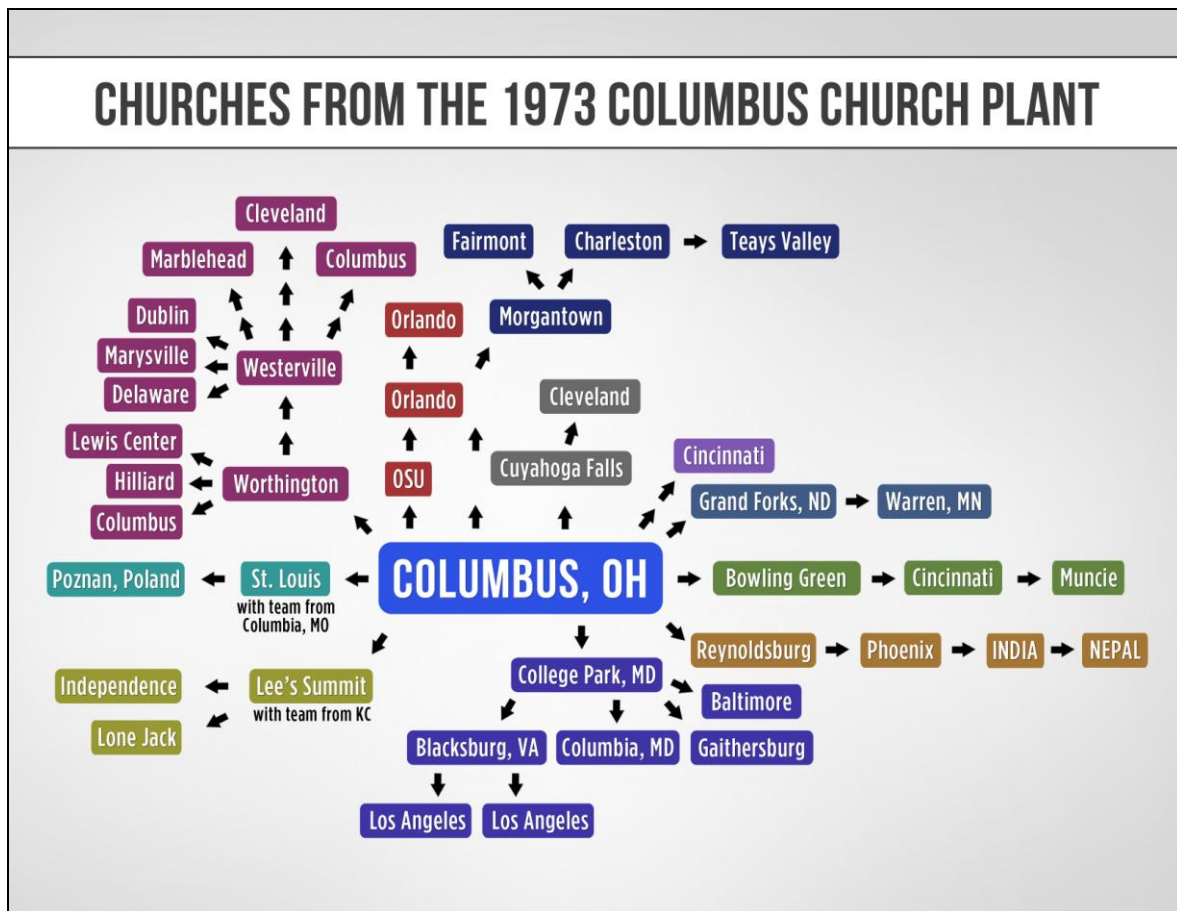


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**GCLI PAPER—SPRING 2016**  
**A GCC DISCUSSION OF EPHESIANS 4:11-13**

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**NOTE:** *This paper is a “For Discussion Purposes Only” paper. After discussing it at a regional level, I anticipate that more edits will be made to this paper before it is printed in final form for the GCLI Foundations material.*

**INTRODUCTION** A few years ago I wrote a paper on “Great Commission Pastoring.” That paper described the Great Commission church in Columbus, Ohio during the 1970s which went on to plant many churches, as shown below:



That paper described many of the qualities of that church, including:

- \*A love for Christ rooted in the grace of God;
- \*A devotion to obey God’s word;
- \*A zeal for evangelism; and
- \*Following the New Testament pattern of raising up elders within the church.

But there was one other factor worth highlighting. ***The church was led by a group of men who exhibited a diversity of spiritual gifts.*** Some of the elders excelled in evangelism. Others were prophetic speakers and excellent teachers. And some had an apostolic/missionary gifting that stirred members to be devoted to the Great Commission. In reflecting on those years, I am reminded of what the Apostle Paul wrote to the saints in Ephesus as he described the building of Christ's church:

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

The Columbus church exhibited the diversity of the gifts described in Ephesians 4:11. This was one of the key factors that led to the tremendous growth that occurred over the past forty years.

### **The Purpose of this Paper**

This GCLI paper is focused on the five gifts identified in Ephesians 4:11. Other GCC papers have addressed some of the gifts described in this verse. For example, the GCLI paper on "The Local Church and National Ministries" by John Hopler discussed the apostolic gift; the evangelist gifting was addressed in a GCLI paper "New Testament Evangelism in Action Today" by Tom Short; and the elder-pastor gift was the focus of the book "New Testament Leadership in Action Today" by Brent Knox and John Hopler. However, we in GCC have never devoted an entire paper to Ephesians 4:11 that focused on all five of the gifts described in this verse. Our desire is that God will raise up more Ephesians 4:11 leaders in GCC churches so that we may be more effective in fulfilling the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.

## ***QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON EPHESIANS 4:11-13***

### ***1. Why study this topic of Ephesians 4:11-13?***

There are at least four reasons to study Ephesians 4:11-13. First, as a movement of churches we are committed to put "New Testament Christianity in Action Today." Ephesians 4:11-13 is a central passage in the New Testament about the functioning of God's church. The more we practice the truths taught in this New Testament passage, the more effective we will be as leaders in building Christ's church and in advancing the gospel.

Second, there are many perspectives about Ephesians 4:11-13 among Christians today. Each perspective reflects the core values and beliefs of the people who promote that particular perspective. For example, groups that believe in women elders or who do not put an emphasis on the GCC core values will have a different approach towards Ephesians 4:11-13 than we do in GCC. One purpose of this paper is to give an explanation of Ephesians 4:11-13 through the lens of the Biblically based core values that we believe and practice in GCC.

