



### Apostolic Strategy

... *the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work ...*

Acts 13:2

God is restoring a new level of the 'apostolic' to his church.

But for this to occur we must cut through the extraneous and get to the foundational. In an age of communication and information overload we are desperately in need of distinguishing between the primary and the peripheral.

And so, in this chapter my object is to uncover the primary strategy for an apostolic release and show how the kingdom of God may increase on earth.

#### **Distinguishing between *strategy & tactics***

To do this we must understand two terms:

*Strategy*—the art of war; the planning and direction of the larger military movements and overall operations; and *tactics*—the art of disposing armed forces; the carrying out of the larger strategy through manoeuvres in actual contact with the enemy.

The former consists of foundational principles, which are inviolable and universal—applicable to all peoples and all times. They look at the big picture—to where, when, and why troops and resources are best directed to ensure victory.

The latter consists of situational procedures — methods that will vary depending on circumstances to deliver troops and resources in implementing the strategy. For example, troops and supplies may be dropped in by parachute, or they may be landed by boat. It deals with the logistics of a specific mission.

Tragically the church devotes most of her energies to the *tactical*, trying to implement and improve practical programmes, assuming they are integral to God's larger *strategy*.

The *tactical* must come out of the *strategic* and relates to the management of either the church (this management is called the *diaconate*) or the sphere of the apostle (the *apostolate* which is managed by the ministry of 'helps and administrations'). This opens the difference between the *church* and the *work*, which we will unpack later in this chapter.

The *strategic* is macro-leadership, while the *tactical* is micro-management. But one must flow from the other — the latter out of the former.

This article therefore will take us into the 'war room'—into the macro. There we will explore the apostolic strategy for the global expansion of the gospel and the increase of his kingdom on earth.

### **Defining the term *apostle***

To do this we must first define the term *apostle*. The Greek word *apostolos* simply means “a sent one”. Jesus used the verb form of this word when He declared, *"As the Father has sent (apostello) me, so I send you"* (Jn 20:21). Every believer clearly has an apostolic commission. The marching orders have already been given. But how are those orders delivered in a given situation so that the body of Christ might move into the apostolic — into its commission as a *sent one*?

This is where the apostle kicks in. Along with the prophet, they are the pivotal ascension-gift-ministries for the healthy functioning of the body and the releasing of the saints to the work of ministry (see Eph 2:20; 4:11-14). In other words, the body cannot function apostolically without the full and mature functioning of the apostle.

The use of the term *apostolos* in classical Greek is instructive: first, in the context of Roman colonial expansion, it was used to refer to the commander of a naval expedition sent out to establish a new colony; and also, to the whole fleet and colony which was founded by that commander.

### **Nature & function of the *apostolic***

The Holy Spirit has lifted this term from its classical context and embedded it within the sacred text to describe for us both the nature and function of the apostolic.

Sent from God, the primary function of the apostle is to plant the colony of heaven on earth. This is far larger than just planting new churches. It encompasses this, but has more to do with the increase of the kingdom both in a quantitative and qualitative sense — the raising up of a new humanity enjoying and advancing *"righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit"* (Rom 14:17; see also Rom 8:29; Heb 2:10).

This is borne through the corporate and plural nature of the apostolic. We have just seen in the original usage of the term the thought of leadership (the commander) and the corporate (the fleet and the colonists).

While not teaching explicitly the corporateness of the apostolic ministry, the Scripture does teach it implicitly by way of a model.

Paul, for example, on his 3rd missionary journey returning from Greece *"was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, and by Aristarchus and Secindus of the Thessalonians; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia"* (Acts 20:4). Through this corporateness the gospel spreads and the kingdom is expanded.

