish similarly enumerates the foundational teachings he lays down.⁵⁸⁸

It will certainly *not* be the case that the apostle fulfils the primary *teaching function* in the church: that is seen as the complementary ministry of the teacher, who will build upon the apostolic foundation.⁵⁸⁹

2. Architects

The 'master-builder' motif (1Co 3:10) is important for the Restorationists, indicating the apostle's grasp of the 'big picture' of God's purpose, and his wisdom in deploying other ministries to help fulfil it. Jones believes:

Today's apostle has the complete picture of what is being built and the overall strategy for building it. And into this programme others with God-given ministry gifts fit with their own contributions.⁵⁹⁰

The apostle is seen to act as a 'catalyst' for others,⁵⁹¹ or to use Jones's term "the hub of a wheel" whose foundation-laying gives others clear ground on which to build.⁵⁹² Johnson's colleagues see apostles as having the "blueprints" to reproduce Heaven on the earth, together with an anointing that "stimulates and

⁵⁸⁴ Virgo, *Spirit-Filled Church*, 153.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid., 149.

⁵⁸⁶ Jones, *Radical Church*, 126, 127.

⁵⁸⁷ Coombs, *Apostles Today*, 176-183.

⁵⁸⁸ Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, 94-156.

⁵⁸⁹ Cf. Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, 45.

⁵⁹⁰ Jones, "Apostles Today – For Tomorrow's Church", 33.

⁵⁹¹ This term is used frequently in the Restorationist literature.

⁵⁹² Jones, "Apostles Today – For Tomorrow's Church", 34

draws to the surface the diverse anointings in the people around them" so as to create "an environment of 'sub-contractors' who help the 'master builder' to realize the blueprints of Heaven."⁵⁹³

Wallis saw the apostle's role as recognizing and bringing forth into maturity the prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers,⁵⁹⁴ and Coombs insists we simply *will not have* many prophets and evangelists functioning unless we allow apostles to make room for them.⁵⁹⁵ In our own experience within Jones's circle, numerous proven ministries have been developed, recognised and released as a result of the apostolic gift.

3. Apostolic Teams

This leads to a consideration of 'apostolic teams' (a concept derived principally from a reading of Paul's relationships with his many colleagues), usually understood to be *functional* and *flexible*.⁵⁹⁶ Many benefits are noted: Virgo suggests apostles are delivered "from the snare of individualism";⁵⁹⁷ Jones similarly sees apostolic teams as guarding against excess and imbalance, and saving an apostle from "emerging as a lone figure of ultimate authority";⁵⁹⁸ Devenish highlight the sharing of wisdom and gifting, together with accountability and companionship;⁵⁹⁹ and Silk adds a pastoral dimension, pointing out that, since apostles should rightly focus on prayer and the Word, they must function alongside the other fivefold ministries in order to avoid "a noticeable inattention to the needs of the people".⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹³ Silk, *Culture of Honor*, 62.

⁵⁹⁴ Wallis, *Radical Christian*, 183.

⁵⁹⁵ Coombs, *Apostles Today*, 80-82. His point is that *pastors* often find prophets and evangelists too challenging to work with!

⁵⁹⁶ Cf. Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, 218; Virgo, *Spirit-Filled Church*, 154.

⁵⁹⁷ Terry Virgo, "The Apostle is No 'Optional Extra,'" *Restoration*, Nov/Dec, 1981, 12.

⁵⁹⁸ Jones, "Apostles – Do They Measure Up?", 104.

⁵⁹⁹ Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, 221f.

⁶⁰⁰ Silk, *Culture of Honor*, 64.

At the heart of the team is the partnership between *apostle and prophet*. Jones believes they must “function in tandem”, in planting and building churches.⁶⁰¹ Silk suggests both “are looking into Heaven and recreating what they see there on the earth. They should work together like a bow and arrow seeking the same goals.”⁶⁰²

Coombs advocates broad, mixed teams (of gender and age), based on loyalty, zeal, servanthood, self-discipline, endurance and humility,⁶⁰³ and observes “nothing brings more discredit upon an apostolic team than when members have a haughty spirit.”⁶⁰⁴ In his critique, Kay credits Coombs with the “notion of the spiritual fatherhood of the apostle and the spiritual sonship of many of his team.”⁶⁰⁵ Coombs believes a “true father” will: invest his life in his spiritual sons (never ‘using’ them); express his “unqualified approbation” to them; consistently pray for them; and allow them to make mistakes.⁶⁰⁶ Devenish concurs, but highlights an important caution:

