

International Pentecostal Holiness Church



APOSTOLIC BIBLICAL STATEMENT
AND PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

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International Pentecostal Holiness Church

SUMMARY – APOSTOLIC POSITION PAPER

We celebrate our Lord Jesus Christ as the foremost Apostle, whom God sent by incarnation into the world to redeem humanity (Hebrews 3:1).¹ He chose foundational apostles to write the New Testament Scriptures and lay the foundation of the Lord's church (Luke 6:13; Galatians 1:1). The New Testament also identifies functional apostles, who followed the Twelve (Acts 14:14). Functional apostles have served in every generation since then to blaze the gospel trail to the ends of the earth. The New Testament term, apostle, therefore, carries the sense of one chosen, gifted and empowered by God and sent on a specific divine assignment.

The role of apostles has always been to plant the gospel in every culture worldwide and do it on the base built by Jesus Christ, the foremost Apostle, and His foundational apostles. Motivated by this sense of the Great Commission, the Lord's church has advanced steadily. At each of these three levels (Jesus, the foremost Apostle, the foundational apostles, and the functional apostles), apostolic ministry has been marked by signs, wonders, and miracles amid great perseverance (2 Corinthians 12:12).

To achieve the Lord's worldwide agenda, Jesus asked the Father to send the Holy Spirit to empower believers. The Day of Pentecost, therefore, marked the birth of the church. The *charismata*, or manifold gifts of the Holy Spirit, have always been fundamental to the Lord's strategy of global harvest. The apostle Paul wrote that God gave him an eightfold listing he sent to the believers at Corinth (1 Corinthians 12:28-31). The same apostle said the Lord Jesus Christ gave him a fivefold identification of ministry giftings that he sent to the church at Ephesus (Ephesians 4:11-13). Paul further said the Holy Spirit gave him a ninefold list, often identified as manifestation gifts, and that the Spirit appointed bishops in the church at Ephesus (1 Corinthians 12:7-11; Acts 20:28). We believe these gifts and ministries have not ceased but will continue until Jesus returns.

We recognize the active involvement of the Trinity in the giftings of the Spirit. In their composite, these giftings portray the full-orbed ministry of Jesus Christ. The result is that people in every generation have been won to the Lord, planted in churches, and built up in the most holy faith. The International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC) affirms that these gifts are primarily ministry gifts rather than governmental offices.

Functional apostles are named in the New Testament. It is also unmistakable that the foundational apostles, in writing the New Testament scriptures, planted the seeds that birthed the ministry of bishops among the Early Church Fathers, a practice that has continued to this day. Therefore, we recognize the ministry of functional apostles and of bishops in church history as having a close resemblance. We also recognize that false apostles appeared in the apostolic church as well as in church history, and that we must remain alert to the continuing danger of these emissaries of Satan. (See 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; Revelation 2:2.)

By affirming and releasing the leadership ministry gifts Paul identified, and recognizing the governmental roles of bishops and elders, the IPHC provides a biblical and historical form of government that is consistent with two thousand years of church history (Ephesians 4:11; Titus 1:5).

We celebrate that the Holy Spirit has always manifested apostolic witness in every generation of the Lord's church, including the manifold *charismata* of the Spirit. And, in the contemporary Pentecostal revival, the multiple giftings of the Holy Spirit continue to demonstrate the ministry of the Lord. As Spirit-filled believers in the modern church, we commit ourselves to the same bold dedication our fathers

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references used in this document are from the New International Version of the Bible.

in the Early Church made to the Lord's Great Commission. Blinded eyes must be opened everywhere. The gospel must go to the ends of the earth.

APOSTOLIC BIBLICAL STATEMENT AND PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

International Pentecostal Holiness Church

I. APOSTOLIC BIBLICAL STATEMENT

A. THREE NEW TESTAMENT LEVELS OF APOSTLESHIP

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Foremost Apostle

Our heavenly Father sent His one and only Son as the first apostle of the New Covenant. His mission to this earth was to show all people the heart of the Father and provide salvation for “whosoever will” (John 3:16; Galatians 4:4). Apostolic ministry, therefore, begins with Jesus Christ. We honor Him as the foremost Apostle. The church is “built” on “Christ Jesus himself... the cornerstone” (Ephesians 2:20). The writer of Hebrews challenged his readers to “fix [their] thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. He was faithful...” (Hebrews 3:1, 2). Hence, an apostle, by definition, is a person chosen by the Lord Himself and sent on a focused mission.

2. The Foundational Apostles

Apostolic ministry continued in the New Testament with the twelve men personally chosen by the Lord as His disciples. When Jesus commissioned them for their first preaching tour, “he sent them out two by two” (Mark 6:7).