Third, as Romans 12:1-8 teaches, there is a correlation between walking in the will of God and walking in our giftedness. As leaders identify their gifts and operate within those gifts—and as they are affirmed in those gifts—they will be more encouraged and more fruitful in building the kingdom of God. Also, understanding the Ephesians 4:11 gifts will help us make wiser ministry decisions. For example, if a church has only one or two of the Ephesians 4:11 effects present in the church, the pastors might consider some practical ways to bring in the other Ephesians 4:11 effects. Also, our understanding of Ephesians 4:11 could affect strategic decisions. For example, a pastor who wants to plant a church is different than a person with an apostolic effect. If the goal is to establish a new GCC region in the U.S. or overseas it would be wiser to send someone with an apostolic effect, not merely a pastor who desires to plant a church.

Fourth, Ephesians 4:11-13 teaches us that gifted leaders are to equip the saints for the work of service. Part of this equipping is to train and mobilize other Ephesians 4:11 leaders. I believe that within any given local church there are people with latent gifting that God wants to develop. We in GCC want to lead with “all wisdom” (Colossians 1:28) so that people are made complete in Christ, fully developed in their maturity and in their gifting. As we understand Ephesians 4:11-13, we will be better equipped to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in His work in people’s lives.

## ***2. Do all the Ephesians 4:11 gifts exist today?***

As will be explained later in this paper, pastors in GCC would answer this question differently. Some believe all five gifted individuals exist in the church today (as defined below in Question 3). Others believe that the “apostles and prophets” in Ephesians 4:11 refer to individuals during the first century only. However, there seems to be a consensus in GCC that whether or not all 5 of the Ephesians 4:11 gifted individuals exist today in the church, there is a need for leaders and others in the church to have the five-fold effect described in Ephesians 4:11. For example, some would not think that the gift of apostle exists today. But they would affirm that some in the church today have a leadership gift to oversee a network of churches or to go out as a missionary to start churches. The primary purpose of this paper is not to resolve these differences but to address some practical ways to bring the 5-fold Ephesians 4:11 effect to churches today.

## ***3. What is a short summary definition of the five gifts as applied today?***

Apostolic gifting/effect: A fruitful missionary or leader of a network of churches

Prophetic gifting/effect: One who communicates God’s present-moment message

Evangelist: One who shares (or equips others to share) the gospel of Jesus Christ

Pastor: One who shepherds/cares for Christians in Christ’s church

Teacher: One who explains the Scriptures

From the standpoint of “responsibility”:

Leaders with apostolic effect are responsible to expand and build a church network

Leaders with prophetic effect are responsible to speak a particular message from God

Evangelists are responsible to share the gospel with unbelievers

Pastors are responsible to shepherd specific people in Christ’s church

Teachers are responsible to faithfully explain the Scriptures and urge their application

**4. Are the individuals referred to in Ephesians 4:11 the leaders of the church or are they individuals scattered throughout the church who have influencing gifts?**

Historically we in GCC have leaned towards the view that the Ephesians 4:11 individuals are leaders of the church for several reasons:

1. The passage itself describes a group in the church who are equipping the whole body for the work of service. This would strongly indicate that these were leaders in the church.
2. The example in Acts 13:1 is of “prophets and teachers” in the church who were praying and sending out Paul and Barnabas as missionaries. The sense from this passage is that the prophets and teachers were leading the church.
3. The term “pastor” is used in Ephesians 4:11. Because elders are referred to as those who shepherd or “pastor” the church (1 Peter. 5:1-2), it would strongly suggest that these are the leaders in the church.

A different view is that Ephesians 4:11 is referring to men and women, leaders and non-leaders, who have apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoring and teaching gifts and who are using their gifts in a variety of ministries in local churches and in the universal body of Christ. They claim that Ephesians 4:11 is highlighting the primary (although not all) speaking gifts described in 1 Peter 4:10-12:

*“As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”*

This view notes that the 1 Peter 4:11 exhortation to employ their speaking gifts was made to all Christians in the church and not just to leaders. Similarly, they argue, Ephesians 4:11 is referring to Christians—leaders and non-leaders, men and women—who use these five primary speaking gifts to build up the church.

Bottom line, both views of Ephesians 4:11 are shared by pastors in GCC. While this paper is not taking a stand on either of these two views, because this GCLI paper is written to leaders, the primary emphasis of this paper is on equipping church leaders in their Ephesians 4:11 gifts and in developing new Ephesians 4:11 leaders.

**5. In light of these two perspectives of Ephesians 4:11, what is the consensus in GCC regarding Ephesians 4:11?**

Regardless of which interpretation of Ephesians 4:11 is correct, there is basic consensus in GCC on these five points:

First, everyone affirms that gifting without character leads to chaos. Humility, love, obeying God, and spiritual maturity is a priority, regardless of whether Ephesians 4:11 refers to the leaders in the church or to non-leaders.

Second, for the church to function well, there needs to be designated leaders with designated authority. Those leaders are called elders (Philippians 1:1).

Third, only men are to be appointed as elders in the local church. As 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:12 teaches, women are not to teach or exercise authority over men. This practice

values the physical family as the basic community and basic discipleship unit in the church, with men being the servant-leaders and spiritual authorities in the home, under Jesus Christ. If women become elders in a church, it will ultimately weaken the authority of men in the home and will ultimately undermine the family.

Fourth, non-leaders do have influencing and speaking gifts. Throughout church history, God sends out members in the church on His mission, not just apostolic leaders. The prophetic effect (as defined later in this paper) is available to the body at large, not just to the leaders. God has used many members to lead others to Christ. Many non-leaders provide pastoral care to each other. And all members are called to teach each other.

Fifth, both men and women have speaking gifts that God wants them to use within Biblical guidelines. Evangelical Christians generally agree that God raises up women who are sent as missionaries, who speak prophetically (as defined later in this paper) like Philip's daughters (Acts 21:9), women who communicate the gospel to the lost, who provide pastoral care to people and who teach other women (Titus 2:5).

