

Deal Pentecostal Church Training School

Reference Material

Study 8 Gifts of the Holy Spirit

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The Gifts of the Holy Spirit and Gifts of Christ

Petts, D., *You'd Better Believe It*, Mattersey, Mattersey Hall, 1999,
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The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The outpouring of the Spirit which took place at the beginning of the twentieth century was marked by two things. There was, as we have seen, a realisation that the Baptism with the Holy Spirit was available to Christians today as an endowment with power from on high. With that realisation, however, there came also the understanding that the supernatural gifts of the Spirit seen in operation in the Acts of the Apostles and referred to in 1 Corinthians 12-14 might be received and exercised in our present generation. Indeed, what singles out the present-day Pentecostal Movement from all the revivals of charismatic phenomena in church history is the emphasis placed upon the biblical connection between the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and the supernatural sign-gift of tongues.

The Baptism with the Spirit, although a wonderful experience in itself, is not essentially a goal but a gateway. Through it we have entered into an entirely new realm — the realm of the supernatural. It is important, therefore, that we should know not only what the gifts of the Spirit are, but also what they are for and how we may receive them.

What they are

In 1 Corinthians 12:1 Paul tells us that we are not to be ignorant about spiritual gifts. He then lists in verses 8-10 the following nine gifts:

The message of wisdom, the message of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, the ability to

distinguish between spirits, tongues, and the interpretation of tongues.

It would not be possible within the scope of this brief chapter to give a detailed definition of each of the gifts mentioned. There are plenty of books which specialise on this subject readily available. For our purpose it will be sufficient to outline what the scriptures teach concerning the gifts of the Spirit as a whole.

The first thing to notice is that they are gifts. The Greek word used here is charisma (plural charismata) from which of course we get our word 'charismatic'. The word charisma comes in turn from another Greek word, charis which means 'grace'. From this we see that the basic idea behind these gifts is that they are given to us because of God's grace. Like the gift (charisma) of eternal life (Romans 6:23), spiritual gifts cannot be earned by human merit, but must be received in gratitude and dependence on the grace of God.

Another important aspect of these gifts is that they are supernatural. Some gifts which God gives us are clearly natural (as in 1 Corinthians 7:7 for example), but these gifts are described as 'spiritual' (Greek pneumatika). They are the kind of gifts to which the writer to the Hebrews is referring when he speaks of signs, wonders, and.., miracles, and gifts¹ of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will (Hebrews 2:4). The context here puts the gifts of the Spirit in the same category as signs and wonders and miracles. Tongues, for example, has nothing to do with the ability to learn foreign languages quickly at school! It is the ability to speak a foreign language although you have never learnt it (Acts 2:4ff).

¹ The Greek word means allotted, distributed or apportioned rather than "gifts"

Finally, we notice that spiritual gifts are described as manifestations of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:7). This word means 'the outward evidence of an inner principle'. So the gifts of the Spirit are an outward evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit working within us. A person may speak a language that they have never learned because the Holy Spirit, who knows all things, dwells within them. We can work miracles because the all-powerful God lives inside us!

Of course, not all supernatural manifestations come from God. Satan has his miracle-workers too! The miraculous events, which take place in a spiritualist séance, the messages from the ouija board, the supernatural powers of the mystical eastern religions, the practices of witchcraft and Satanism, are not from heaven! Their miracle-gifts come from a variety of evil spirits. The gifts God gives come from the one, same, Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4-11). The evil spirits never call Jesus Lord. People controlled by the Holy Spirit will gladly acknowledge his Lordship (1 Corinthians 12:3). The demons only curse his name.