The phrase, “he sent them out,” derives from the Greek word, *apostellein*, meaning the “sent ones.” When the disciples completed their preaching assignment, “the apostles [*apostoloi*] gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught” (Mark 6:30, KJV). The English word apostle is a transliteration of this Greek term.

The apostles, therefore, were persons specifically chosen and gifted by the Lord Himself, and sent by Him personally on a specific mission (see Acts 16:9). Jesus anticipated strong spiritual warfare would confront them, so He “gave them authority over evil spirits” (Mark 6:7).

After Pentecost, these apostles became the recognized servant leaders who laid the foundation of the infant church [hence, the term, foundational apostles]. The Lord who chose them was also their teacher (Mark 1:22; 4:2; 10:1; 11:17). With Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone, the Lord’s church is “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets” (Ephesians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 3:10).

The apostle Paul served at this foundational level as the apostle to the Gentiles and considered himself “as one abnormally born” (1 Corinthians 15:8; Galatians 2:8). In Galatians 1 and 2, he particularly defended his claim that he was equal to the other apostles. Paul’s assertion was that Jesus commissioned him as an apostle, through revelation, after the Lord had returned

to heaven (See also Acts 9:11-16, 27; 26:19; 1 Corinthians 9:1). Paul did many miraculous things in his ministry; including raising the dead (Acts 20:9, 10).

Paul said apostles have a fourfold identification: “The things that mark an apostle – signs, wonders and miracles – were done among you with great perseverance” (2 Corinthians 12:12; Acts 5:12).

Four characteristics uniquely set apart the foundational apostles:

Seeing the Lord in the Flesh

Each of the foundational apostles saw the Lord in the flesh and had been with Him “from the beginning” (John 15:27; Mark 16:10). John’s testimony was that from the start of the Lord’s ministry, “we have heard...seen with our eyes...looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life” (1 John 1:1, KJV).

Understanding Their Mission

The job description of the foundational apostles was to lay the groundwork of the New Testament church. In achieving this objective, their duties included writing the New Testament scriptures. They were also held accountable to preach and teach the gospel in such a way that it revealed the character and concern of Jesus for all people. They accepted personal responsibility to open up new ethnic groups for the gospel by planting new churches (Luke 4:32; Acts 2:40, 42; 6:13, 14; 13:1-14; 17:1-3; Romans 15:20).

People received the Holy Spirit when the apostles prayed (Acts 8:15-17). The apostles served their congregations by leading in worship, memorializing the Lord’s Supper, administering the affairs of the growing church (including maintaining appropriate discipline in the congregations), exorcising demons, healing the sick, and judging who were the false representatives of the Lord (Luke 10:3; Acts 2:40-42; 3:2-8; 4:23; 5:1-11; 16:13-18; 17:3; 20:29; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; 2 Corinthians 11:13; Ephesians 2:20).

Miracles regularly happened when Jesus walked into town (e.g., Luke 4:31-37). Miraculous things also routinely occurred when an apostle came to town. For example, after the believers in the area of Caesarea heard that Peter was in Lydda, they took him to pray for a woman named Dorcas, who had died. After interceding in the name of Jesus, Peter commanded Dorcas to get up, and she did (Acts 9:36-41). “This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord” (Acts 9:42).

Apostolic authority expressed itself in two problem areas in the early church. The first was settling the dispute that arose among the Grecian widows by establishing the role of deacons (Acts 6:3). The second included working out the doctrinal disputes that prompted the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15).

Writing the New Testament

In addition to their roles in pioneering the church and laying its foundation, foundational apostles either wrote or were responsible for most of the New Testament. Matthew, John, Peter, James, and Paul wrote New Testament books as part of laying the foundation for the church (Ephesians 2:20).

Reinterpreting Old Testament Scripture

Foundational apostles fulfilled a vital function in the young New Testament church by reinterpreting Old Testament scripture through the lens of Jesus' cross and empty tomb. Three examples will make the point.

- 1.** At Pentecost, Peter stood and said, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel..." (Acts 2:16, KJV; Joel 2:28-32). The power to say with specificity what the Holy Spirit intended through the pen of an Old Testament prophet ("this is that") really was an awesome authority.
- 2.** Paul offered the interpretation that anyone, Jew or Gentile, who has Abraham's faith is a son of Abraham and an heir of the promise (Galatians 3:29). At the time, it was a radical reinterpretation of Scripture. This explanation swung the door wide open for the faith of Abraham to find a new launching pad in the Gentile world.
- 3.** Paul also taught that the "seed" referred to in Genesis 12:7 (KJV) is a specific prophecy about one person, "who is Christ" – a truly revolutionary idea in the first century (Galatians 3:16; also see Genesis 13:15; 24:7). This pronouncement proved to be fundamentally important as well for the growth of the New Testament church in the Greek and Roman world.