Paul said of his associate Timothy, *"For I have no one else of kindred spirit...But you know of his proven worth that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel..."* (Phil 2:20, 22). Likewise, Luke in his record of Paul's 2nd missionary journey provides us clear testimony to the corporateness and effect of Paul's ministry in the spread of the gospel: *"And a vision appeared to Paul...a certain man of Macedonia...saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and*

*help us.' And when he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them" (Act 16:9,10). It is important to note that while he (Paul) had seen the vision we (Paul's team including Luke) sought to go. Through the apostle, Luke concludes that "God had called us to preach"—a vivid picture of what could be called the 'corporate apostle'.*

It appears that Paul's apostolic grace was the catalyst for the release and function of other ministries. His life and dynamic irrepressibly found expression in a company of intimates (see Rom 16:1-16). These men and women, while free, subordinated any individualistic pursuit of ministry, resulting not in an organisational structure, but in a pure and powerful demonstration of the body of Christ—of free men walking together in relationship as love-slaves to Christ.

### **Paul the prototype apostle**

And so, the history of God's activity through the church is primarily a history of people and movements; he calls and commissions apostles, through whom he raises up a work. After the ascension of Christ Peter, James, and John, all had their spheres of ministry from which flowed related movements of followers and co-labourers.

However, as significant as these men were I would suggest that there is one man and movement which is the normative model—the prototype.

This, in my view, is Paul—the pioneer *apostle to the Gentiles* (Gal 2:8). A man sent to the *ethne*—to all tribes, tongues, peoples, and nations (see Acts 26:16-18). His mission was universal—to *all* nations.

Let me explain.

Peter, by contrast, was recognised as an *apostle to the Jews*. This was according to a divine commission, as was Paul's apostleship to the Gentiles (see Gal 2:7,8). James and John were also established as 'pillars' in Jerusalem—the Hebrew church (see Gal 1:19; 2:9, 12; Acts 15:13; 21:18), although, tradition later places John in Ephesus (living out his days towards the close of the first century as an old and venerated leader of that church); and Peter in Rome.

However, Paul was the chosen instrument to take the gospel to the nations in accordance with God's purpose (see Acts 9:15; 26:15-18; 13:47; Isa 49:6; Rom 1:1; Gal 1:15). This was primarily an issue of call and revelation:

*15 But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased 16 to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man,*

Galatians 1:15–16 NIV

Because of his call to the nations God entrusted a unique revelation to Paul. This revelation was not received from any man, nor revealed to previous generations:

*... the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, ... I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.*

Galatians 1:11-12 NIV

He did not receive it from Peter, James, or John. In fact Paul's revelation was so distinctive he could describe it uniquely as *my gospel* (Rom 2:16; 16:25; 2 Tim 2:8; 2 Th 2:14; 2 Cor 4:3).

He also warned of a *different gospel*, in contrast to the gospel that he had preached (see 2 Cor 11:4; Gal 1:6, 8, 9). Paul's gospel was so distinct in contrast to that of Peter, James, and John, and so integral to the establishing of the new covenant order that he publicly withstood Peter in Antioch to protect it (see Gal 2:11-14). Peter, writing many years later, acknowledged that Paul's revelation was *hard to understand*, but had evidently accepted the rebuke, affirming his writings as *Scripture* (see 2 Pet 3:16).

So, what was the revelation that others found so hard to understand—and what was unique about it?

Paul explains:

*Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation... In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of **one body** (emphasis mine) ...*

Ephesians 3:2-6 NIV

It is the revelation of the *one body*, in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile (see Eph 2:11- 18; Col 3:11; Gal 3:28; 6:15; Rom 2:28, 29). Until this revelation the gospel – with the exception of Cornelius's household in Acts 10 – was viewed as exclusive to the Jew. And even after the outpouring of the Spirit at Cornelius's house the Gentiles were still subjected to the ritual law. Certain individuals came from James in Jerusalem to Antioch demanding the Gentiles submit to circumcision. Conflicting with Paul's revelation of the gospel this precipitated the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) and triggered Paul's later confrontation with Peter at Antioch because of his withdrawal from the Gentiles (Gal 2).

This revelation of the *one body* is the essence of the apostolic mandate.