What they are for

The major purpose of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is that the believer might be empowered to be a witness for Jesus (Acts 1:8). One of the ways in which this power is evidenced in evangelism is through the supernatural gifts the Spirit gives. Jesus promised that miraculous signs would accompany the preaching of the gospel and that in this way God would confirm his word (Mark 16:15-20). This is backed up by Hebrews 2:4 which tells us that God testified to the message of salvation preached by the early disciples by signs, wonders and miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Paul, too, could talk of how he had been used to lead the Gentiles to obey God by what he had said and done, by the

power of signs and miracles through the power of the Spirit as he had fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ (Rom.15:18-19). Surely we need to pray like the early church that signs and wonders might be done in the name of Jesus and that God's servants might preach his word with boldness (Acts 4:29-31). So the gifts of the Spirit are certainly of use in evangelism. However, they are also of use for the edification of the local church. (Truly scriptural evangelism does not just win people for Jesus; it establishes churches). By the time Paul wrote to the church at Rome it was already a large and important one, yet he longed to see them in order that he might impart to them some spiritual gift to make them strong (Romans 1:11). Writing to the Corinthians about spiritual gifts he says everything must be done for the strengthening of the church (1 Corinthians 14:5). If we eagerly desire spiritual gifts — and Paul says we should — we must try to excel in gifts that build up the church (1 Corinthians 14:12). So the two main purposes of spiritual gifts are evangelism and the edification of the church.

How we may receive them

Since the gifts of the Spirit are so important we need to understand what the scriptures teach about how they may be received. In this connection we need to remember that it is the Spirit who distributes the gifts to each person just as he, the Spirit, determines (1 Corinthians 12:11). Ultimately it is God who decides what gifts he gives us. At the same time, God tells us to desire them eagerly (1 Corinthians 12:31, 14:1, 12). The Greek word used on each of these three occasions means literally to strive fervently after.

God will decide what gifts he will give us, but at the same time he encourages to strive fervently after them! In the realm of the spiritual God commands us to do the very thing that in

the realm of the natural he forbids. Exodus 20:17 tells us that we may not covet material things — our neighbour's house, wife, servant, ox or ass. But we are to covet spiritual gifts. It seem very significant that in those parts of the world where materialism is least in evidence, the gifts of the Spirit are most in evidence in the church. If we were to spend less time in the pursuit of material gain and were to devote more of our attention to the things of the Spirit, we would come closer to seeing the revival we undoubtedly need!

Once we start to desire spiritual gifts, we should pray for them. The speaker in tongues, for example, is told to pray that he may interpret (1 Corinthians 14:13). Of course, when we pray, we should always pray in faith (James 1:6). When the gifts are used in the context of evangelism they are promised to 'those who believe' (Mark 16:17-18), and anyone who prophesies must do so 'in proportion to his faith' (Romans 12:6). We must desire the gifts, ask for the gifts, and believe for the gifts.

May God raise up from among us men and women, filled with the Holy Spirit, exercising the mighty gifts of the Spirit, preaching the word in the power and demonstration of the Spirit, so that our evangelism might be effective, and our churches established and edified.

The Gifts of Christ

In the last chapter we considered the list of spiritual gifts found in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. We now turn our attention to another list. This is found in Ephesians 4:11 and is also of great importance to the church of Jesus Christ today. The list includes apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers and reveals the variety of leadership gifts that God has set in the church. In this chapter we will examine the nature, purpose, and importance of these leadership gifts.

The nature of the leadership gifts

Before considering briefly the nature of each of these ministries it will be helpful to notice two basic differences between the leadership gifts of Ephesians 4:11 and the spiritual gifts referred to in 1 Corinthians 12.

First, leadership gifts are said to be given by Christ (Ephesians 4:7), whereas spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:8).

Secondly, spiritual gifts are given to individuals for the benefit and edification of the church (1 Corinthians 12:7, 11-13, 14:12), whereas leadership gifts are not so much given to individuals, but are individuals given to the church (Ephesians 4:11-12). Paul, for example, did not, strictly speaking, have the gift of apostleship. Paul himself was the gift. He was given to the church as an apostle.

With this distinction in mind, let us now proceed to consider each of the gifts mentioned.

a) Apostles

Basically the word 'apostle' means one who has been sent. The Greek verb *apostello* (from which it comes) is used frequently in the New Testament in a perfectly ordinary way to mean 'send' (as when Pilate's wife sent a message to him in Matthew 27:19). In its more specialised sense, however, the word was used to refer first to the twelve men Jesus chose to be with him and to send out to preach and heal (Mark 3:14-15). Then it refers to a wider circle of people the church recognised as having this particular ministry. Paul and Barnabas are obvious examples of apostles in this wider group (Acts 14:14).