#### ***6. Is there a difference between “gift” and “office”?***

Yes. An elder is responsible for the oversight of a particular local church. As will be discussed later, one definition of an apostle is someone who has a responsibility to provide oversight for a particular network of churches (i.e. a “bishop” in a church association.) Thus Paul had a “*daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches*” 2 *Corinthians 11:28*.

It is noteworthy that when the issue of circumcision was discussed in Acts 15, Luke continually refers to “apostles and elders” as leading this process (15:2,4,6,22,23; 16:4). This suggests that these men had spiritual authority to work through this doctrinal issue. In contrast, the Ephesians 4:11 gifts may not necessarily be referring to “authority” positions but to “ministry” roles.

#### ***7. Can leaders have more than one Ephesians 4:11 gift?***

Absolutely. We know from the 1 Timothy 2:7 that Paul was an apostle, an evangelist and a teacher. Silas had both an apostolic gift (1 Thessalonians 2:6) and a prophetic gift (Acts 15:32). In the chart below, many of the leaders named have other gifts besides the one mentioned.

One other observation: At the beginning of a new work (a new church, a new church association or a new ministry) it is common for God to raise up an individual who has multiple gifts. Then, as that work becomes more established, the Lord will add in leaders who have a more singular gifting.

#### ***8. Can those with gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11 have a ministry in more than one local church?***

Certainly. A person who is apostolic would typically have a ministry beyond a local church. But it also true that individuals with a prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral or teaching gift could have a ministry that requires travelling outside one local church. Others might focus on one church exclusively.

**9. Can you give examples of past and present day Ephesians 4:11 leaders?**

Gift	NT Example	Church History	Present Day	GCC???
Apostolic gifting or effect	Peter, Paul, James, Timothy	Wesley; Booth; All who started denominations; Hudson Taylor	NAE denominational leaders; Ying Kai	
Prophetic gifting or effect	Silas (Acts 15:32); Agabus (Acts 21:10) Antioch leaders (Acts 13:1)	Luther; Tozer; Wilberforce	Franklin Graham; Piper Francis Chan Hybels Cymbala	
Evangelist	Philip; Timothy	Whitefield; Moody; Bright	Billy Graham; Rick Warren; Josh McDowell	
Pastor	Philemon; Aquila	All church pastors-- countless examples	All church pastors-- Countless examples	
Teacher	Paul, Apollos Antioch leaders (Acts 13:1)	Calvin; Spurgeon; Nee	MacArthur; Stanley	

**10. How is the word “apostle” used in the Scriptures?**

The word “apostle” simply means “sent one.” The term is used in a general way to describe a “messenger” or any one who is sent on a mission (2 Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25). However, the word “apostle” is primarily used in the Bible to describe the original disciples of Christ (the Twelve) as well as the Apostle Paul and James and a few others in the New Testament.

**11. How were the original apostles in the New Testament unique?**

They were unique in that there were “apostles of Jesus Christ.” There were “sent ones” from Jesus Christ Himself rather than “sent ones from a church” or “ones sent by the Holy Spirit.” That uniqueness was shown in several ways:

First, the original Apostles had seen Jesus Christ after He had risen from the dead (Acts 1:22, 26; 1 Corinthians 9:1).

Second, the original Apostles had a special authority from Jesus Christ in laying the foundation of the Church (Ephesians 2:20).

Third, the original Apostles were given unique miraculous powers to testify that their message was from God (2 Corinthians 12:12).

Finally, many of the apostles of Jesus Christ (such as Peter, John, Paul, James and Matthew) had a special role in that they were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write portions of the Scriptures.

## ***12. Does this mean that there are no apostles today?***

There are certainly no apostles today like those in the first century. However, some distinguish between “foundational” apostles (first century apostles) and “functional” apostles (modern day apostolic workers). This view acknowledges that the first century “foundational apostles” were unique in that God gave them the ability to perform signs, wonders and miracles. But this view argues that this ability was unique to the time period not to the apostles, noting that Stephen performed signs wonders and miracles even though he was not an apostle (Acts 6:8). They point to 1 Thessalonians 2:6 where Paul refers to himself and Silas (and perhaps Timothy) as apostles. Also they think that Ephesians 4:11 refers to both kinds of apostolic workers. Their basis is Ephesians 4:13 which suggests that these gifted leaders are given until the completion of the church: *“until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”*

On the other hand, some think that the word “apostle” in Ephesians 4:11 refers only to the foundational apostles. They point to Ephesians 2:20: *“having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.”* This verse, they say, shows that the apostles were necessary for laying the foundation of the church, before the Scriptures were given and the canon was closed. According to this view, the sign of an apostle for all ages (not just the first century) is to perform signs, wonders and miracles (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:4). But now that these miraculous gifts have ceased and now that the foundation of the gospel has been laid, “apostles” as defined in this way are no longer present. (See the Addendum for a further explanation of this view.)

Concerning these two views of Ephesians 4:11, in the early 1980’s Great Commission International published some material that took the position that the word “apostles” in Ephesians 4:11 refers to both foundational apostles and to modern day “functional” apostolic workers like missionaries and bishops in church associations. However, over the last 30 years, GCC has not taken a strong position on this issue.

At a pragmatic level, we do not think that it is important to resolve this issue. Did God intend the word “apostle” in Ephesians 4:11 to refer to missionaries and other modern day leaders who have an apostolic effect? We cannot be certain. (This is one of the questions we will ask the Lord when we see Him in heaven!) But we don’t think this issue needs to be resolved in order for Christ’s church to effectively function in its mission to make disciples of all the nations

Regardless of which view a person adopts, there is a united view in GCC (and in most evangelical churches) that there are no apostles today like there were in the first century, who have the four unique characteristics described in Question #11 above. Evangelicals agree that the New Testament canon is closed. The work that the first century apostles did in establishing and codifying the gospel message of Jesus Christ is complete. However, Christians generally affirm that there are missionaries and other leaders today who have a God-given ministry that functions in ways similar to that of the first century apostles.

### ***13. What are some examples of a modern day leaders with an apostolic effect?***

There are two primary examples. First, there are missionaries (or cross-cultural workers) who are gifted to leave their culture to expand the church by reaching a new people group. These workers go out to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, plant churches and start church planting movements in new areas of the world. The church has affirmed this type of worker throughout the past 2000 years.