### **Antioch – the prototype apostolic church**

Before we expand on the revelation of the *one body*, viewing Paul as the apostolic prototype for the universal church, let us explore the beginnings of that ministry.

If we are to understand the intent of the Holy Spirit in any given direction, we must go back to the first instance of that direction. This provides the model for all future development.

To do this we must return to the city of Antioch. It was from here that the Gentile mission was born, becoming the true parent of the universal church. The action of the Holy Spirit in this city creates the DNA for the apostolic—it becomes the prototype for gospel expansion and kingdom increase.

Focussing on Antioch, Acts chapter 13 divides the record of Acts in two the first section (ch 1-12) finding its focal point in Peter's mission to the Jews, and the second (ch 13-28) finding it in the unfolding Pauline mission to the nations. Significantly, the first reference to Paul as an 'apostle' does not occur until chapter 14 (vs. 4, 14)—after he has been sent from Antioch.

Acts 13, therefore, provides the ingredients for the release of the apostolic.

Let us examine this in more detail:

### **A gateway city**

First, we see that Antioch was a *gateway* city.

Antioch, in Syria, the third largest city of the Roman Empire after Rome and Alexandria, was a commercial and political hub. Close to the frontier between the Greco-Roman world and the Orient, it contained a highly cosmopolitan population. It was the gateway between West and East—a city through which commerce, government, many nationalities, and belief-systems found access to larger geographical regions and spheres of influence.

The international complexion of the city, and therefore of the church, is reflected in its leadership:

*In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers:  
Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who  
had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch) and Saul.*

Acts 13:1 NIV

In addition to Barnabas from Cyprus and Saul from Tarsus, the leadership consisted of Simeon called Niger (meaning *black*), obviously from Africa; Lucius of Cyrene, from Libya, in North Africa; and Manaen, “*brought up with Herod*”, a member of the Jewish aristocracy.

As the master-strategist, in this melting pot of the nations, the Holy Spirit chose to give birth to the apostolic. It became the launch pad for the Gentile apostolic mission—for the colony of heaven invading earth.

And so, the *Antioch model* illustrates that the Holy Spirit is strategic in choosing *gateway* cities for the raising up of the apostolic.

Even so, it must be remembered that *forerunners* and *saviours* most often come from, or minister in, obscure places before strategic expansion. He sent, for example, John the Baptist into the wilderness; Amos was called from a small country town, and Jesus came from Nazareth. Paul was also taken into Arabia for a season before his strategic placement in Antioch (Gal 1:17, 18).

**The church of the city:** " ... in the church in Antioch ... " Acts 13:1

God is restoring the *church of the city*. The coming worldwide visitation will be so extensive, and so intensive, that one group will not be able to contain it. It will demand a new wineskin—the emerging *city-church*.

The apostolic church knows nothing of our modern denominational divisions. It was not denominated by theologies or celebrities, but by *geographies*. Geographical boundaries and civil jurisdictions alone determined the church's boundaries. They were not in competition with one another; when the apostle addressed a church he would speak, for example, to the whole "*church of God in Corinth*" (1 Cor 1:2). Evidently, the church, even in these large cosmopolitan cities, was functioning as one unified body.

This brings us again to the content of Paul's revelation of the mystery: "*that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body (emphasis mine)...*" (Eph 3:6).

The revelation of the *one body* was not only the *message* but also the *method* of Paul's apostolic mission to the Gentiles. Once received it was modelled in the citywide church of Antioch and then in Paul's apostolic team. Conceived in the womb of the city-church, Paul's apostolic team was thrust out from Antioch to plant and nurture the corporate Christ – city by city – throughout the nations. Paul and his team, having had hands laid on them by the Antioch church, were 'sent' (*apostello*) out (see Acts 13:3). And so, the prophecy is fulfilled that "*the inhabitants of one city will go to another and say, 'Let us go at once to entreat the Lord and seek the Lord Almighty'*" (Zech 8:21).