At first, an apostle was one who had seen the risen Christ and who was sent out by him to be a witness of the resurrection (Acts 1:21-22). Apostleship was attested by the supernatural

gifts as well as the fruit of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 12:12) and, in the case of Paul at least, involved planting churches as we see from the Book of Acts.

Some have argued that the leadership gift of apostle was not intended to continue beyond the period of the early church, on the grounds that to be an apostle one was expected to have 'seen the Lord'. However, the fact that the early Christians required this as one of the qualifications of apostleship in no way suggests that they would have expected it of the apostles of later generations!

Indeed, several facts indicate that this important ministry was intended to continue:

- the New Testament refers to several apostles other than the original twelve
- nowhere does it state that the gift was to be withdrawn in fact it states that the gift is needed to prepare God's people for works of service (Ephesians 4:11-12)
- down through church history, and in our own generation God has clearly given people this ministry.

These facts provide sufficient grounds for believing that the ascended Christ is still giving some to be apostles to prepare God's people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up.

b) Prophets

When considering the ministry of the prophet it is helpful to remember the distinction which we have already made between leadership gifts and spiritual gifts. In this way we will not confuse the spiritual gift of prophecy with the ministry of the prophet. Undoubtedly all prophets prophesy. But not all those who exercise the gift of prophecy are prophets in the Ephesians 4:11 sense. To have received a spiritual gift does not necessarily imply that one has received a leadership gift.

The word 'prophecy' means 'to speak on behalf of' and clearly both those who are prophets (in the leadership-gift sense) and those who have the spiritual gift of prophecy `speak on behalf of God to his people. The spiritual gift, however, is essentially for the strengthening, encouragement and comfort of the church (1 Corinthians 14:3), and we are all encouraged to desire it eagerly (1 Corinthians 14:39), whereas the leadership gift of prophet would seem to include an element of revelation (e.g. Agabus, Acts 11:27-28, 21:10- 11), and not all Christians would expect to have it (1 Corinthians 12:29). Yet, having distinguished the spiritual gift from the leadership gift, we must acknowledge that there is a connection between them. Indeed, it is difficult to know whether the prophets referred to in 1 Corinthians 14:29-32 are leadership gifts or simply those who exercise the spiritual gift. The context certainly seems to imply the latter.

However, asking whether a person has the leadership gift of a prophet or exercises the spiritual gift of prophecy can be an unproductive exercise! What is really important is weighing carefully what they say (1 Corinthians 14:29). God does speak to his people by the direct revelation of his Spirit and we need to pay attention!

c) Evangelists

Considering the prominence that is given to the ministry of the evangelist in the work of the church today it is surprising to discover that in the whole of the New Testament only one person is specifically named as being one.

We are told that Philip, who had been one of the seven people appointed to wait on tables in Acts 6, was an evangelist (Acts 21:8). His ministry is vividly described for us in Acts 8, where we read of his visit to Samaria and of his leading the Ethiopian eunuch to Christ. We see that his

message was very simple. He preached Christ (v.5). He preached Jesus (v.35). His message was confirmed with signs and wonders (vv.6-7). When people believed his message, they were baptised by immersion in water (vv.12, 38-39). Although he himself was very much led by the Spirit (vv.29, 39), his ministry in itself was not sufficient for the young converts. He does not seem to have possessed the specialised ministry of laying hands on people to receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, so the apostles sent Peter and John to help in this connection.

It is important to realise that no one ministry is sufficient for all the needs of God's people. We need apostles *and* prophets *and* evangelists *and* pastors *and* teachers! Young Christians need to be careful that the more spectacular ministry of the evangelist does not detract from the authority and ministry of their pastor(s).

d) Pastors and Teachers

In the Greek language in which the New Testament was first written, the word *poimen* (translated 'pastor' in Ephesians 4:11) is usually translated 'shepherd'. Such scriptures as Acts 20:28 and 1 Peter 5:2 show clearly that those who were to shepherd and feed the flock were usually referred to as 'elders' or 'overseers' and the qualifications for holding such an office in the local church are listed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. One such qualification was that the elder must be able to teach (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:9).