Second, just as the first century apostles were servant leaders to a network of churches, there are many today who serve networks of churches, and not just one local church. Consider the words of Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ:

*“Though we do not have people who could claim to be apostles in the original sense—those who had been eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:22,26)—today we would have those who may function much like an apostle... to give leadership to a number of churches and to show supernatural wisdom and authority in spiritual matters that relate to those churches” (The Holy Spirit, Thomas Nelson Publishers, [1980], p.214).*

Today, those with this gifting are operating in various ministries, denominations and church networks. Their title might be bishop, district superintendent, conference minister, or regional director. Throughout church history, the word “bishop” has commonly been chosen to describe this role, based in part on a word found in Acts 1:20. When Matthias was selected to replace Judas as part of the Twelve, Peter says *“Let another take his office [literally, ‘overseership’].”* The English word “bishop” comes from this word. In GCC, the term “regional ministry director” has been used to describe this kind of worker. Regardless of the title, the nature of the ministry is the same.

### ***14. Are there different types of ministries that have this apostolic effect?***

Yes. As taught in 1 Corinthians 12: 4-6, there are a variety of gifts, ministries and effects. Therefore, those who have a gifting to do work as missionaries or as leaders in a network of churches (as with any of the gifts) will have a variety of ministries and effects. Some with this gifting are catalytic and entrepreneurial while others are more pastoral. For example, those who are at the beginning stage of a church movement will typically be more catalytic and evangelistic while the second generation of leaders will tend to be more pastoral. We see this in Jerusalem in the Book of Acts with Peter (who was catalytic and evangelistic) taking a more prominent role in the early chapters while James (who was more pastoral) was more prominent in the later chapters.

### ***15. Can apostolic leaders and workers stay focused on one church in one city?***

Yes. Some with this gifting may be more mobile while others may be more stationery. For example, while Paul travelled from city to city, planting churches James (who is called an apostle in Galatians 1:19) seemed to have a ministry focused on the ever-expanding church in Jerusalem. This is similar to many pastors who stay in one locale and focus on multiplying churches throughout that city. (Multi-congregational churches usually have at least one elder with an apostolic gifting, defined in this way)

Marital status and other factors will determine the nature of a man’s ministry. Paul’s being single certainly freed him up to be more mobile in his apostolic ministry.



#### **16. What about using the term “apostle”?**

We in GCC do not use the term “apostle” because of its connotation today. The term “apostle” is usually associated with the original twelve Apostles or with those who have a super authority in churches or with those who claim authority equal to the Scriptures (none of which we believe exist today).

That being said, we still recognize (as Bill Bright and many others have recognized) that there are leaders in our day who have been sent out as missionaries or who have a multi-church ministry comparable to what Paul, Timothy, and Barnabas had 2000 years ago. Without such a gifting, how else would Jesus Christ accomplish His goal of fulfilling the Great Commission?

In seeking to emulate the New Testament apostles, we do so, not in a spirit of arrogance, but in a spirit of humility and servanthood. Our movement began in 1970 with the vision of “New Testament Christianity in Action Today.” We earnestly desire to fulfill the New Testament mission by following the New Testament pattern. In humility, we don’t want to act on our own initiative. We do not want to pursue a ministry path based on tradition or pragmatism. Instead we want to submit ourselves to what the Scriptures teach and to humbly learn from the leaders in the New Testament.

*“All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16:17).* I believe the Scriptures are the “training manual” for pastors and for regional leaders. I personally have learned countless valuable lessons about doing regional ministry by studying Paul’s instructions in 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy and other epistles.

So, while missionaries and regional leaders in GCC would never arrogantly describe ourselves as “apostles” we nonetheless have sought to humble ourselves before God and the Scriptures by learning from men like Paul who sacrificed his life for others in advancing the gospel and who had a “daily concern for all the churches” (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 11:28).

#### **17. What about the prophetic gift? How is this defined?**

Some would define “prophet” as someone who has received an infallible word from God. This word may be predicting the future, or it may be an infallible word of instruction to a person or group at a particular time in history. Others have defined the word “prophet” as someone who receives a present-moment message revealed by God and communicates it to others.

#### **18. Are prophets infallible?**

In the Old Testament, prophets were infallible, both in “foretelling” (predicting the future) as well as “forth telling” (revealing God’s heart and mind to Israel and other people.) If a prophet spoke what was later found to be false, he was to be put to death (Deut. 18:20). To disobey a prophet in the Old Testament was to disobey God Himself.

But are there prophets like this in today’s church, whose words are infallible? The vast majority of evangelicals believe that this “infallible” type of “prophet” does not exist in the church today.

There are some Bible scholars who believe that the apostles were to the New Testament times what the prophets were to the Old Testament times—messengers from God to proclaim the word of God to people. Some view the reference to “apostles and prophets” in both Ephesians 2:20 and Ephesians 4:11 to be New Testament apostles and Old Testament prophets. Others believe that the “prophets” in Ephesians 2:20 and 4:11 refer to New Testament prophets who were infallible. All of these interpreters believe that these types of prophets have ceased today.

***19. If there are no infallible prophets today, has the gift of prophecy ceased?***

Some in GCC and in the evangelical world would say that the gift of prophecy referred to in Ephesians 4:11 has ceased. They say that now that the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Scriptures have been given, there is no need for this gift any longer. Others say that there is a gift of prophecy in a “secondary sense” where God is giving the speaker supernatural wisdom and insight to apply the already-revealed Word of God to the situation at hand.

GCC has not taken a strong stand on either one of these views. That being said, everyone in GCC does agree that the canon of Scripture is closed and that we should be wary of so-called “prophetic” ministries that lord it over the faith of others. At the same time, we all value the sound, grace-filled “in the moment” communication of God’s truth—always based on the Scriptures—that results in edification, exhortation and consolation.

***20. What are evangelists?***

The word “evangelist” is only used three times in the New Testament:

*“On the next day we left and came to Caesarea, and entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him” (Acts 21:8).*

*“And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers” (Ephesians 4:11).*

*“But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:5).*

An evangelist is a “preacher of the gospel.” His focus is to proclaim to a lost world the good news message of Jesus Christ.

***21. Are there different types of evangelists?***

As with the other gifts, this gift has many different expressions. There are evangelists like Billy Graham or Tom Short who publicly preach in public arenas. There are pastors who have the gift of evangelism who use their gift in the context of a local church, perhaps through a Sunday service that is more seeker focused. And there are evangelists whose ministry is more one-on-one or who equip others to share their faith.