This is in vast contrast to many of the so-called *apostolic networks* that litter the current church landscape. Flying the flag of a particular *network*, new members are *recruited* to that network rather than *re-formed* into the one body of Christ of the city. Consequently they are defined and denominated by their membership of that particular network rather than by the church of the city. In my view this is incipient denominationalism—it is not materially different to our existing denominational divisions.

Because we are in transition this aberration is in some measure understandable. We are emerging from a centuries-old sub-normal Christianity; and so, the fullness of the apostolic ministry will occur only in harmony with the restoration of the apostolic church—the one church of the city. This will occur as a work of the Spirit and will require distinguishing between two very different spheres of ministry—between the *church* and the *work*. It will also demand that one serve the other, but more of this later.

The apostolic Gentile mission began in Antioch and will continue until the “*full number of the Gentiles has come in*” (Rom 11:25). As the parent of that mission, Antioch’s DNA will, therefore, play out in every authentic expression of the apostolic.

Just as the Church of Ephesus “*tested those who claimed to be apostles... and found them false*” (Rev 2:2), contemporary apostles will also need to be measured and tested.

The marks of an apostle, in addition to the *miraculous* (signs, wonders and miracles - 2 Cor 12:12), are seen in the *man* (the fellowship of Christ's sufferings for the sake of his body – see 2 Cor 4; 6:3-13; 11:16-12:10; Phil 3:10; Col 1:24-27); in their *message* (the revelation of the mystery – the one body – Eph 3:2-6); and in their *method* (the Antioch-model as a prototype discussed here).

The revelation of the mystery – of one corporate Christ – in every city was shown to Paul and to the “*apostles and prophets*” (see Eph 3:5). This revelation will drive every authentic apostle, not to build empires and networks, but to spend and be spent in growing the one church of the city. This is the peculiar mission of apostles, prophets, and teachers who are set in the body as the spearhead of heaven’s invasion of earth (1 Cor 12:28). They do not exist for themselves—to be a successful and growing network, but for the body of Christ of each locality that it might come to “*the fullness of the stature of Christ*” (Eph 4:11-14). This DNA only comes by the Spirit: “*...it is now being revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets*” (Eph 3:5); and is therefore one of the proofs of true apostleship.

Without it, new *apostolic networks* will only prove to be a deviation—as self-serving, sectarian, and schismatic as historic denominationalism.

And so, when Paul planned to visit Rome, for example, he addressed himself “*to all in Rome* (ie to the whole church of the city)...*I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong...*” (Rom 1:7, 11 NIV). He was concerned to impart something of the Spirit to the *whole* church of the city that would add to their corporate maturity. His apostolic passion and purview took in the whole horizon of the city-church. He was not looking for recruits to grow his *part*—his own network.

It is time to ask ourselves whether we are merely building a ‘successful’ network or the corporate Christ!

**The church and the work:** “*In the church at Antioch...the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart Paul and Barnabas for the work ...’*” Acts 13:1-2

Despite the apostolic message and method finding its focus in the city-church – the *one body* – there is a clear division of labour. Paul and Barnabas, at the direction of the Holy Spirit, were to be separated from the *church* to the *work*.

This is the birth of the apostolic. Hands are laid on them and they are ‘sent’ out (*apostello*), immediately embarking with John Mark, on the first missionary journey into Asia Minor (modern day Turkey), preaching, winning disciples, planting churches, and appointing elders. On returning to Antioch they give an account of their labours

and after a lengthy stay Paul returns, this time with Silas, to "*see how they are doing*" (Acts 15:36), thus providing apostolic oversight for the cities and regions previously visited.

The *church* and the *work* are distinguished in missiology as the *modality* and the *sodality*. They are two distinct spheres of calling; the former referring to the *local* sphere of congregational life; the latter to a *trans-local* sphere—in fact, to the brotherhood, or association of an apostolic team, which is separate from the former, but given to the work of serving it along with a larger geographical region. Thus, both spheres are interdependent, neither presiding over the other in any organisational sense. Nonetheless, God sets apostles, prophets and teachers in the church with spiritual authority, in contrast to organisational or institutional (1 Cor 12:28).