As far as the New Testament is concerned, therefore, a person cannot be a pastor unless they are able to teach. This is why I have included teachers along with pastors in the heading for this section. Indeed the Greek text of Ephesians 4:11 can be understood to mean that the two words refer to the same leadership gift. However, perhaps we could say that

although a pastor needs to be a teacher, a teacher need not necessarily be a pastor, as a teacher might have an itinerant ministry.

A detailed study of the privileges and responsibilities of local church leadership is not possible within the scope of this book. Perhaps it is sufficient to say that those to whom God has given the serious responsibility of shepherding and feeding his sheep deserve the respect and allegiance of those they are called to lead.

The purpose and importance of the leadership gifts

As we read on in Ephesians 4 and consider the purposes for which these gifts have been given to the church, we realise something of their tremendous importance. In a day when much emphasis has been placed on the renewal of the spiritual gifts in the church, it is vital that we realise that whatever gifts of the Spirit we may exercise, we still need the leadership gifts that God gives to his church. As individual Christians, and as churches, we still need apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers that God's people will be equipped to do better work for him, building up the church, the body of Christ, to a position of strength and maturity, until finally we all believe alike about our salvation and about our Saviour, God's Son, and all become full-grown in the Lord — yes to the point of being filled full with Christ (Ephesians 4:12-13, Living Bible).

We should pray that God might increasingly raise up these ministries among us. We should submit ourselves to those God has set in office in his church. We should search our hearts to see if perhaps God has gifted us and is calling us to one of these important areas of service for him.

Holy Spirit Gifts

Paul S Fermor

Gifts in the Church

God has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit

Acts 1:4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit's gifts to the Church are for the building up of the body

Eph.4:12 to equip God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up

We are each a part of Christ's body and we each have a gift

1 Cor. 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

1 Cor. 12:4-6 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.

There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

1 Peter 4:10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

God gives gifts to each of us for the good of the Church

1 Cor. 12:7-11 Now 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.

The Holy Spirit's gifts are diverse

It is not possible to categorise each manifestation of the Holy Spirit into a specific gift as the distinctions often merge.

Honouring Jesus and love are the keys to spiritual gifts

1 Cor. 12:3 Therefore I tell you that no-one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no-one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor. 12:31-1 Cor. 13:1 But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

Purpose of spiritual gifts

1 Cor. 14:3 But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.

1 Cor. 14:6 Now, brothers, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction?

Use of spiritual gifts

1 Cor. 14:12 So it is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church.

1 Cor. 14:39 Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.

1 Thes. 5:19-21 Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good.

Gifts to the church

Gift Greek: **cavrisma**, charisma; a gift of grace, a free gift, favour

The greatest Gift to the Church is Jesus

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

1 Cor. 1:30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

The Gifts to the Church are for Ministry

Serving God is by grace - that is, He gives us all we need. Our own ability is of no use

Philip. 3:7-8 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ

God has given Ministry Gifts to the Church

Ephes. 4:8 This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men."

Ephes. 4:11-13 It was he who gave 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.

1 Cor. 12:27-28 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.

Apostle

Greek: **ajpovstolo**", apostolos: a messenger, one sent on a mission. (Similar to the Latin "missus" from where we get missionary, missile etc.)

Jesus is our Apostle

Heb.3:1 Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the Apostle and high priest whom we confess.

Apostles are appointed by God and sent on a mission

Mark 3:13-14 Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach

Galatians 1:1 Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—

Apostles minister in power:

Acts 2:43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.

2 Cor. 12:12 The things that mark an apostle—signs, wonders and miracles—were done among you with great perseverance.

Apostles (and Prophets) establish Churches

Ephes. 2:19-20 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

Prophet

Greek: **profhvth**", prophêtês; from pro = before and phêmi = declare; to say. An interpreter or forth-teller of the divine will.

Jesus is our Prophet

Matthew 21:11 The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Acts 7:37 "This is that Moses who told the Israelites, 'God will send you a prophet like me from your own people.'