The Gifts of the Spirit: the Ministry of Christ in Action

The *charismata* in the apostolic church portrayed the ministry of Jesus Christ. [*Charismata* = gifts; the term translates into English as charismatic.] The result is that these gifts in operation opened blinded eyes to the gospel. To this day, it takes all of them functioning in the church to reveal to people the full-orbed ministry of the Lord.

The Manifold Gifts of the Spirit

Paul taught a multiple ministry gift mix in his writings. In his first epistle addressed to the believers in Corinth, Paul said:

God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts (1 Corinthians 12:28-31, KJV).

A few years later, the apostle Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus that he had received from our Lord Jesus Christ a fivefold identification of leadership ministry giftings, identified by the word *doma* (also translated as gifts).

He [Jesus] gave (*doma*) some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Some years later, Paul penned another list to the believers in Rome:

We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve;

if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully (Romans 12:6-8).

Paul wrote that the Holy Spirit also gave him two listings of spiritual gifts. He wrote to the believers in Corinth:

To each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines (1 Corinthians 12:7-11).

Toward the end of his life, Paul said to the elders in Ephesus in his farewell discourse on the strand of the Aegean Sea: “the Holy Spirit made you overseers [*episcopous* = bishops]” (Acts 20:28).

The apostle Peter also wrote about the gifts of the Spirit:

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen (1 Peter 4:10, 11).

So the Triune Godhead was actively involved in giving Paul his understanding of the manifold gifts of the Holy Spirit that have produced ministry in every generation of the Lord’s church.

These listings show a striking diversity regarding the gifts of the Spirit (*charismata* and *doma*). A correct understanding of New Testament spiritual ministry, therefore, must take into account the manifold nature of the gifts and the diverse nature of the lists. The common thread binding all of them together is that the gifts of the Spirit are about ministry. Each is necessary to reveal Jesus Christ fully and to open blinded eyes to the redemptive message of His Cross (Acts 26:18).

Replacing Judas

Another function of the apostles at the foundational level was the authority to replace one of their own who had fallen, setting the new apostle in place as one of the original twelve.

When the apostles made the decision to replace Judas, their requirement was that the person chosen had to have been with them from the beginning of the Lord’s ministry and be able to give witness to the Lord’s resurrection (Acts 1:21, 22). The disciples nominated two men, Joseph and Matthias, to take Judas’s place. After they prayed, they cast lots and chose Matthias

(Acts 1:20-26). This is a case of some form of selection process among the apostles, which included casting lots, with an accompanying conferral of an apostolic ministry.

Barnabas and Saul, the First Missionaries

The apostles Barnabas and Saul were specifically selected by the Holy Spirit and blessed by the leadership team of the young congregation at Antioch in Syria to become the first missionaries of the church in the apostolic era (Acts 13:2). However, Paul (previously called Saul) and Barnabas pursued separate courses of ministry after that first missionary journey (Acts 15:39-41).

In the years ahead, Paul journeyed throughout Asia Minor, Illyricum, Greece, and ultimately Rome, planting churches in the Roman Empire. His missionary ministry was accompanied by signs, wonders, and miracles amid great perseverance. (e.g., Acts 16:9, 12-34; 28:30; Romans 15:19-21).

Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest

It should be noted again that the writer of Hebrews described Jesus Christ as “the apostle and high priest whom we confess” (Hebrews 3:1, 2). For all of the greatness of the Lord’s apostles at this foundational level, they could never rise to equality with “the apostle and high priest,” Jesus Christ Himself.

3. The Functional Apostles

We now give attention to a third level of New Testament apostolic ministry, which we term as the functional apostles. The term, functional, is used because they functioned in apostolic categories in the New Testament, although the biblical text leaves unanswered questions about their calling and ministry.

Without trying to be exhaustive in identifying all functional New Testament apostles, we note the case for Barnabas, Timothy, and Silas. Luke referred to Barnabas as an apostle (Acts 14:14; see also Acts 9:27). Paul probably meant that same title for Timothy and Silas (1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2:6, 7).

In the case of Barnabas, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them” (Acts 13:2; 14:14). At the beginning of this first missionary journey of the Early Church, Barnabas was obviously the lead apostle in taking the gospel into Asia Minor. This had changed by the end of their ministry on Cyprus. Luke recorded that “Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia...” (Acts 13:13). At this point, Paul had emerged as the leader.