This pattern has been somewhat reflected throughout the Christian movement in the various reformational or missionary movements, and brotherhoods of both the Catholic and Protestant streams. However, because of the post-apostolic subnormal condition of the church they have been limited in their effect, despite the reforming nature of their origins. Despite the retardation of institutionalism, they were in most cases born of a true apostolic or prophetic genius.

Nonetheless, in response to the spiritual malaise of the church, they have separated from it and given themselves to specialist areas such as missions, prayer, education, or mercy—but in isolation to the true apostolic burden of the *one body*, the corporate Christ of a city (*modality*). And yet this is the DNA of the original apostolic team (*sodality*) that was sent from Antioch.

Consequently, our current understanding of so-called 'para-church' ministries is aberrant, so also our understanding of the 'local church'. As the Holy Spirit restores the fullness of the apostolic and prophetic foundation of the *new thing* God is doing, many para-church ministries will either become a part of the city-church diaconate or become fully-fledged apostolic movements serving and facilitating the restoration of the *one body*, the city- church, across whole regions of the globe. Others may become *ministries of helps* (or *supports*) to those movements that have a true and proven apostolic commission. And others will be shut down, as the Father plucks up all that he has not planted.

### **The foundation of *apostles and prophets***

If apostles and prophets, in union with Christ as the chief cornerstone, truly are the foundation of God's dwelling (Eph 2:20-22), these transitions and realignments will *only* occur as the foundation is restored.

This is why intimacy with God is so foundational to what God is doing, but more of that in a moment.

In any building process first things must be first—first the foundations and then the superstructure: "*... God sets first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then ...*" (1 Cor 12:28 NASB). This means that for the "*dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit*" to be raised up across a whole city – for a citywide visitation – apostles and prophets are not optional. In fact, without them it begs the question as to what we are building. It explains in some measure why the church has stalled in the West, including the newer city-reaching and various church growth emphases.



A restoration process demands the 'uprooting and pulling down' of all that is not true to the original plan. Only then can the 'building and planting' proceed. This is the work of reformation as God shakes all things that can be shaken, so that only the unshakeable will remain (Heb 12)—every human system, structure, and sentiment will be shaken until only the kingdom of God remains. Our present 'local church' structures are currently experiencing this. The traditional model of a pastor-led congregation retailing as a denominational franchise will phase out as the city-church, built on the foundation of apostles and prophets, replaces it. This is the Father's original pattern—a mature corporate son revealed in every city (see Eph 4:11-13; also for a full explanation see chapter 9 of the author's book, 'Snakes in the Temple: Exposing Idolatry in Today's Church').

And as it was at the first, at this end of the age the heavens will again resonate with the Father's pleasure as he declares over the corporate Christ, *"This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased. Listen to him!"* (Mtt 17:5). God will rivet the attention of whole cities as a visible manifestation of his glory descends over them, sweeping multitudes into the kingdom. The word preached by his apostles and prophets, confirmed with signs following, will become the norm (Mk 16:20).

But how will this occur, and how will the apostolic foundation be restored? The Antioch prototype provides the spiritual principles and strategy.

**Prophets and teachers:** *"In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers ... "* Acts 13:1

It would appear prophets and teachers prepare the way for the release of apostles. Through prophetic teaching and declaration a shift occurs in the spirit realm that releases new or higher levels of the apostolic.

This kind of teaching is not just the transfer of information. It is not Greek academe – the teaching of seminaries or Bible Colleges, as useful as that is – but rather the kind of prophetic teaching that is truly transformational—the proclamation (*kerygma*) of the gospel of the kingdom of God. It is not merely man's wisdom acquired from book learning, but wisdom from God, taught by the Spirit to his apostles and prophets (Eph 3:1-10). It is food for the spirit that comes from the Father's heart through those sent as ascension-gift-ministries to the church (see Eph 4:11). They are those that Jesus promised that he would send as *"prophets, wise men and teachers"* (Mtt 23:34); they are John-the- Baptist-type prophets, reformers and revolutionaries sent to prepare the way of the Lord.