The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of Prophecy

Rev.19:10 At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

A Prophet speaks the Word of God that he has heard:

Exodus 7:1-2 Then the Lord said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet. You are to say everything I command you, and your brother Aaron is to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his country.

Ezekiel 2:1-2 He said to me, "Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you." As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me.

Luke 1:67-76 His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied: ...And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, Luke 3:2 during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert.

A Prophet speaks life and health:

Genesis 20:7 Now return the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not return her, you may be sure that you and all yours will die."

Genesis 20:17 Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife and his slave girls so they could have children again,

A Prophet prepares the way for Jesus:

Luke 1:76 And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,

A Prophet is filled with the Holy Spirit:

Numbers 11:25-26 Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took of the Spirit that was on him and put the Spirit on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but they did not do so again. However, two men, whose names were Eldad and Medad, had remained in the camp. They were listed among the elders, but did not go out to the Tent. Yet the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp.

A Prophet has a public ministry:

Luke 1:80 And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the desert until he appeared publicly to Israel.

Evangelist

Greek: **eujaggelisthv**", euaggelistês; a bringer or herald of good news (the Gospel)

Jesus is our Evangelist

Luke 4:18-19 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." [Isaiah 61:1-2]

An Evangelist preaches the Word

*2Tim.4:2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction.
2Tim.4:5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry*

Pastor

Greek: **poimhvn**, poimên; a shepherd

Jesus is our Pastor (Shepherd)

John 10:14 "I am the good Shepherd ; I know my sheep and my sheep know me--

1Pet.5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

Pastors (Shepherds) feed and care for the sheep

Psalms 23:1-3 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

John 10:9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture.

Pastors oversee God's people willingly

1 Peter 5:2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve;

Pastors watch over the church

Acts 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Teacher

Greek: **didavskalo**", didaskalos; an instructor; teacher

Jesus is our Teacher

Matt.19:16 Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"

John 20:16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher)

As with all gifts, Teaching is an appointment made by God

1Tim.2:7 And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle--I am telling the truth, I am not lying--and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles.

2Tim.1:11 And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher

Teachers (and those with other Ministry Gifts) deserve double honour

1 Tim. 5:17 The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.

Leaders are to teach others to teach

1 Tim. 3:2 Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

2 Tim. 2:2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

Leaders are accountable to God for what they teach their congregation

Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

2 Cor. 1:24 Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm.

Canty's "I Was Just Thinking".

Prophets, past and present

Canty, G., www.canty.org.uk (*IWT 2, Prophets past and present*)

"Too often, modern 'prophets' stream through our churches, fellowships, and homes giving words almost like fortune tellers. But is God really speaking?" So I read on the back page blurb of John Bevere's book "Thus saith the Lord?" It is American 'comfort writing'; small bytes of teaching sugared heavily with tales, but this time the tales are needed as exemplary warnings.

From it I gather that prophesying in the USA has taken off in a big way. John Bevere accepts that everybody could prophesy to everybody else but his concern is the frequent tragic consequences. From my crows' nest I don't see prophets clustering yet on British horizons. However, western winds do blow fashions our way sooner or later, like the awful American litigation culture, British lawyers now encouraging greedy claims for compensation here.

The Church of God USA is holding a conference on "The Place of Prophets in the church today." In preparation, Chris Thomas, the Church of God Professor of Biblical Studies has drawn together the New Testament references taking in turn each writer. They say surprisingly little and or even nothing

about prophecy. For that matter the New Testament says just as little about other spiritual gifts, but prophecy is the most heavily emphasised today.

Preachers coming with a 'prophetic ministry' are usually from overseas. I'll surprise many when I admit I am a little hazy about what their claim means. Donald Gee, that original global patriarch and guide of earlier Pentecostals insisted prophecy often could be preaching. Well, what is higher than the Word? Is the prophecy better than the Word?

In the New Testament the word 'prophet' occurs 150 times but 139 are Old Testament prophets. 'Prophecy' and 'prophesy' come 47 times, 16 Old Testament references. The total of 42 references are preponderantly warnings about false prophets and prophesying.