***22. Define the word “pastors” as used in Ephesians 4:11.***

Ephesians 4:11 is “technically” the only verse that refers to “pastors” as a noun. However, elders are commanded to “pastor” or “shepherd” the church (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2). Therefore, GCC has historically equated “elder” with “pastor.” The term “elder” refers to his character whereas “pastor” refers to his function or work. This explains why Paul used the word “pastor” in Ephesians 4:11 rather than “elder.”

Pastors or elders are to take responsibility to feed a designated portion of the body of Christ—a particular group of people in a local church. They will give an account before the Lord for the church that has been allotted to their charge (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:3). For this reason, pastors need to be faithful men of character, who will fulfill their responsibility.

### **23. *Are all elders pastors?***

While not all Christians agree on this point, GCC has taken the position that all elders are pastors (based on Acts 20:28 and 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:2). At the same time, we recognize that some elders may be more effective than others in counseling and personal discipleship—functions that our culture describes as “pastoral” in nature.

### **24. *What are the characteristics of a New Testament pastor?***

There is much we can say about pastors. But GCC has addressed this topic extensively in other papers including the book “New Testament Leadership in Action Today” that Brent Knox and I wrote. In that book, we made 7 key points:

1. Pastors are to be servants
2. The organizational chart of the church is “simple” with the church to be led by “pastors” (or “elders” or “overseers”).
3. The Biblical qualifications for pastors are based on Christ-like character.
4. Pastors are raised up from within the local church
5. Pastors are to lead in plurality.
6. Only men are to be pastors.
7. Pastors are to be devoted to prayer and the ministry of the word of God.

(For more information about GCC’s view of pastors, you can obtain a free copy of “New Testament Leadership in Action Today” on the GCC website.)

### **25. *What are teachers as described in Ephesians 4:11***

Some make a distinction between prophets and teachers by use of the words “revelation” and “explanation.” Whereas prophets received an infallible revelation from God (or receive an in the moment impression from the Holy Spirit to communicate to others) teachers are ones who study and explain the Scriptures, with the goal of bringing church members into maturity in Christ. This is seen in Colossians 1:28 where Paul writes: “*We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom that we may present every man complete in Christ.*”

Teachers instruct on the whole counsel of God—His character, His purposes, His promises, and His commands. Like Ezra who studied and practiced God’s word (Ezra 7:10) teachers are students of the Bible who aspire to give a balanced and clear view of what God has taught in the Scriptures.

As Jesus states in Matthew 28:20, teachers are to teach members to “*observe all that Christ commanded.*” Those commands include knowing God, believing in Christ and loving others. Paul affirms this in 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 1:5 where he makes clear to Timothy that “*the goal of our instruction is love.*” Therefore, a teacher’s effectiveness is tied into his character, his obedience, and his love for others.

**26. *Are pastors and teachers referring to the same gifted individual?***

Some maintain that there only four gifts in Ephesians 4:11, that the “pastor-teacher” gift is one gift. The wording in Ephesians 4:11 does, perhaps, suggest this because the word “some” is not placed before the word “teacher” implying that pastor and teaching are to be joined together.

So, this view is not entirely unreasonable. We in GCC have always emphasized that a man’s teaching effectiveness is tied into the fruit in people’s lives—which is best seen in a pastoring context. Our goal is not great orators who can give an impressive speech. Our goal is to raise up godly men who teach the word so that it results in people loving and obeying Jesus Christ. So pastor-teachers are what God wants in his church.

That being said, the church has historically distinguished between the functions of teaching God’s word, from the pastoral responsibility to shepherd specific church members unto maturity. We recognize that some men are better at expositing the word and others are better in a personal counseling context. So, for the sake of this paper, I have separated out the two functions—although they are closely related functions.

**27. *What are some values to consider when applying Ephesians 4:11-13?***

It is important to consider these values:

1. *The pre-eminence of Jesus Christ and the centrality of the Scriptures* The Lord Jesus is the One who gives gifts to men (Ephesians 4:7-8). These gifts of the Holy Spirit are given according to Christ’s will, for His purposes and for the glory of God. In the Book of Acts when the Holy Spirit was given, the testimony was that the “word of the Lord continued to grow and to be multiplied” (Acts 12:24). When the Ephesians 4:11 gifts are operating well, God’s word will be magnified and growing in a church and in the world.
2. *The foundation of humility, servant-hood and love.* “Spiritual gifts” without character are worthless. Before Paul teaches on spiritual gifts in Ephesians 4:7-11 he exhorts the church to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, in all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love” (Ephesians 4:1,2). In Luke 22:26 Jesus states: “Let the greatest among you be as the youngest and the leader as the servant.” And the Apostle Paul makes clear in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:1-3 that spiritual gifts without love are worthless. It is noteworthy that every time spiritual gifts are mentioned in an Epistle, they are in the middle of the book rather than in the beginning (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4). This indicates that while gifts are important, the gospel message, faith, love, humility and character are most important. Therefore, spiritual gifts were given to build solid, mature Christians who genuinely love God and love people in the name of Christ.
3. *The priority of the Great Commission.* God’s heart is to make disciples of all the nations who are immersed in God and who obey all that Christ commanded. He did not give the Ephesians 4:11 gifts to “entertain” or “wow” people. Rather, God gives grace to men so that the Great Commission will be fulfilled.
4. *The importance of the local church.* Ephesians 4:11 gifts were given by God to build local churches where people are growing in their faith. If these gifts are functioning

properly it will result in perceivable fruit through the building of local churches—with salvations, baptisms, strong marriages, healthy families, and more mature disciples.

5. *The multiplication of leaders.* When Jesus sent out apostolic workers in Matthew 9 and 10, He commanded His followers to pray for more workers to go into the harvest (Matthew 9:37-38). Paul urged the Corinthians to “*earnestly desire the greater gifts*” (1 Cor. 12:31). And Paul exhorted Timothy to multiply his life into those who would be able to teach others (2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:22). In our passion to advance the gospel throughout the world, it is vital that God multiply gifted leaders who are dedicated to this mission.