While Barnabas has the distinction of the first functional apostle of the Early Church, he is not recognized as a foundational apostle, for such reasons as the New Testament:

- Does not establish that he saw the Lord
- Records no evidence that he ever made an apostolic claim about his ministry
- Does not identify him as the writer of one of its books
- Offers no evidence of signs, wonders, and miracles in his ministry amid great perseverance

In the great tradition of Barnabas, who had the extraordinary ability to develop leaders whose ministries exceeded his, church history shows that numerous missionaries have functioned

in apostolic roles. They have gone into pagan countries and dug out the church in new nations and ethnic groups even as their lives have been characterized by signs, wonders, and miracles amid great perseverance. These apostles have frequently also mentored new leaders whose ministries have surpassed their own. They have typically fulfilled their ministry away from the spotlight, and often without the apostolic title, so that few in the body of Christ even realized their outstanding contribution to the Lord's kingdom. Title has not been their concern; they have been compelled by the commission the Spirit has given them. But the Lord of the church knows, and He is the one who will hand out the rewards (Matthew 25:14-23).

Other than Barnabas, the New Testament does not state how the other functional apostles came to have the title. In the case of Timothy, the apostle Paul admonished him "to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands" (2 Timothy 1:6, 7), but the particular gift is not identified.

We have already observed that the foundational apostles had a diminished but very important role in comparison to "the apostle and high priest" – our Lord Jesus Christ. The role of these functional apostles in the New Testament was certainly important in helping win the Roman world. It diminished further, however, in comparison to the job description of the foundational apostles. The roles are only partially the same. Neither can persons in the church today, who feel commissioned by the Lord as an apostle, possibly have a ministry equal to that of the apostles at the foundational level.

Spheres Not To Be Repeated

In four key areas, the most basic duties of apostles at the second level cannot be duplicated.

1. Having seen the Lord. The Canon gives no indication that any of the functional apostles saw the Lord in His active ministry or after His resurrection. We conclude that functional apostles today can have a revelation of Jesus that is surely similar to having seen the Lord minister in the flesh, although we wonder if it can ever be 100 percent its equal. We do not want that statement, however, to diminish in any way the power of the Holy Spirit to help believers intimately experience and get to know their Lord.

2. Laying the foundation of the New Testament Church. Functional apostles had to build on the foundation already laid by the second level apostles; they could not lay a new foundation for the Gospel. "God's household" is "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit" (Ephesians 2:19-22).

3. The authority to interpret the Old Testament Scriptures, so that the explanation became part of the New Testament canon. Functional apostles had to submit to the interpretations of the foundational apostles. Paul, for example, spoke a bold anathema on anyone, including even an angel from heaven, who did not accept his gospel (Galatians 1:8, 9).

The great revivals of church history – e.g., the Lutheran Reformation of justification by grace through faith, Wesley's revival of holiness and perfect love, and the Azusa Street Pentecostal revival – plowed no new biblical ground. Instead, each of them was a rediscovery of

what was already in the foundation laid by the Lord's second-level apostles in the New Testament.

4. The authority to write New Testament books. No record exists that a functional apostle wrote a New Testament book. All twenty-seven books of the New Testament came from foundational apostles or close associates of these second-level apostles.

These are four key areas, therefore, that functional apostles cannot even entertain duplicating.

Two Repeatable Spheres

1. However, it should be emphasized that functional apostles could then and can today equal those at the second level in the area of anointing and power for ministry. This marvelous reality should in no way be minimized or depreciated. "Anyone who has faith in me," Jesus said, "will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father" (John 14:12).

2. In addition, functional apostles to this day have a strong foundation-laying ministry, establishing the faith in the new areas they open up for the gospel. The base they build must always square with the historic faith laid by the foundational apostles who wrote the New Testament.

The Closed Canon

In this context, we affirm that when the Holy Spirit sovereignly merged into one volume the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, the Canon was closed. We join with our fathers across the centuries and rest our eternal souls to this day on both the authority of Holy Scripture and on the sufficiency of the Word of God. We also hold that no modern-day apostle or prophet can write or speak words that are equal to God's Word as recorded in the Holy Bible.

We conclude there are persons identified as "apostles" in the New Testament at this functional level. In addition, at this level, it is reasonable to believe the ministry gift of the apostle has always existed in the Lord's church and continues to this day.

B. Recognizing True and False Apostles

In addition to the foundational and functional apostles, the Scriptures clearly define a category of "false apostles." These people were not appointed by God. Instead, carnal men usurped the role for their own glory. Paul labeled them as "deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ." He likened them to Satan, who "transformed himself into an angel of light" in order to deceive the elect (2 Corinthians 11:13-15, KJV).