Prophets have always been a worry, way back to Balaam. Moses laid down tests for the true and the false. All prophecy needs a cautious approach and safeguards. Self-appointed prophets have brought huge divisions and spawned new religions and sects. Mahomet proclaimed himself a prophet and so have other religious founders. Jesus, by the way, did not. There are allusions to Jesus as a prophet but He was not a prophet in the Old Testament sense. They spoke in the name of the Lord, but Jesus spoke in His own name.

Paul said 'despise not prophesying' so it looks as if they did despise it. It lifts the lid off the early churches. Christ left warnings about prophesy as did His apostles. Commentators say Paul wrote to Corinth to correct the misuse of tongues, but I see less of that than to ensure that prophecies were judged. I've heard one individual in a service prophesy AT another, and no pastoral check. Often 'prophets declaim 'I the Lord do say unto thee' at considerable length but what

actually eventually is said is trite and trivial, hardly the hallmark of the Almighty.

Paul ruled that prophecies should be judged, but I don't see it done too often today. How much is Divine inspiration and how much verbal inebriation? Denominational decisions have been taken following untested prophecies. Subsequent results stripped away their pretentious disguise. Extreme caution must be exercised especially for one-to-one prophecies.

Personally I would doubt them unless Biblical checks and balances are applied and they are linked to supernatural validation of some kind. It hurts me too much to recall the ruin I've seen wrought by private prophecy.

I heard a woman tell another that she would enquire of the Lord about a problem she had, and would let her know what the Lord wanted her to do. She spoke as if it was Old Testament times when prophets communicated the mind of the Lord. Today every believer has equal access to God. That fundamentally changes the function of the prophet. I asked some ultra Pentecostals to sell me their redundant church recently, and they said they would 'ask the prophet'. They then sold it to Jehovah Witnesses. Professor Thomas, John Bevere, and many others write as if 'prophet' always means the same thing. But it clearly does not. Christ said "All the prophets prophesied until John". John the Baptist, Jesus said was "more than a prophet". The word changed its meaning from that time. Every true prophet speaks by the Holy Spirit, but the New Testament role is different. For example, Hebrew prophets were sent to the people of God, that is, the whole nation of Israel. Apart from Scripture, no apostle or prophet ever addressed nations, nor even all the people of God at large.

The Corinthian letter indicates that prophecies are normally within the church, where they can be judged by hearers, and only held fast if good. To judge a prophecy it would be necessary to know the prophet and his Divine credentials. Otherwise it needs supernatural authentication. Within the church the speaker of a prophecy is known. Anonymous prophecies are not envisaged in Scripture, and it would be naïve to accept them. Such prophecies arrive by post sometimes, perhaps from a group consensus.

Common sense safeguards are common sense. Prophecies duplicated or printed are circulated wide-cast from a computer list of names. It is hard to think that the Spirit addresses people in anonymous and indiscriminating fashion. Individuals claiming a 'ministry' send 'words from the Lord' to whoever they think. One came to me recently, judgemental, and quite pretentious, so wide of the mark I could not see what it had to do with me at all. Another warned me I was in 'great danger' and could die with cancer like another person he didn't like. I've survived beyond his cheerful anticipations. Nobody ever prophesied to me face to face, yet more than once a colleague has dropped an apparently casual word as if direct from heaven, correcting and building me up, comforting and encouraging. No prophecy has mandatory force. A leading Pentecostal figure said he also had known a casual remark to bring assurance of God's will, with tremendous and far reaching results. Prophets had come to 'minister' to him but he did not need them as he knew already what God wanted. Prophecy giving explicit direction is unknown in the New Testament. In the book of Acts the apostle Paul refused to be deflected from his course by prophets, saying 'none of these things moved me'.

I wonder if the present popularity of prophesying is to get God to say something? Why must God be always speaking to us if we are already doing His will? How does it serve God for prophets to know about the private lives of members of the congregation? Just to bolster their prophetic ministry? Like John Bevere says, it is like fortune telling. In a current TV programme, subjects are told by psychics about themselves. Didn't they know already! The point escapes me.