One danger in emphasizing a fathering ministry, and the need to train others to go on our behalf, is that apostolic ministry can become unwittingly hierarchical...An apostle should never simply become the ‘head of an organization’, supervising others with apostolic calling. Apostolic ministry is always, to a large extent, a hands-on ministry.⁶⁰⁷

We will return to the issue of spiritual sons in 3.4 below, but in the meantime we again note the risk of hierarchies developing.

There is an important test of apostolic *authenticity* in all this, for as Jones rightly says: “a true apostle is not only a commissioned man but also a ‘related’ man, working alongside men with other ministry gifts in mutual submission under

⁶⁰¹ Jones, “Apostles and Prophets”, 110.

⁶⁰² Silk, *Culture of Honor*, 67.

⁶⁰³ See Coombs, *Apostles Today*, 94-114. Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, 228f offers similar criteria

⁶⁰⁴ Coombs, *Apostles Today*, 112.

⁶⁰⁵ Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 246.

⁶⁰⁶ Coombs, *Apostles Today*, 124-130.

⁶⁰⁷ Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, 79.

God.”⁶⁰⁸ In this regard, Keri Jones believes there must be a forum of peers where an apostle can submit his doctrine and revelation for evaluation by others (cf. Gal 2:1ff);⁶⁰⁹ this would guard against independence and protect unity across apostolic spheres.

3.3.4 APOSTLESHP AND POIMENICS

Lastly, we ask how apostolic models are outworking *pastoral care* in the church.

1. Fatherly Care, through Elders

It is clear from the biblical evidence that apostles not only plant churches but remain intensely concerned about the *ongoing* wellbeing of believers (2Co 11:28). However, since the apostle is a ‘sent’ ministry, his ongoing care is exercised largely through *local* leaders, appointed for that purpose (Ac 6:3, 14:23, Tit 1:5).⁶¹⁰ Thus, Virgo describes apostles as those “who know their prime calling is no longer to one particular local work...but to the church at large”, and who “begin to develop a care for the churches – plural.”⁶¹¹ The appointing of elders is therefore a vital aspect of foundation-laying, and a mark of “fatherly care”.⁶¹² Cannistraci believes apostles “will regularly ordain elders and deacons to rule and serve” in the churches.⁶¹³ Once again, teamwork is essential.

How are elders appointed? In our experience, suitable men are identified (by the apostle, with any existing elders) using the Pauline criteria,⁶¹⁴ and a

⁶⁰⁸ Jones, “Apostles – Do They Measure Up?”, 104.

⁶⁰⁹ Keri Jones, discussion with author, 15th May 2012.

⁶¹⁰ We take “them” to be the people, not the apostles.

⁶¹¹ Virgo, *Spirit-Filled Church*, 154f.

⁶¹² *Ibid.*, 150.

⁶¹³ Cannistraci, *Apostles*, 102.

⁶¹⁴ 1Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9.

proposal put *to the whole church* for their consideration;⁶¹⁵ if it meets with their approval, the new elders are commissioned by the apostle (with prophets), with prayer and the laying on of hands.

It is a moot point whether an apostle's *authority* towards a church ceases after elders are appointed. In some networks, the apostle retains ultimate authority and responsibility;⁶¹⁶ in others, he hands it to the elders, but retains a 'consultative' role, effectively a pastor to pastors.⁶¹⁷ It seems to us, however, that the biblical evidence favours a continuing relationally-based apostolic authority into churches, exercised in *partnership* with local elders.

2. Further Expressions of Care

After the appointment of elders, an apostle will also continue to exercise meaningful personal care by, for example: praying regularly for the church; "confront[ing] powers of darkness" that would attack them;⁶¹⁸ and remembering the poor, perhaps by meeting financial needs (Devenish regards this as "central to their ministry" and provides some helpful practical guidelines).⁶¹⁹

To summarise, in this section we have considered the approach of the new apostolic models to the fundamental 'tasks of the church'. The apostle is seen as: a *church-planter*, seeking to involve everyone in the mission; a *father*, laying a foundation of stability and identity; an *equipper*, establishing a doctrinal base and involving other ministries in the building; and again as a *father* with a caring concern for many churches, partly expressed through others in each

⁶¹⁵ This must not be to 'rubber-stamp' a decision already made. That said, proposals that do *not* meet with the approval of the whole church should certainly raise concerns regarding the judgment of those making them.