To help distinguish genuine apostles from false apostles, we deem it best primarily to highlight the characteristics of a true apostle:

1. Each of the foundational apostles saw the Lord minister in the flesh. Paul claimed to have seen Him by revelation. But no evidence in the New Testament indicates a functional apostle actually saw the Lord in the flesh. It is reasonable to conclude, however, that a person today who ministers with apostolic giftings will have had, in his personal walk with God, a clear vision of the Lord akin to the vision of the apostle Paul (see 1 Corinthians 9:1; 15:8).

2. In the contemporary church, all apostles are functional apostles. They minister with total faithfulness to the writings and teachings of the foundational apostles. They never lay a new foundation (1 Corinthians 3:10, 11). As they labor for the Lord, their ministry is accompanied by signs, wonders, and miracles amid great perseverance (2 Corinthians 12:12).

3. Recognizing True, Functional Apostles: They...

- a.** Hear from God (Acts 13:2)
- b.** Accept personal responsibility for the Lord's Great Commission, even at great cost to themselves (Matthew 28:16-20)
- c.** Look through the eyes of the Holy Spirit and see needs in a society or an ethnic group that for the most part others do not perceive; guided by the Spirit, they develop new spheres of ministry to meet those needs (which normally includes church planting), even when this includes stepping across cultural, racial, or language barriers to achieve what the Holy Spirit has assigned them to do (Romans 15:20; 1 Corinthians 3:10)
- d.** Give themselves to their calling (2 Timothy 4:5)
- e.** Minister humbly, never lording it over God's heritage (1 Peter 5:3, KJV; Matthew 5:3)
- f.** Continue to serve even when no one confers on them a title or recognizes their role
- g.** Perfect the saints for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:12 KJV)
- h.** Bring unity to the body of Christ (John 17:23; Ephesians 4:3)
- i.** Speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15 KJV)
- j.** Join and knit the whole body together (see Ephesians 4:7-16)
- k.** Are free from the love of money (1 Timothy 6:10; Hebrews 13:5)
- l.** Are authoritative teachers of the truths in the Word of God (Acts 20:20)
- m.** Never proclaim new revelation, claiming equality with the twenty-seven books of the New Testament (Matthew 5:18; 1 Corinthians 3:11; Revelation 22:18, 19)
- n.** Are ecumenical, with a universal interest and authority in the whole body of Christ (Galatians 2:8)

4. The biblical record states explicitly that Jesus Himself selected and appointed the foundational apostles, including Paul (Matthew 10:2; Acts 26:17; Romans 1:1). It is true Matthias was chosen by the apostles amid much prayer in some form of selection – “they cast lots” (Acts 1:26). This, however, was a one-time event in the Early Church. As one-by-one the twelve apostles died, the surviving foundational apostles filled none of the vacancies. The New Testament establishes no line of apostolic succession.

As for the functional apostles, the New Testament does affirm the Holy Spirit commissioned Barnabas. But the record is silent regarding how the others named as apostles came to hold the title (Acts 13:2).

The norm in the New Testament, therefore, based on the whole of the evidence, is that both foundational and functional apostles were chosen and commissioned by God and not elected or appointed by men (Acts 13:2; Ephesians 1:1; 1 Timothy 1:1).

5. While the names of no false apostles are actually given in the New Testament, examples certainly exist in church history. To name three: Mani of Persia, founder of the Manichee sect in the third century who called himself the “apostle of light” – the last apostle of Jesus Christ, he said, who would ever appear. Mohammad, the founder of Islam, also claimed to be the last apostle in history. In more recent times, Joseph Smith claimed to be an apostle. Smith wrote books that he alleged were superior to the New Testament. He also organized the Mormon Church with twelve last day “apostles” as leaders of his new movement and created a structure for a line of apostolic succession among these twelve “apostles.”

C. THE MINISTRY OF ELDERS AND BISHOPS

It is a well-established fact of church history that the role of bishops quickly superseded the ministry of functional apostles in the second century of the church. Study of the writings of the foundational apostles regarding bishops helps to explain this development.

The terms *elder* (*presbuteros* – leadership by elders) and bishop/overseer (*episkopos* – leadership by bishops) are used interchangeably in the New Testament. The title, bishop, however, rapidly came to have wider use in the second century church than did the term, apostle.

It is interesting that the apostle Paul seems to have applied the title of apostle to Timothy (1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2:6, 7). When Paul wrote his two letters to Timothy, however, he spoke of him three times as a spiritual “son,” but not as an apostle (1 Timothy 1:2, 18; 2 Timothy 2:1). Instead, the tenor of the two books describes the role of a bishop or elder (see 1 Timothy 3). Paul felt the need to command Timothy (who may have been a functional apostle ministering in the role of a bishop): “Keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry” (2 Timothy 4:5).