And as they prophesy, as did Ezekiel, there will be a *"noise, and a shaking as the bones come together, bone to bone"* (Ezk 37:4-8) – a re-formation of the church – in fact, a restoration of the *one body*, until their breath enters them and they *"stand on their feet as an exceeding great army"* (v 10)—a cohesive fighting force with *"one spirit, one hope, one Lord, and one God and Father, over all and through all and in all"* (see Eph 4:4-6); and so, *"from him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work"* (Eph 4:16).

The body of Christ is now entering a phase of prophetic teaching and declaration strategic to the restoration of apostles toward the rebuilding of the church of the city.

**Prophetic worship birthing the apostolic:** *"As they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said ... "* Acts 13:2

These kinds of prophets and teachers are given to the Lord in ministry to him. They know what it is to play to an audience of *One*. They are not ecclesiastical functionaries – professional ministers and church technicians – but men of the Spirit. Like David they have hearts after the heart of God and know how to lose themselves in him—to be abandoned to the Great-Heart himself. They do not 'do' worship to bring God down, nor coerce him to perform in any way.

### **Priests after the Order of Zadok**

They are priests after the order of *Zadok*. Having remained faithful to the Lord and to the sanctuary while others pursued their idols of growth and success they alone, in this new temple of the city-church – the mature corporate Christ –will be permitted to "*come near ... to minister before me*" (Ezk 44:16).

Those Levites who pursued other gods will bear the consequences of their defection. They will be permitted to minister at the gates of the temple *before the people*—but never in the sanctuary *before the Lord* (see Ezk 44:10-16). The secret of the Lord is with those who fear him (Ps 25:14); and so, his hidden counsels – the intimate things of his heart – will only be revealed to those who have denied all other lovers, remaining true in their devotion exclusively to him.

When the more obvious manifestations of renewal subside, the Lord will search our hearts to see whether we continue to pursue him, or resort to 'business as usual'—to man's programmes and planning. Those who cross the invisible line of unfaithfulness in the past season will visibly wear the consequences in the next. They will be supernaturally withheld from having significance in the restored temple of Ezekiel's vision—the new temple of the city-church. The most unlikely will emerge as the apostles and prophets of this new era of the church. Those who have lead churches and movements in their headlong pursuit of the Baals of growth and success – like Esau – will not regain their birthright even with weeping (Heb 12:16-17).

And so, the apostolic is born of spiritual intimacy. Union with Christ is the primary driver of true apostles, providing the foundation for the dwelling of God with men.

Out of intimacy with the Father the next season will see an increased level of prophetic teaching and declaration—a declaration of the counsels of God's heart regarding the mature corporate son; that is, the restoration of the one church of the city, built on the foundation of true apostles and prophets with Christ as the chief cornerstone (Eph 2:20-22).

To the surprise of the religious system a new breed of Zadok-like apostles and prophets will be released into the body of Christ to prepare for the harvest of the nations.

### **Rebuilding the *House of the Lord***

Once again God is calling out a remnant from the church's Babylonian captivity.

As ancient Israel, when the seventy years had expired, were set free to return and rebuild the temple, likewise, the people of God in this hour (Jer 25:11-12; 29:10-14; Ezra 1:1-5). The prophetic clock has been ticking and the time for our release is imminent. But it is a release with a purpose: *“the restoration of all things spoken by the holy prophets”* (Acts 3:21), so as to restore and rebuild the house of the Lord.

Nevertheless, we have misunderstood the ‘house of the Lord’. We have believed that it was our ‘panelled houses’ – our ‘local churches’, denominations, and movements – while the house of the Lord lies waste (Hag 1). With myopic vision we have focussed exclusively on our *part*—our ‘panelled houses’; in reality, just another franchise outlet, whether it is for the latest ‘apostolic network’, a new movement, or historic denomination.

