

APOSTLES' AUTHORITY

Gary Inrig, in his book, Life in His Body, has this to say concerning the gift of apostleship (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11):

“This is the most important gift and was specifically the prerogative of the twelve disciples and Paul. An apostle was one who had not only seen the risen Christ (Acts 1:21-23; 1 Cor. 9:1) but who had been personally commissioned by the living Lord of the Church, and not just by men (Gal. 1:1). The essence of the apostle’s gift was his reception of divine revelation, his ministry is establishing churches, and his authority over the churches. They were thus the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20; 3:5). As such they held a unique position and were given unique powers and authority for the purpose of establishing new groups of believers and building them up in their faith. Apostles are not in the church today and they have not passed along their authority to others.”

William McRae in his book, The Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts, says:

“There are none with the authority of the ancient apostles and as direct revelation ceased with the completion of Scripture, we conclude that the gift of apostleship was a temporary gift in the first century church.”

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The New Testament seems to suggest a twofold use of the word apostle. Technically it refers to the “TWELVE”. Generally it refers to any “SENT ONE”. The Scriptures do distinguish between those who were “apostles of the churches” and those who were “apostles of Jesus Christ.” Some were apostles (sent out, messengers) of the churches. Barnabas was such a one but he was not an apostle of Jesus Christ.

1 Cor. 14:37 speaks of the special authority that the apostles and prophets were given when they spoke the commandments of God as revealed to them directly from the Lord.

Their practices are precepts for the church (1 Cor. 4:17).