Titus served on the island of Crete as an elder (or bishop) in an administrative role to follow up after Paul departed the island (Titus 1:5, 6). Paul wrote to the believers in Rome that he had started the church in Illyricum (the Balkan mountain region of southern Europe) (Romans 15:19). Titus went to this area as well, to Dalmatia, after Paul had departed (2 Timothy 4:10). Titus is a New Testament example, therefore, of an elder (bishop) with a clear missionary and Great Commission focus.

Paul, Peter, and James were used of the Holy Spirit to describe the character qualifications and the servant roles of bishops and elders: e.g., 1 Timothy 3:2-5; Titus 1:7-9; 1 Peter 5:2; James 5:14, 15. (See Appendix I.)

D. CONCLUSIONS

1. When we study the New Testament teachings on apostleship and compare the instructions on bishops and elders (see Appendix I), we conclude that the character requirements and job description the apostles Paul, Peter, and James presented for bishops and elders have a close comparison with the role of the functional apostles.

Study of the development of leadership roles in second-century church history reinforces this thinking. The New Testament teaching on bishops rapidly became the principal language of the second-century church, and that title has largely remained constant in church history through

the centuries since. Comprehending this resemblance points to the conclusion that the church fathers who followed the foundational apostles did have the mind of the Holy Spirit and were not in error to elevate the title and ministry of bishops.

It should also be noted when the apostles chose Matthias to replace Judas, Peter said, “It is written in the book of Psalms, ‘Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric let another take’” (Acts 1:20, KJV). The apostles then chose Matthias to replace Judas as one of the twelve apostles. In his explanation for choosing Matthias, Peter did not use the Greek term *apostolos* (apostle); instead, he used the word *episcopos*. This is the Greek term that later in the Acts of the Apostles is translated as “bishop.”

2. We affirm the distinctive roles of the leadership ministry gifts of the Holy Spirit and the governing roles of bishops and elders in the New Testament. With this understanding in mind, when all of the gifts are combined, they reveal what the full extent of the ministry of Jesus Christ was like. In doing so, they help to fulfill the Lord’s Great Commission by opening people’s hearts to the power of the gospel.

3. We affirm that the Ephesians 4:11 gifts are primarily ministry gifts. The governing offices for the local churches and conferences, and the general church in the IPHC are expressed in the roles of bishops and elders (1 Timothy 3:3-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

4. The Lord’s church must constantly be aware that Satan has sought throughout church history to counterfeit the full range of the *charismata* of the Spirit, and this has included raising up false apostles. A praying church, therefore, will continually search the Scriptures and intercede for spiritual guidance to discern the true *charismata* of the Holy Spirit from the false.

5. Based on our study of the New Testament, the contemporary church should continue, as the apostles did, to elevate the character qualifications of its ministry leaders over their titles or even their professional training.

II. PRACTICAL GUIDELINES²

We celebrate the callings and ministries of the Holy Spirit as gifts that are conferred by the Spirit and not by the International Pentecostal Holiness Church. The responsibility of the church, instead, is to recognize, embrace, and nurture all of the Spirit’s gifts in its members. The church does this by providing an atmosphere and framework so that all of the gifts, including apostles, can blossom in the ministry of its congregations and, when necessary, find direction and spiritual discipline.

When leadership has determined that a person has been called by God to do the work of the ministry, the IPHC affirms that calling through the following credentials:

² The practical guidelines in this paper apply primarily to IPHC Ministries in the United States. Application to IPHC Ministries outside of the United States of the biblical interpretations should be done in consultation with the IPHC presiding bishop, executive director of World Missions Ministries and the overseas ministry coordinator.

- **Minister's License**
- **Certificate of Ordination**

These credentials permit a minister to mature in the God given gift mix. This may include apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, or teacher, as well as any other combination of the manifold gifts of the Spirit. We hold these to be ministry gifts of the Holy Spirit, therefore, and not titles to be conferred by the IPHC.

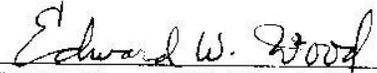
The term, bishop, is distinctively a New Testament word. The IPHC joins with the early leaders of the Lord's church in using this terminology to acknowledge its spiritual and administrative leaders. Therefore, the general superintendent and conference superintendents in the International Pentecostal Holiness Church carry the honorary title of bishop.

We also recognize an affinity in the New Testament between the role of functional apostles and bishops. This close similarity makes it reasonable to expect persons who function in the manifold gifts of the Spirit to be amenable to their bishops.