We have forgotten the *whole*; that Jesus said, *“I will build My church”* (emphasis mine – Mtt 16:18); that he is single-minded about the restoration of *“one flock with one shepherd”* (Jn 10:16); the one church of the city according to Ephesians 4—not our sectarian spiritually bastardised versions of it (1 Cor 1:10-13; 3:1-9; 11:18; 12:25; 2 Cor 11:2-30; Eph 4:1-6).

We have prevaricated by saying, *“The time has not yet come for the Lord’s house to be built”* (Hag 1:2). Nevertheless the time has come when the Lord is asking, *“Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your panelled houses, while this house remains a ruin?”* (Hag 1:4).

We have wondered why it’s so hard to ‘do church’, why there is so much ‘burn-out’—so much failure and frustration, and so little growth.

And so, the Lord is saying:

*... Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but have harvested little...You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home I blew away. Why? ... Because of My house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house.*

Haggai 1:5-9 NIV

The Lord is about to stir the hearts of his people again. As they hear the prophetic sound of the Haggais and Zechariahs, the Zerubbabels and Joshuas – the apostolic builders, with a remnant people – will leave their sectarian and selfish interests to return to the work, to the rebuilding of the city-church and the raising up of the dwelling of God by the Spirit (Hag 1:12-15; Eph 2:19-22).

***“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit”***

But because the status quo – building our ministry, movement, church, or denomination – is such an immovable mountain the word of the Lord will again declare:

*... ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit’ ... ‘What are you, O mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level*

*ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of 'Grace, Grace!'*  
*Then the word of the Lord came to me, 'The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it ... '*

Zechariah 4:6-9 NIV

The mountain of entrenched patterns – eighteen-hundred years of religious traditions, structures, and sentiments, of self-effort and self-promotion – will fall before the omnipotent Spirit. What is impossible to man is possible to God. All things that can be shaken will be shaken, so that only the unshakeable will remain (Heb 12:26-29; Hag 2).

The release of God's people and the restoration of the city-church are imminent. Its foundation will be re-laid, but it will be by the Spirit, not by any human might or power—there will be no twelve-step city-reaching strategy to pull it off!

The foundation of apostles and prophets with Christ as the chief-cornerstone is the first step. And it will only be re-laid through a deep work of the Spirit. False foundations – denominational, celebrity, and self-seeking agendas – will be ripped up and discarded in this new move of the Spirit. A deep repentance will grip the hearts of many as they are called to *"raise up the age-old foundations"* (Isa 58:12).

All across our cities and nations these reformational forerunners are now being prepared for release; they have been called by the Spirit into places of obscurity and anonymity. Just as those who, in debt, distressed, and discontented were called out from Saul's palace to David at Adullam (1 Sam 22:1-2) in preparation for the throne – for the third and apostolic anointing – so too, a remnant forerunner company for the restoration of the apostolic city-church. They will prove to be the embryo of a new wineskin that will harvest whole cities and regions of the earth.

### **True servanthood – *"known, yet regarded as unknown"***

As 'no-name' apostles and prophets they will make way for the King. They will be buried in Christ as the chief-cornerstone – hidden in God – obscured in the anonymity of true servanthood—*"known, yet regarded as unknown"* (2 Cor 6:9). A foundation is never visible, except as it is being laid. And so, for a short season there will be a re-emphasis of their role in the process of rebuilding and restoration. But as they are put in place, in Paul's words:

*... God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe...we are fools for Christ ...*

1 Corinthians 4:9-10 NIV

As true apostles they will receive the sentence of death in themselves—they will decrease, so that the life of God may increase. And so, again in Paul's words: *"For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ"* (1 Cor 3:11).

And this foundation is more than the doctrine of Christ. It is not knowledge *about* Christ; rather, it is being immersed in the knowledge *of* Christ – a union of spirit – the intimacy of bride and groom. As Paul explains, “*you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God*” (Galatians 4:9 NASB). It is an intimate two-way experience.