Early Israel had no churches or synagogues, few people could read, and few Scripture copies existed. The only way was laid down in Scripture that fathers must memorise the words of God and teach them constantly to their children. Prophets meanwhile came to keep the people in the way of the Lord. The 'schools of the prophets' had the same purpose, a form of preaching. Lacking regular Bible instruction it is not surprising that Israeli people fell into the idolatrous ways of their next door Canaanites.

The Spirit of the Lord rested only upon individuals, such as Moses. It was regarded as the Spirit of Moses, or the spirit of Elijah, and 'the spirit of the prophets'. The prophets did far more than prophesy by the Spirit of God or just to foretell. Their work was to safeguard the people of God. Samuel kept the whole nation together, an ideal example. David believed He had the Spirit of God to fight Israel's enemies.

Prophesying is only one aspect of the Spirit of prophecy. When Joel said God would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh it was an incredible prediction. Jesus said that if we asked for the Holy Spirit we would receive it. That was revolutionary. The disciples spoke with tongues on the day of Pentecost but Joel did not mention tongues, Nevertheless Peter said tongues fulfilled the promise that 'your sons and daughters will prophesy'. They had received the Spirit of the ancient

prophets, The Spirit rested on Moses, the greatest of the prophets, empowering him for his delivering and world changing work.

The Spirit of the prophets, or the Spirit of prophecy, is the Holy Spirit. He has other functions than prophecy, very particularly to empower us witnesses of Christ to fulfil the Great Commission. Mystical messages between church members is a minor operation.

"Prophets" are in the list of five gifts in Ephesians 4, but their precise work is not described, except it was for the founding of the early church. For the first Christians there was no New Testament to read, no words of Christ and the apostles available except by word of mouth. The role of prophet was something like that of the Hebrew schools of the prophets, to bring the Word to remote groups of Christians. They were itinerants. They might come with false teaching, and that was an ever-present anxiety to the apostles with little of the Word available to check.

I suppose preaching when anointed partakes of the character of prophesy. Without the anointing how valid is it? A 'prophetic ministry' I would assume is one aspect of the Spirit coming under the category of the word of wisdom or the word of knowledge. Most people in the ministry have experience of such gifts, though whether we can call up such a 'word' on command is a question to be studied. For me, there are times such 'words' of revelation, and times when I know nothing. I don't guess.

However the Holy Spirit does not need to accommodate Himself to our preconceived ideas, except to witness to Bible truth, especially about Jesus. Jesus is the focus, not supernatural phenomena.

What is 'True Revival' ?

Canty, G., (*IWT 12, What is 'True Revival'?*)

"I have been young and now am old but I have not seen the masses repenting nor their seed coming to church." If prayer could do it, the whole world by now would be in religious ferment. 'Revival', is a matter of definition. There's the kind associated with the question "Why does revival tarry?" It seems a perpetual subject for preachers as a chance to have a go at church shortcomings. Some want God to step in, do everything and make work easier for Christians. 'Prayer brings revival'? So does work! Without it, revival never did happen. The Bible talks about evangelism, never 'revival'.

Periodically we hear of 'signs' of revival, as when Billy Graham was in Haringey 50 years ago and constantly in the fads and fashions of worship and Bible 'discoveries'. The cry "Do it again Lord!" is for a repeat of old church excitements. Realities should be our concern, the paralysing and disgusting national ignorance of the Bible and Christianity, spiritual collapse and public moral bankruptcy even led by a blind Parliament.

Now, when Wesley died in 1791, Britain was still only half civilised, cruel, debauched. Churches were struggling, or empty, and it was feared that Christianity would not survive the century. Wesley's followers were mostly poor un-influential country folk. Fifty years of revivalism left only 50,000 Methodists (accounts vary). Of the 10 million UK, 9,950,000 were not Methodists. The Industrial Revolution created slums for the masses of country folk recruited for the mills, the new 'working classes'. Little was done for their spiritual welfare, shunned as the 'great unwashed' by the churches and lost to them until now.

Then, from about 1830 or 1840, almost imperceptibly, spiritual waters crept in with the greatest revival I know of, though little mentioned in the books about revival. The main Wesleyan increase did not come from 'revivals' at all, but from church expansion continuing up to the Great War of 1914. What the Victorians did for us was to lay new Christian foundations. God does things His own way, not according to a preset revival formula. He changed Britain then, His way. I pray for 'revival', but for God to do it His way - again. The need is not a week or two of excitement, but a nation-wide swing back to Christian principles and a change in social conscience and God-consciousness.