The IPHC places its blessings on ministry networks for the purpose of assisting others in doing ministry, rather than as a vehicle to gain lordship over a group. Those who desire to form networks within the IPHC are always under the spiritual and administrative authority of both their conference bishop and the presiding bishop of the IPHC.

The IPHC through its Manual gives the structure to be adhered to by all of its leadership and congregants. The Manual provides an umbrella that allows diversity within the limits it prescribes.

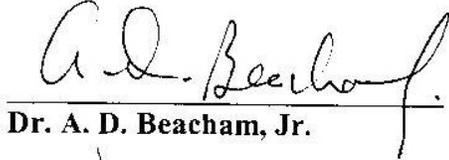
Signed: The Apostolic Commission Members



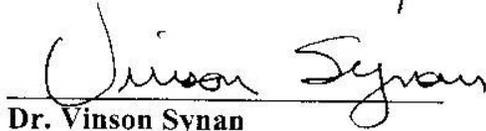
Rev. Edward W. Wood, Chairman



Dr. Frank G. Tunstall



Dr. A. D. Beacham, Jr.



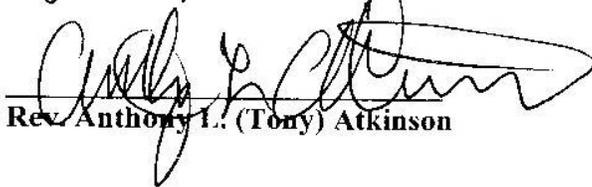
Dr. Vinson Synan



Rev. Terry Tramel



Rev. Jimmy C. Whitfield



Rev. Anthony L. (Tony) Atkinson

APPENDIX I

None of the New Testament writers offered any listing of character qualifications or duties for apostles at the third or functional level. However, there is such a New Testament catalog for bishops/elders.

1. The bishop had to be above reproach (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 2:7). To serve in that role, a bishop must not participate in any non-Christian activity.
2. He was required to be the “husband of one wife” (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6). In the pagan Roman Empire, where immorality was commonplace, Paul established a strict marital policy for bishops. In addition, the bishop was expected to “rule well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity” (1 Timothy 3:4, KJV; Titus 1:6). To Paul, the point was obvious: If a person “does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?” (1 Timothy 3:5). A bishop, therefore, was expected to be a dedicated family man.
3. The bishop was to be “temperate” and “self controlled,” a manager of his own person (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8). He must have the mastery over the desires of his own flesh.
4. The bishop was to be a “sober” man who lived wisely, possessing foresight in the management of practical affairs. He had to be sensible (Titus 1:8, KJV; 1 Timothy 3:2).
5. The bishop was required to be orderly, or a man “of good behavior.” The term so translated is *kosmion*, from which comes the English term, cosmos. As God placed order in His universe, so the bishop must be an orderly man who brought order into the lives of people (1 Timothy 3:2).
6. The bishop was to be hospitable, with social graces that enabled him to enjoy guests and treat them with cordiality and generosity (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8). The bishop must also be expected to share unselfishly with others.
7. He must be qualified and ready to teach (Titus 1:9). In doing so, he had to impart sound doctrine. He was also required to be gentle and not given to argumentation (2 Timothy 2:24-26).
8. The bishop must not be “given to wine” (1 Timothy 3:3, KJV; Titus 1:7, KJV).
9. He could not be a “striker” (Titus 1:7, KJV; 1 Timothy 3:3). The word in the Greek carries the meaning of both physical and verbal violence. The bishop must be a servant like His Lord, not one to smite physically or verbally, or to be a violent, quarrelsome man (1 Peter 2:23). Rather, he was to be forbearing and patient (1 Timothy 3:3). He possessed the ability and wisdom to know when not to enforce something that was due, recognizing that there are times to act with leniency and patience.
10. The bishop was “not a brawler” (1 Timothy 3:3, KJV), given to contentious behavior.
11. He could not be a man who was “a lover of money” (1 Timothy 3:3; 1 Peter 5:2; Titus 1:7). Rather, he was to teach people how to handle capital assets. The bishop could not fulfill this requirement if he was not himself free from the love of money. Nor could he be covetous (1 Timothy 3:3, KJV), desiring money or possessions, which were not and could not be his own. Instead, the bishop was to be liberal and generous.
12. The bishop could not be a “recent convert”: one who was a novice or neophyte in the faith (1 Timothy 3:6). Rather, he was to be a seasoned man of mature wisdom and experience.
13. The bishop was not permitted to be conceited in his own self-estimate of his worth (1 Timothy 3:6). This kind of pride would cause him to fall into the condemnation of the devil.
14. A bishop was required to be a man of “good reputation” among those from outside the household of faith who knew him. Otherwise, Satan could use someone acquainted with the

weakness of his character to set a snare for him, making him “fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap” (1 Timothy 3:7).