⁶¹⁶ Eg, in the CMI, Sovereign Grace and Salt & Light networks (cf. Jones, "Questions and Answers", Aubrey, "Apostles Today", 206; 14-15; Harvey, *Polity*, 25; Coombs, *Apostles Today*, 196f).

⁶¹⁷ Eg, in the Newfrontiers network (cf. Virgo, *A People Prepared*, 165; Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, 181).

⁶¹⁸ Jones, *Radical Church*, 126.

⁶¹⁹ Devenish, *Fathering Leaders*, 54 and see his practical outworking in ch. 15.

locality. The key to understanding this apostolic approach is appreciating the role of the apostle *in conjunction with* the other ministries. *Together*, they are equippers. The apostle cannot, does not and *should not* personally undertake all the tasks; he is part of a team, mobilising others more gifted than himself in many of these things. Where there is an imbalanced focus on the apostle, hierarchies and personalities can easily come to the fore.

3.4 APOSTOLIC ‘SUCCESSION’

Finally, we consider the issue of ‘succession’ in the new apostolic models. This is particularly pertinent for the Restoration group because many of the founding apostles are now in, or approaching, their seventies. What happens to the churches under their oversight and care when they are no longer in ministry? How do apostolic groups avoid stagnation after the death of a charismatic founder?

3.4.1 THE CHALLENGES IN CONTEXT

The challenges are as follows:

- (i) Restorationists do not believe in ‘apostolic succession’ in any episcopal sense. Apostleship is seen as a gift, so there can be no ‘succession plan’ to determine who will fill a vacant office.
- (ii) The concept of a ‘successor’ is equally difficult: since apostolic spheres function on the basis of personal relationships, it is difficult for an apostle to ‘hand over’ to another man with whom elders and churches do not have the same relationship.

- (iii) Apostleship is a *personal* gift and commission, which, by definition, *cannot* be passed on. When an apostle has completed his commission his work is done.
- (iv) Historically and sociologically, many ‘new’ groups (Christian or otherwise) experience the ‘routinisation of charisma’ as leadership passes to second- and third-generations.⁶²⁰

3.4.2 EMERGING APOSTLES

The new models expect that because of the ongoing *necessity* of the gift for the church, the ascended Christ *will continue to give it*. The onus is on existing apostles to recognise and release emerging men (cf. 3.1.1 above), who will probably function initially as apostolic *delegates* before beginning to “emerge carrying *their own* sense of calling and gifting, again gathering around themselves apostolic teams that could multiply ministry.”⁶²¹ For Keri Jones, an apostle’s true fulfillment comes from seeing sons emerge who imbibe his message and take it forward with continuing revelation; such men will serve an ‘apprenticeship’ alongside a mature apostle.⁶²² Likewise, Coombs believes that when an emerging apostolic gift is seen, a “fathering apostle” should invest time alongside the emerging man so that an “apprenticing” can take place.⁶²³

The way ahead, then, is not seen in ever-expanding apostolic spheres, nor in necessarily seeking to maintain those which currently exist, but rather in *many more* apostles, with their own commission and sphere, each recognizing and

⁶²⁰ Sociologist Max Weber’s term to describe the process by which after the death of a founding ‘charismatic’ leader (one whose authority and following derives from his gifting), his followers feel obliged to find ways of perpetuating and staying faithful to the ‘charisma’, and do so by developing rational, bureaucratic and democratic structures. Weber’s principle is developed in *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: Free Press, 1964).

⁶²¹ Virgo, *Spirit-Filled Church*, 156 (italics mine).

⁶²² Keri Jones, discussions with author, 15th May 2012.

⁶²³ Coombs, *Apostles Today*, 209.

respecting each other's ministries and working and relating openly with each other.

