

MARKETPLACE APOSTLES

The Government of the Church

I do not question any one of those statements (about provision coming into the Church). I think that every one has validity. I think that the determining variable might well have to do directly with the gift and office of apostle.

I believe that it makes sense to postulate that God might well hesitate in lifting the church to a new and unprecedented level of financial resources until the true, biblical government of the church is actually in place. According to Ephesians 2:20, apostles and prophets are the foundation of this ecclesiastical government, and 1 Corinthians 12:28 adds the fact that apostles are first in its order. How, then, could God entrust this wealth to the church until the apostles have been recognized in their rightful place? It would be like loading cargo into a truck with no tires. The cargo, good as it might be, could go nowhere.

The good news is that the biblical government of the church has actually been coming into place over the past 30 years. In the 1970s the gift and office of intercessor began to be recognized, in the 1980s the gift and office of prophet began to be recognized, and in the 1990s the gift and office of apostle began to be recognized. My personal reckoning is that this process was completed, at least in its initial stages, in 2001.

If that is the case, why, then, haven't the funds been released?

Marketplace Apostles

The answer to that may well relate to what have been called "**marketplace apostles.**" It is helpful to think of the church as two interrelated spheres, the "nuclear church" and the "extended church," much as sociologists distinguish between the "nuclear family" and the "extended family." The nuclear church is the church as we have traditionally known it, congregations of God's people that meet together on Sunday and groupings of these congregations. The extended church is what we have commonly thought of as God's people in the marketplace.

1 Corinthians 12:28 says that God gave to the church "first apostles." It seems reasonable to conclude that He would have given apostles both to the nuclear church and the extended church. Almost all of the recent process of recognizing the gift and office of apostle has focused on apostles in the nuclear church. Progress has been rapid and we are becoming quite comfortable with that phase of apostolic ministry. But now is the time, in my opinion, that we need to do similar work on understanding the role of apostles in the marketplace or the extended Church.

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