**28. What practical steps can be taken to raise up more leaders with the 5-fold Ephesians 4:11 effect?**

Here are some general suggestions for all types of leaders. Questions 29-33 will focus on each of the gifts individually. (*Note: This is in no way intended to be a complete list. It is meant to “prime the pump” for your discussion at the regional.*)

1. *Stick to the basics.* For 45 years, our movement has emphasized certain core beliefs and values: The gospel of Jesus Christ; the grace of God; cultivating a devotional life; obeying God’s word; prayer and faith; humility; love and unity; the Great Commission vision; the command to make disciples; building godly character; strengthening marriages; raising godly families; and many other basic Christian qualities. In order for a church to raise up godly leaders, it is vital that its pastors “major on the majors.” It is similar to a law student. All the students learn the basics of the law the first year and then specialize in later years. So too, before emphasizing a person’s spiritual gift, urge him to spend a long time getting grounded in the basics of the Christian life.

2. *Teach on Ephesians 4:11.* A pastor who teaches on spiritual gifts in his church, I believe, will see good results. First, he will protect the church from counterfeit spiritual gifts that could undermine the healthy development of godly Christian leaders. Second, the church will attract and inspire young aspiring leaders.

Because we live in a culture that bends towards individuality and self-awareness, people are very interested in the topic of spiritual gifts. When we see a cultural bent like this, we have three choices. We can reject the culture by avoiding the topic of spiritual gifts. Or we can accept the culture by over-emphasizing spiritual gifts. Or we can redeem the culture by giving a balanced teaching on spiritual gifts in the context of the basics of the Christian life. As we do so, we will see God raise up some choice gifted leaders.

3. *Prayer.* Years ago, one church needed funds—but instead of praying for money, the pastors prayed for people to come to the church who had the gift of giving. And God answered those prayers. The Ephesians 4:11 gifts are just that: gifts. They are gifted leaders from God who equip the church for the work of service. They are “game-changers” in God’s eternal plan to build His church. Therefore simple, faith-filled prayer is vital for God raising up more Ephesian 4:11 leaders.

4. *Practice the “with him” principle.* Jesus trained leaders by simply having them “with Him” (Mark 3:14). The more we can have men with us, the more we train them to become effective leaders. Also young leaders can benefit by spending time with leaders

who are gifted in the same way they are. For example, pastors might urge potential evangelists and apostolic leaders in their churches to be with trusted evangelists and apostolic leaders—either for a season or permanently (like Timothy was with Paul.)

*5. Start small groups according to the Ephesians 4:11 gifts.* A simple but practical step that a church can take is to start up 5 different types of small groups. A mission group or a T4T group cultivates a missional culture and missional leaders. A 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14 open sharing meeting allows for more prophetic-style sharing. A discovery Bible study provides an opportunity for evangelism. A typical life group or a recovery group provides for a more care-giving culture. And a Sunday school-style of small group elevates the teaching gift. A church that has an array of groups that reflect the Ephesians 4:11 gifts and effects is positioned to raise up more Ephesians 4:11 leaders.

*Other steps?????*

**29. What practical steps can be taken to raise up more apostolic leaders in the church?**

Leaders with an apostolic effect can be cultivated by taking these practical steps:

1. *Short-term Teams.* Send out domestic and international short-term mission trips from your church. This will create a “sending” culture from which more long-term missionaries will be raised up.
2. *Generosity.* Be generous financially with missionaries. One pastor when asked why his church was so generous with missionaries said, “I never want to say ‘No’ to someone who has said ‘Yes’ to God.” If we have an atmosphere that provides financial support to missionaries, it will positively affect the number of missionaries that God raises up.
3. *Cheerleaders.* Be cheerleaders towards anyone who wants to be a missionary. While we always need to give sound and prudent counsel to anyone considering going on a mission, I think it important that we generally encourage potential missionaries.
4. *Regional Culture.* Cultivate a culture where pastors reach out to pastors and churches in their region. This kind of culture will lead to the development of regional leaders whose ministry is focused on a network of churches, not just one church.
5. *“Go and Make Disciples” groups.* Begin a t4t group or similar kind of group out of your church. The t4t group with its unique “three-thirds process” is an “apostolic go-and-make-disciples” group, aimed at raising up missional Christians. These kinds of groups enable church members to do mission work in their city, by reaching people that would not otherwise attend an existing church. (There are many GCC leaders experienced in t4t who would be happy to train others in this process.)

*6. Other steps?????*

**30. What practical steps can be taken to raise up more prophetic leaders in churches?**

Here are some simple steps:

1. *Create a church culture that continually abides in Christ and His Word.* This first suggestion is very basic but also very profound. The beginning point is building a church culture where Christians are constantly abiding in Christ (John 15:5), praying without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17) and allowing the Word of Christ to dwell within them (Colossians 3:16). This will result in God raising up more leaders that speak God's word according to the need of the moment (Ephesians 4:29).

2. *Create a humble and open church culture.* A church where people freely share what they think the Lord is saying in a given situation is very important. Why did Paul say in 1st Thessalonians 5:20: “*Do not despise prophetic utterances*”? Because the natural inclination is to despise prophetic utterances! Certainly we need to correct and guide and to examine everything carefully. But we want to avoid a chilling atmosphere where people are afraid to share their impressions from the Lord.

3. *1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14 meetings.* Somewhere in the church schedule, provide the opportunity for a 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14 style of meeting. I grew up in a church that had a structured Sunday morning teaching, a somewhat structured small group meeting and a free-flowing breaking of bread meeting on Sunday night. During the communion time, men and women could share from the word what God had laid on their hearts that week. It was done in a respectful and relational way—and it was quite rich. Churches might consider providing some venue for this kind of church experience where “prophetic” kind of messages might be exercised in a sound but powerful way.

4. *Invite outside speakers.* Consider bringing in outside speakers to your church or leadership team who can speak God’s word prophetically and powerfully to help your church grow. Many churches are in a rut—and a word spoken at the right time by a mature, gifted speaker can make a huge difference in bringing about growth and change.

5. *Come to Faithwalkers.* Faithwalkers is a unique opportunity for church members to hear from teachers who speak God’s word in a prophetic manner.

6. *Other steps????*

### ***31. What practical steps can be taken to raise up more evangelists in the church?***

Consider the following steps:

1. *Offer evangelism training.* Courses like the Outreach class, T4T training, a class on how to write a testimony tract or other similar classes can build an evangelism culture in your church.