Virgo's 'Newfrontiers' network offers a timely case study. Virgo's apostolic sphere has expanded greatly over the last thirty years, and with it the emergence and recognition of other apostolic ministries who have been encouraged to develop their own spheres within the overall network.⁶²⁴ Newfrontiers therefore now comprises several related apostolic spheres, with each apostle regarding Virgo as a 'father'. The combined Newfrontiers 'family' currently consists of around 800 churches in over 60 nations. Virgo has rejected the notion of a "successor" on both theological and pragmatic grounds (it would effectively 'turn the clock back').⁶²⁵ Instead he has allowed his network to transition into "multiplied apostolic spheres who plan to work together interdependently".⁶²⁶ Whether the various apostles *will* continue to work together remains to be seen, but as Virgo explains:

It would be my hope that the title and the corporate life of *Newfrontiers* will live on, but it's more important that apostolic spheres emerge, and that churches are in dynamic partnership with apostolic advance. *Newfrontiers* as a name could fade away...but it's so much more important that apostles emerge, vitally engaging with churches that know they are on apostolic mission together.

In summary, then, the new models expect the Chief Apostle to continue giving the gift of apostleship, and will seek to develop an environment where such gifts can be recognised and released.

⁶²⁴ As Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 79 observes, "Virgo's apostolic gifts have been used to produce other apostolic gifts and apostolic teams".

⁶²⁵ Terry Virgo, "The Future of Newfrontiers, Part 2." *Newfrontiers Magazine*. Vol 3, Issue 15 (April-June 2010), 27.

⁶²⁶ Virgo, Terry, "Newfrontiers Redefined: Transition into Multiplication", Available from http://www.terryvirgo.org./.../Transition_Into_Multiplication_Newfrontiers_Redefined.aspx Internet; accessed 3rd February 2012.

3.5 SUMMARY

In this section we have examined ways in which some of the contemporary models of apostleship are expressing their ecclesiology. Our scope has been necessarily limited. Nevertheless, we now summarise our findings as follows:

1. The new models are mostly aware of the biblical marks of apostleship and patterns of recognition, and are committed to authenticity in outworking these things. Recognition of a genuine apostolic gift and commission is by other apostles, affirmed by the church: apostolic character and ‘fruit’ will be clearly visible. It is essential that ‘collegial’ principles are upheld; apostles must be recognised by a *body* of others. We have also found evidence, however, of institutionalism (notions of an apostolic *office*), which must be vigorously challenged.
2. Apostolic authority is understood as being spiritual, constructive, real and, above all, *relational*; it functions within an apostle’s sphere on the basis of warm and informal relationships. However, we are concerned by any *over-emphasis* on authority, which we do not find in the biblical evidence.
3. Effective accountability is essential, and our concern here would be that the practice matches the principles; in particular it seems gatherings or ‘forums’ of apostolic peers are vital for accountability, and also for maintaining integrity of doctrine. Again, a collegial approach is necessary.
4. Apostolic spheres (‘networks’) offer a biblical pattern for apostolic oversight and care, and a means of involving local churches in the wider apostolic mission. We are concerned by any secular ‘networking’ notions, however. Biblical spheres were relational and purposeful, not organisational or merely ‘beneficial’; our appeal is that apostles mobilise

those in their networks towards the biblical goal of planting and building churches. A true apostle will form an apostolic people, who engage with him in the wider mission.

5. To some extent, the new models represent a new approach to the tasks of practical theology. The apostle is less of a preacher, liturgy-setter, teacher and carer; and more of a church-planter, community-founder, equipper and father. The tasks are completed, but in the apostolic model the apostle is a catalyst for *others* to play their part; apostles function effectively only as part of a team. Thus the goal of Ephesians 4:16 comes into view.
6. The predominant motif throughout these practical matters is that of the apostle as *father*, which faithfully reflects the biblical evidence. We have found no evidence of apostles functioning in a way that is self-serving, domineering or authoritarian.
7. However, there is a real danger of hierarchies developing within the new models. To avoid this, it is vital that the emphasis shifts from a focus on *apostles* (as needful as that has been) to a balanced emphasis on *all of the fivefold* gifts, and this in the context of the giftedness of the whole church. Problems arise where the focus is on *apostolic* ministry, rather than on the *fivefold* ministries.
8. The new models face 'succession' issues with confidence, believing the ascended Christ is continually giving the gift of apostleship. Emerging men should serve an apprenticeship within another man's sphere, functioning as apostolic delegates before fully emerging in their own gift and commission.

