

Apostolic Revolution Pt1

By Todd Bentley

Many of us are in awe at what the Lord is doing in the earth today. Not only is He allowing the earth to shake physically, but He's shaking the structures and governments of both the secular and Christian worlds. Many of us are seeing a whole new structure, or way of conducting church, emerging on an international scale. Therefore, in this article, I want to try to lay a prophetic grid for what God is doing, by outlining a number of strategic keys that will equip us to be part of the apostolic revolution in the world today.

The Tsunami Wave of God

To begin, I must ask the burning question, "Are you aware that we are in a move of God?" Listen! I am making an announcement: "We're in one! It's still coming, but we are in it!" I'm seeing us on the crest of a growing wave - a tsunami wave. The healing and prayer movements are in this wave, but it's bigger than that. It reminds me of a revolution! (Revolution means "the overthrow of one government and its replacement with another; a sudden or momentous change in a situation.") What's happening today in evangelism and the great harvest doesn't complete the picture either!

I believe these three major moves of God - healing, prayer and evangelism/harvest - will come together and form one, global movement. This fusion gives life and substance to the tsunami wave or move of gives life and substance to the tsunami wave and move of God, but we mustn't box God in; we have to give Him freedom to enlarge this wave. This next wave of God can be considered an apostolic movement. But what does that mean? To understand the nature of the apostolic, let's examine several characteristics of the apostle and nine true signs that mark genuine apostolic anointing and authority.

Definition of an Apostle

An apostle is a missionary, a sent one or a messenger who first plants the Christian faith in any part of the world, and one who initiates any great moral reform, or who advocates any important belief. An apostle must be chosen and appointed by God, not self appointed. Also, an apostle must never be appointed by any man or college, institution or church that might want to do so, based solely on their own initiative and outside of the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Yes, God is restoring apostles in the church today, but I would like to pause and bring a word of caution. Those who say "I am an apostle" are the ones we need to be careful of. Usually the ones that really are apostles don't say anything about who they are. The anointing speaks for itself. In addition, it's my belief that for someone to even qualify to use the name "apostle", or for someone to oversee an apostolic network, he or she should be moving in miracles, signs, wonders and mighty deeds.

APOSTOLIC ANOINTING AND AUTHORITY

I want to share with you nine true signs or characteristics that qualify genuine apostolic anointing and authority:

1) Separation: "Paul a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God" (Rom. 1:1). Apostles are instructed, by God, to live a life of total consecration, totally separated to His purpose and call.

2) Fathers: "For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers..." (1 Cor. 4:15). Apostolic anointing produces loving spiritual fathers; their role is a reproductive one that produces mature sons and daughters.

3) Team Counsel: "Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter" (Acts 15: 6). An apostle has a team spirit and gathers with other apostles and elders for counsel at prophetic round tables in various cities, regions and nations. Apostles maintain an attitude that welcomes the wisdom of other apostles from different spheres and locations.

4) Signs, Wonders and Perseverance: "Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you will all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds" (2 Cor. 12: 12). Notably, true apostles don't give up easily; they persevere in signs wonders and mighty deeds, not getting disappointed and discouraged in spite of fierce opposition.

5) Humility: "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself" (Phil. 2:3). An apostle walks in humility; Paul models humility.

6) Servant hood: "Imitate me just as I also imitate Christ" (1 Cor. 11:16).

Paul was telling the Corinthians to follow Christ in everything they did; they were to imitate him in living solely for the glory of God. He urged the Corinthians to have Servant's hearts. The passion of Paul's life was to serve Christ and to serve others - that humble commitment of love is a mark of the apostolic anointing. An attitude of servant hood always seeks the profit of many that they might be saved (1 Cor. 10:32-33). Apostles are the servants of all.

7) True Revelatory Gifting: "But I made known to you, brethren that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1 11: 12). Apostles operate in significant prophetic gifting and receive the anointing to preach the gospel through the revelation of Jesus Christ, just like Paul did. True apostles, most of the time, possess a strong anointing that is revelatory and prophetic. They can actually change their "apostolic hat" for a "prophetic hat" or step out into ministry with both hats. Like Paul, they can also shake entire cities and plant churches with signs and wonders. Accurate revelatory gifting will accompany a true apostle. Frequent, heightened, supernatural experiences are normal for the apostle - they have visions and dreams, receive the word of the Lord and experience open heavens.

8) Character: "And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (Rom 5:3 - 5). God wants to raise up apostles with impeccable character who can be completely trusted. He repeatedly tests apostles, using trials and tribulations to reveal their real level of character. Not only do tribulations help build character, they also produce perseverance and hope. Apostles that patiently allow God to refine their character will be fully equipped and carry a strong authority to bring a message of hope to the world - the message of salvation through Jesus Christ!

9) Breaking Out: "And so I make it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest all should build on another man's foundation" (Rom 15: 20 - 21). Like Paul, modern-day apostles pioneer new territory; they don't want to build on anyone else's foundation. Apostles actually enjoy the adventure of new frontiers; their hearts are set on a pilgrimage.

THE EMERGING APOSTOLIC REVOLUTION

Vision of Harvest

I'd like to share with you a vision that I had in Eastern Europe. We were in Latvia driving to an evangelistic meeting when I was taken into an open, interactive vision. In the vision I was looking at a white, golden, harvest field that shimmered with rays of God's glory and splendor. I was standing on the threshold of this magnificent never-ending harvest saying, "I want to enter into the harvest!"

The Pastor and Harvest

Wow! I knew Jesus was coming to me in the vision and I was expecting to see Him in brilliance and majesty as Lord of the Harvest and the King of Glory. But instead, out of the harvest stepped the Lord Jesus, as the Good Shepherd - meek, wearing a cloak and carrying a staff in His hand. I thought, "The pastor? What does that have to do with harvest?" He said, "Follow Me. Follow the Good Shepherd into the harvest." I said, "What? Follow the Good Shepherd into the harvest? Where is the Lord of the Harvest, the King of Glory and Lord of Lords?"

At first, I couldn't understand what was happening because Jesus was appearing in the harvest as the Good Shepherd who usually leads us by 'still waters' and 'green pastures.' So I asked, "What's up with this?" Jesus said, It's the pastor anointing. It's the discipleship anointing that is coming on this harvest. I don't just want to get people saved. I want to make fishermen. It's not going to be like it was before Todd, with big tents, big crusades, and big numbers. There is going to be an anointing in this to truly disciple and to make fishers of men. I realized that in order to reap the great harvest, pastors and evangelists will have to learn how to work together better than they do now, lovingly honoring each other's calling.

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