Imparting this knowledge – through prophetic worship, declaration and teaching – prophets will prepare the way for a new release of the apostolic in the spirit of the Antioch prototype.

### **Apostolic strategy for maximum *impact***

But, once launched into the nations these new-breed apostles will employ a certain strategy—one that, for Paul, harvested cities and nations.

They will go to the ‘Jew first’, signifying the old order of man’s religious systems, with a prophetic challenge (see Rom 1:16; 2:9,10, Acts 13:46; 18:6; 28:17-31). From them a believing remnant will come out, identifying with the ‘new thing’ that God is doing. Nevertheless, as the old order resists the time will come to withdraw and go to the Gentiles—this will signal a new kingdom era and ingathering of the nations.

Specifically, this pattern is revealed during Paul’s third missionary journey.

In Ephesus:

*Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.*

Acts 19:8-10 NIV

True to the apostolic prototype of separation between the ‘church’ and the ‘work’ (ie ‘modality’ and ‘sodality’ – refer above on Acts 13) there is no indication Paul presided over the infant *church* of Ephesus in any kind of eldership or pastoral role. Rather, he gave himself to the apostolic *work* of teaching and training for the sending out of workers.

The School of Tyrannus became an ‘apostolic training centre’ that impacted the whole region. Ephesus, being the commercial and religious hub for the whole of Asia (modern day Turkey), was the strategic choice for maximum impact.

### **Apostolic anointing for miracles and *multiplication***

How did this work? on the principles of *replication* and *multiplication*. Paul, through a fathering relationship, instructed Timothy:

*and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*

2 Timothy 2:2 ESV

Four generations of leadership are embedded in this one apostolic directive. Paul not only *replicated* his life and ministry in Timothy, but it then *multiplied* through him to the third and fourth generation and no doubt beyond. Even so, the success of this strategy hinges on two factors: *character* and *capacity*. Timothy was to entrust the apostolic teaching only to *faithful* men (character) who will be *able* to teach others (capacity).

Along with "extraordinary miracles" this is how "the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power" throughout the whole of Asia (Acts 19:11, 20). It is no coincidence that when the apostles, at an earlier date, released themselves from administration and were given to prayer and the ministry of the word that "the word of the Lord spread" and that "the number of disciples increased (multiplied) rapidly" (Acts 6:7).

Addition is one thing, multiplication another. Believers were 'added' to the church initially, but as the apostolic ministry was released they began to 'multiply' rapidly (cf Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1, 7; 9:31, 35, 42; 11:21, 24; 12:24; 14:1, 21; 16:5; 17:12; 19:20).

From Christ, as the "Apostle and High Priest of our confession", this apostolic anointing for *miracles* and *multiplication* will exponentially flow into his body as it comes to maturity.

In Ephesus, healing and deliverance occurred through handkerchiefs touched by Paul (Act 19:11-20). The seven sons of Sceva, using the name of Jesus presumptuously in an attempt to exorcise demons, were turned upon by the demons, as they mocked, "*Jesus I know, Paul I know, but who are you?*" The whole city was seized by fear and the prince demon of Artemis (Diana to the Romans) was so shaken that a citywide riot against Paul ensued, pouring into the 25,000-seat theatre. The temple built to Artemis was four times larger than the Parthenon in Athens and the cult was so powerful that it presided over the religious, economic, and cultural life of the whole city and region. However, through the apostolic anointing for miracles and multiplication this dominant supernatural principality was conquered from that time, never to fully rise again. While there is no record of Paul confronting this prince power head on in prayer, at a later date there is extra-biblical evidence that John stood before the altar of Artemis commanding the demon to leave. Instantly, we are told, the altar split into pieces and half the temple collapsed!

Apostolic anointing and strategy leads to maximum impact! It is time to return from our Babylonian captivity, from our self-seeking and self-effort, to re-build the temple of the city-church—and rediscover the foundation of apostles and prophets with Christ as the chief-cornerstone.

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