PART 4

CONCLUSIONS

PART 4: CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has been concerned with biblically authentic apostolic ministry. We have: taken extensive evidence from the NT; considered alternative ecclesiological models and perspectives; and undertaken a review of some contemporary expressions of apostleship. We refer to the summaries at 1.4, 2.4 and 3.5 above, and now present some conclusions:

1. Moved with compassion for the lost, Jesus sent out the Twelve on their first apostolic mission. They went as his representatives, an extension of his own ministry, with authority to proclaim and demonstrate the coming kingdom (Mt 9:35-10:8). This sets the proper context for all subsequent apostolic ministry.
2. After his ascension, Jesus commissioned other apostles, and Paul makes clear that this will continue until Christ returns (Eph 4:11-13). The Chief Apostle is continually expressing his grace to the church and his compassion to the world, by giving apostles who will continue his ministry and mission.
3. Apostleship and mission are therefore interwoven: apostleship cannot be understood separately from mission; and the mission cannot be accomplished without apostles. Apostleship is a function, a 'job-description', and has inherently eschatological dimensions. Notions of apostolicity or methods of mission that deny an extant apostolic ministry *cannot* effectively fulfil the task; the mission requires apostles. If we see the church as charismatically formed and gifted, and existing for the Great Commission, we will see the need for apostles.
4. Authentic apostles are humble, gentle, compassionate, accountable, interdependent, and persevering. They have been commissioned by Christ, and their gift and call has been recognised and confirmed by other

apostles. They have been affirmed and set apart by the churches, and there is no shortage of clearly observable evidence of the fruit of their ministry. They serve Christ, his church and his mission. They do not wear their gift as a badge, and they remain entirely dependent upon and indebted to the grace of God. They are good stewards of the mysteries of Christ; they plant and build churches carefully and wisely, with a clear sense of the order and glory of the finished work. They function like fathers, a motif that provides the most helpful way of understanding their relationships with churches and leaders, and their exercise of authority.

5. Historic attempts to restore apostolic ministry have typically floundered due to an institutionalising of the ministry, together with the attendant hierarchies and authoritarianism. We are optimistic that many of the current 'new' models will succeed, but the pitfalls must be robustly avoided: authentic apostleship knows nothing of hierarchy or authoritarianism. A vital safeguard will be an emphasis on the fivefold ministries as a whole, and on the value and diversity of gifts in the church as a whole. Authentic apostles know they cannot succeed alone and they prize teamwork.
6. In this regard, we see a need for forums where apostles meet together as peers, for the purposes of prayer, dialogue, encouragement and accountability. In these settings, revelation and doctrine can be submitted to others, aiding orthodoxy and consistency across apostolic spheres. Commitment by apostles to a collegial approach is essential: this must include honouring and respecting each other's spheres, sharing together in the recognition of emerging apostles, and drawing on each other's gifts. When apostles interact in these ways, the body of Christ will benefit from a more complete manifestation of her Chief Apostle.

7. The continuing emergence of new apostles gives us great hope, enabling the 'new' models to thrive in subsequent generations. Existing apostles must invest in the apprenticing of such men, making space for them to serve alongside them as 'delegates', whilst their call and commission comes into full focus. As such men emerge, new apostolic spheres will develop in due course.
8. Throughout all this, the success of the new models will also depend upon a commitment to mission and church-planting; the Great Commission must forever be at the fore. Authentic apostles are moved with compassion for the lost and the plight of the poor; they are consumed with the goal of proclaiming Christ, building well, presenting everyone mature in Christ, extending their sphere into unreached areas, and mobilising the whole church to play its part in making disciples.

It is our prayer that such an apostleship will emerge throughout the church and across the nations: men who live for the singular purpose of fulfilling a divine commission and bringing honour to the Chief Apostle and Lord of the harvest:

When He saw the throngs, He was moved with pity and sympathy for them, because they were bewildered (harassed and distressed and dejected and helpless), like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is indeed plentiful, but the laborers are few. So pray to the Lord of the harvest to force out *and* thrust laborers into His harvest.' Matthew 9:36-38, Amp.

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