2. *Learn from other evangelistic pastors.* If your weekend church service is intended to be “visitor” friendly, learn from Rick Warren or other respected pastors in how they communicate in their Sunday messages.

3. *Review your budget.* Evaluate your budget to make sure that a healthy percentage of your funds are used to reach people for Christ—and fund people who are gifted in evangelism.

4. *Try new methods.* Consider different ways to share the gospel, including using the God’s Story method, and discovery groups.

5. *Utilize gifted evangelists.* In GCC, there are three types of member organizations: churches, regional ministries and general ministries. One option for those who have the gift of evangelism is to form a general ministry that can serve the entire body of Christ. Some examples are Tom Short Campus Ministries, the Salvage Project (Jeromy Darling’s music ministry in prisons and other venues) and Total Health (which is led by Dr. Jay Martin, who does compassion/evangelism ministry in Latin America). Consider ways to partner with these ministries as a way to inspire potential evangelists in your church.

6. *Other steps????*

### **32. What practical steps can be taken to raise up more pastors in the church?**

Here are some practical steps to consider:

1. *Focus on the dads.* Continue to encourage fathers to shepherd their families. Men who pastor their families well are excellent candidates as future pastors.

2. *Small groups.* Continue to build small groups in the church that are designed for care giving. A small group is a great training ground for future pastors.

3. *Build the “left side.”* As mentioned in the paper I wrote on Great Commission Pastoring (available at the GCC office) there are two sides in a church organizational structure—the “right side” (the programs of the church) and the “left side” which focuses on personal care for the individuals in the church. I recommend a church where the staff runs the programs and the elders (who also may be on staff) are pastoring the people one on one. This means each elder in the plurality and each elder-intern taking responsibility for pastoring a specified and designated group of people in the church.

4. *Define the pastor’s goal.* Our goal is not just to get people to attend church or to join a ministry or to give financially. While these are important disciplines, the goal is that each person is made complete in Christ—that each church member is obeying Christ’s commands. I personally have identified 8 “Grace Points” for each person that I pastor:

- \*His faith (knowing God, trusting God’s love in trials, sound in doctrine)
- \*His faithfulness (quiet times; meditating on God’s word; walking in the Spirit)
- \*His fitness (physical health; exercising self-control; moral purity)
- \*His finances (managing his possessions; generosity)
- \*His family (building honoring relationships; loyalty)
- \*His fellowship (love; doing the ‘one another verses’)
- \*His field (excelling in his vocation)
- \*His fishing (Spirit-led ministry in fulfilling the Great Commission)



The clearer the pastor's goal, the more pastors will be trained to fulfill that goal.

5. *Clarify the job description for pastors.* As pastors oversee a group of people, I recommend the job description be a simple one: Prayer-Care-Share-Pair. Pray for each person regularly. Care for each person. Share the word of God with each person. And pair each person with others who can help them—either another mature person in the church or with a literature or material that can help that person grow in Christ.

6. *Great Commission Leadership Institute.* My experience is that churches that regularly take potential elders through the GCLI course and who take the other steps listed above have been effective in training new pastors.

7. *Counseling training.* Provide training seminars in care giving, such as *Listening for Heaven's Sake* and *Rational Christian Thinking, Transformation (Theophostic) Prayer Ministries* or other similar ministries

8. *Other steps????*

### **33. What practical steps can be taken to raise up more teachers in the church?**

Consider the following:

1. *One-on-one discipleship.* Our goal is not to raise up orators but men who teach in such a way that people become obedient to Christ. A key way to do this is to have a culture that encourages a man to teach God's word to people, one at a time. The first step for a teacher is to disciple men one on one by opening the word of God and sharing it with conviction in a relational context. This kind of experience is foundational for raising up men who can effectively teach a large crowd of people.

2. *Provide small group teaching venues.* Sunday school classes, house church settings, and church seminars are venues that provide an opportunity to train future teachers.

3. *Cultivate an "Ezra" culture.* We read in Ezra 7:10 that "*Ezra set his heart to study the law of the Lord and to practice it and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.*" Great teachers work hard at knowing God's word. This may mean each leader establishing his own self-study program or it might mean him taking seminars or classes that build the discipline of diligently studying the word of God.

4. *Public communication training.* What is most important is a man's heart and his character. But it is also important that a man be skilled in his communication practices. Taking a seminar or classes or some form of training to hone in his skills is worth considering.

5. *Encourage men to seek constructive criticism.* King David wrote: "*Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me. It is oil upon my head. Do not let my head refuse it*" (Ps. 141:5). After a man teaches, a good habit is to ask trusted friends who hear the message to give him "three keepers and three weepers." The three "keepers" are those

teaching points or habits that “hit home.” The three “weepers” are those points or teaching habits that were ineffective.

6. *When training teachers, use “tough” love.* You are not doing potential teachers any favor when you flatter them and overlook their ineffectiveness. Give them frank and honest criticisms, even when it hurts. But also encourage them into excellence.

7. *Other steps????*

### **CONCLUSION AND FINAL CHALLENGE:**

This paper is not meant to be a comprehensive study of Ephesians 4:11-13. But hopefully it will stimulate GCC pastors to study this topic further and to prayerfully consider how to apply this passage in their churches. Also, our prayer is that this paper will lead pastors to interact with each other, so that we take practical steps in developing Ephesians 4:11 leaders. Toward that end, some discussion questions are included below.

Finally, here is a final challenge: Pray that God will raise up within your church the full panoply of Ephesians 4:11 leaders like He did in the Columbus, Ohio church in the 1970s. The more that He does so, church by church and region by region, the grace of God will spread more freely, leading to the fulfillment of the Great Commission, to the glory of God.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What are your thoughts about the way the Ephesians 4:11 gifts are defined in this paper?
2. Which of the Ephesians 4:11 gifts do you see reflected in your leadership team at your church? How about in your life personally?
3. Think back about your development as a leader. What were the key factors that helped your growth as a leader?
4. What are some practical steps you would like your church to take in light of this paper?