15. The bishop could not be “self-willed,” loving his own way to the point that, to use an idiom, he wanted his own way regardless, and was overbearing (Titus 1:7 KJV). Neither could he be a stubborn man who was insensitive to the feelings of others. He must not try like a dictator to force his own views on others.
16. Nor could he be a passionate man who was “quick-tempered” (Titus 1:7, NIV). The personality of the bishop must not be impulsive, given to wrath that seeks to punish with vengeance.
17. The bishop was to be “a lover of good men.” He was expected to pull around himself men who were holy and honorable like himself – men who delighted to think about and do good things (Titus 1:8, KJV).
18. The bishop was required to be a just man, capable of rendering fair and impartial decisions based on the facts. His rulings must be based on principle and his life sanctioned by sober piety (Titus 1:8). He gained this status because of his sacred observance of all duties toward God – which was the essence of piety.
19. The bishop was required to be a man who practiced holding firmly “to the trustworthy message as it has been taught” (Titus 1:9). How could he teach sound doctrine and convince the gainsayers, if he himself vacillated in the doctrine?

Since “the Holy Spirit” made the Ephesian brethren “overseers,” bishops received their commission from God, just as apostles did (Acts 20:28). The passage explicitly demonstrates that the Holy Spirit, as the great Administrator of the church, chooses, commissions, and equips bishops too.

These God-appointed men were responsible to:

- Obey the Great Commission in their ministries, in the Spirit of the Great Command, so that the gospel went to the nations (Matthew 28:16-20; Luke 10:27; John 13:34, 35)
- Keep watch over themselves (Acts 20:28)
- Shepherd the flock of God, with servants’ hearts (Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:5; 1 Peter 5:2)
- Teach the doctrine (1 Timothy 3:2)
- Protect the people from false teachers (Acts 20:28-30)
- Refute false doctrines (Titus 1:9)
- Oversee God’s church (1 Timothy 3:5)
- Direct the affairs of the church, which made them worthy of double honor (1 Timothy 5:17)
- Lead without becoming dictators, acting as “lords over those entrusted to [them]” (1 Peter 5:3); the Christ was Himself servant of all; likewise, the bishop was to be an example to the flock as a servant (Mark 9:35)
- Demonstrate miraculous healings in their ministry (James 5:14, 15)
- Guide the congregation in worship and administer the sacraments of the church

These qualifications spoke only minimally to administrative experience or, in modern thought, management expertise. The Lord searched primarily for character in choosing His leaders. “Man looks on the outward appearance but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

Functional apostles and bishops in the New Testament fulfilled similar roles. It is also a well-established fact of church history that the terminology of bishop superseded the terminology of apostle in the post-apostolic church.

The apostle Peter even described himself as a co-elder or a “fellow elder” with the elders (or bishops) in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, to whom he addressed his first epistle (1 Peter 5:1). This is a clear case of a foundational apostle, who also thought of himself as an elder (or bishop). This dynamic was intimated when the apostles chose a successor for Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus. In that discussion, Peter actually used the term translated elsewhere in the New Testament as “bishop” to refer to apostolic ministry. “It is written in the book of Psalms, ‘Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric [*episkopain*] let another take’” (Acts 1:20, KJV).

APPENDIX II

Commission Consultants:

Bishop James D. Leggett, Presiding Bishop, International Pentecostal Holiness Church

Dr. Ronald Carpenter, Executive Director, IPHC Evangelism USA

Dr. Eric Belcher, Vice President, Christ for the Nations

Rev. Ron Carpenter Jr., (teleconference) Pastor, Redemption World Outreach Center

Dr. Charles Chitwood, Academic Dean, Southwestern Christian University

Dr. Dan Greenlee, President, Advantage College

Bishop Thomas McGhee, Superintendent, Cornerstone Conference

Rev. Garry Yeatts, Member, Cornerstone Conference Board, and Director, Cornerstone Biblical Ministries Institute

Rev. Paul Oxley, Professor of Bible, Emmanuel College

Dr. Garnet Pike, (teleconference) Dean, Southwestern Christian University Graduate School

NOTE: An invitation was extended to each conference bishop to meet with the Study Commission or send a representative.

APPENDIX III

The Assignment Made by the 2005 General Conference:

That a biblical/theological study of the Apostolic Movement be referred to a study commission of IPHC scholars/theologians appointed by the General Executive Board.

The study will include some practical guidelines for apostolic ministries and any other current theological issues in the IPHC, and the study commission will be made up of persons with some diversity of perspective on the subject.

Study Commission position papers will be presented to the General Board of Administration by 2008.

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