## ADDENDUM

### **Gifted Apostles and Signs, Wonders and Miracles**

*Brent Knox*

*Pastors and leaders in GCC have different perspectives on the topic of apostles. Here is one perspective on the gift of apostle in the New Testament....*

**There are four ways the word “apostle” is used in the New Testament**

- 1. Jesus is referred to as an apostle. (Heb. 3:1)**
- 2. There are the “twelve” apostles.**
  - This is a special category of apostle reserved for men who were eye-witnesses of the Lord. Acts 1 & Rev. 21:14.
- 3. There are “gifted” apostles. This includes the “twelve.”**
  - Ephesians 4:11 refers to the “gift” of an apostle.
  - The apostle Paul is in this category.
- 4. There are other people mentioned as “apostles” in the NT and in early church literature.**
  - These people are not gifted apostles.
  - The word “apostle” is used of these people only in the secondary sense as people who are “sent out.” The Latin word is “missionary.”

**The gift of apostle is demonstrated by signs, wonders and miracles (SWM’s).**

- 2 Cor. 12:12
- This is probably how apostles were “tested.” Rev. 2:2
- While non-apostles performed SMW’s (Acts 6:8, 1 Cor. 12:29), all who had the true gift of an apostle performed SWM’s.

**There are many examples of how gifted apostles demonstrated wondrous supernatural ability.**

- Mark 3:15
- Acts 2:43
- Acts 5:12
- Acts 8:18
- Acts 14:3-4
- Jude 14 (predicting the future)

**Gifted apostles spoke direct revelation from God.**

- 2 Peter 3:2
- Eph. 3:5
- 1 Thess. 4:2

**SWM's were necessary to "confirm" or validate that the message they were speaking came from God.**

- Acts 14:3
- Heb. 2:3-4

**Gifted apostles seemed to have a clear and supernatural calling—either directly from the Lord Jesus or supernatural revelation from the Holy Spirit. There is a striking confidence in their calling.**

- Acts 9:15
- Acts 13:2
- Acts 26:15-19
- Rom. 1:1
- 1 Cor. 1:1
- 1 Cor. 9:1
- 2 Cor. 1:1
- Gal. 1:1
- Eph. 1:1
- Col. 1:1
- 1 Tim. 2:7
- 1 Tim. 1:1
- 1 Peter 1:1

**Because apostles received and spoke direct revelation, they are associated closely with "prophets."**

- Eph. 2:20
- Eph. 3:5
- 2 Peter 3:2
- Rev. 18:20
- Note: What distinguishes the apostles and prophets? Probably SMW's. Prophets only predicted the future and received revelation. Apostles performed SWM's and therefore, carried more weight and authority

**The authority of a gifted apostle was connected to his ability to receive and speak direct revelation.**

- 2 Cor. 12
- Note: authority was also connected to being a "father" to the church.
- Gifted apostles had real authority over local churches.
  - 1 Thess. 2:6
  - 2 Cor. 10:8, 13:10

**There were two types of authority in the local church: Apostles and elders. Apostles had authority because they received and spoke direct revelation. Elders had authority because they were recognized by the local church.**

- Acts 15:2,4,6,22,23; 16:4

### **The Work of an Apostle**

- The primary work of a gifted apostle is to speak revelation from God supported by SWM's. They were "sent out" directly by Jesus and/or the Holy Spirit to expand the kingdom and build the church.
- With this ability, they had authority.
- They also had leadership and evangelistic ability. Therefore, we see many apostles starting and managing churches.
- The work of evangelism and starting churches probably reveals that many apostles also had evangelism gifts. This is certainly the case with Paul. 2 Tim. 1:11; 1 Tim.2:7
- The work of shepherding churches probably reveals that many apostles also had leadership and pastoring gifts. Peter may be an example. 1 Peter 5:1
- While the work of some apostles contains pioneering evangelism and leading churches, it seems most accurate to view this through the gift of evangelism, leadership, and pastor.

### **What about Ephesians 4:11?**

- While there is an implication that apostles and prophets are needed today because the church hasn't fully matured (vs. 12-14), there is another way we could look at this passage. It is possible to look at Eph. 4:11 through the lens of Eph. 2:19: apostles and prophets have already laid the foundational work in the church. (I think it is noteworthy that other speaking gifts aren't mentioned. Why? Other gifts did not bring direct revelation.) Since the foundation has been laid, the gifts of apostle and prophet are no longer needed.
- The foundation continues to support the church to this day. The body of revelation spoken to us by apostles and prophets continues to build and mature the church even though the gift is no longer operating.

### **Miscellaneous Thoughts**

1. Just because the word "apostle" means "sent out" it doesn't mean that being "sent out" defines what it means to be a gifted apostle. It appears that James never was "sent out." Also, there are many current examples of people who are "sent out" as missionaries, but do not seem to have expansionary fruit of the early gifted apostles. It would be a mistake to send out a missionary and expect him or her to be "gifted."
2. SWM's are closely associated with the gift of an apostle. If we believe that SWM's are no longer operating, it makes sense to conclude that the gift of an apostle is no longer operating. If SWM's are still in God's purposes today, then perhaps the gift of an apostle is still operating.

### **Conclusion**

The gift of apostle must be proven by SWM's.

While the word "apostle" was used in the NT of men beyond the Twelve and beyond Paul, if they were truly gifted apostles, they were probably demonstrating SWM's. This is certainly the case with Barnabas. Acts 14:3

If the word “apostle” is used in a secondary sense, describing people who were “sent out,” then these people aren’t gifted apostles—only “sent out” people. We can see this is a similar sense in Titus 1:12: the word “prophet” is used in a general descriptive sense but is not referring to the gift of a prophet.

While we can learn lessons from studying the work of apostles in the NT, we should view their evangelistic work and leadership work and pastoring work through the gift of evangelism, leadership, pastoring and teaching.

Practically speaking, it seems more useful to eliminate the label “apostle” and “prophet” all together. If we only use the words in their secondary sense, no real solid definition of the gift remains. For instance, it is more useful to describe people who have a communicating gift with terms other than “prophet”. Better terms might be teacher, encourager, or exhorter. Also, every teaching gift can have a variety of service and effects (1 Cor. 12:5-6). People who “communicate God’s present-moment message” are probably gifted communicators or teachers with an encouraging or exhorting bent resulting in different effects. In the same way, national leaders are not “apostles” but gifted leaders and pastors of churches. People “sent out” to evangelize or pioneer the gospel in new areas, are not apostles, but gifted evangelists. I think we will have better ability to evaluate people correctly if we use these more descriptive and less elusive labels.