Revivalist type meetings thrived in the 19th century because religion itself was thriving. "Revivals", especially in country places, regularly took place where people in noisy convulsions called on God. One Yorkshire worthy boasted he had been converted like that every year! It contributed to the Christian England the Victorians gave us. A main cause of Victorian godliness was the leadership of great evangelicals, as in the Clapham Sect. William Wilberforce championed not only the Empire slaves, but another ninety moral causes. Evangelicals fought for the deprived and critical social issues. Anthony Ashley Cooper, later the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury, piloted a succession of measures for the depressed classes through Parliament, as in the Factory Acts. When he died, 100,000 working people lined the streets, weeping. We need a broader vision. God made the world, not just churches.

I was brought up by Victorians and I could never convey the ambience, the atmosphere, unimaginable by the present generation with Christianity as the common currency and God a universal sanction curbing crime. Everybody knew right from wrong – then. Britain was the world leader and the

greatest missionary country. Possibly the French Revolution failed to cross the white cliffs of Dover partly because Wesley and his preaching of the Gospel were a spiritual barricade. Jesus said "Ye are the salt of the earth". Where the Gospel is preached, godly and preservative social effects follow, quite beyond any actual evangelistic results.

In books, revivals sound as if they happened in a vacuum, related to nothing but prayer and authenticated by special phenomena. The D.L. Moody, Billy Sunday and Billy Graham campaigns are not counted as 'revival'. Reinhard Bonnke seeing a million converts in a week is also not 'revival.' The revivalism USA paper 'The Herald of His coming' has never mentioned that in about three decades, CfaN has received 34 million decisions cards and brought unprecedented public and even national changes with multitudes healed and the dead raised to life. Should we wait for something we've never seen or move with God in what He is doing?

'Revival' with classical phenomena invariably follows religious pre-conditioning. Duncan Campbell told me that in the Isle of Lewis, where he led the 1949 classic 'revival', even drunken fathers had read the Bible at breakfast each morning. The Welsh revival winged along on the nostalgia of chapel culture. When the Salvation Army first took to London streets a crowd would listen to them at any time of day or night. The "Awakening" in the American colonies was among people already very religion-conscious. Toronto phenomena, mainly among believers was hailed as signs of 'revival', but no sweeping soul-winning followed.

Christian expansion today, however, is amazing, but only on other continents. Bogotá (Colombia) may explain. There, as in the Philippines, to talk to someone on the street about God attracts a crowd. Why? Because Catholicism is inbred,

everyone is religiously aware and interested and there is spiritual unrest. Catholic theologians tried to meet it with their leftist Theology of Deliverance, but people want God, not just politics. Similar pre-conditioning accounts for Christian expansion in Africa, China, Korea, and other global areas. Why no revival in Britain? First, there is no inbred religious consciousness here. Second, 300 years of rationalist thinking from European and British philosophers like Descartes, Hume, Locke, Kant, plus Biblical critics and liberals, has washed religion out of the public mind. These secularist teachings, however, have not penetrated everywhere and on other continents multitudes turn to Christ while Europe stagnates in spiritual uncertainty, like another Nazareth rejecting Christ.

Folk of the 19th century, less well educated and sophisticated had not absorbed the Enlightenment rationalism and turned to God not in the classical revival sense but like a quiet tide. Remembering Wesley many say "Lord do it again". Has God only one bolt to shoot? In my grandparents' times God proved He had bigger ideas and soon Christian standards permeated society generally.

I was born into a Christian land. No locked doors, no burglars, no muggings, but Sunday schools and church-going were becoming unfashionable. That is why I suffered 11 burglaries, road rage assault, and my wife being attacked near our home. In her final illness a plausible rogue offered me a gadget for £946 to relieve her pain. I saw it in a Curries catalogue for £46. Builders told me my house needed new gutters. They had installed new ones themselves 6 weeks before. England today!

When Princess Diana died, grief changed Britain overnight. That's human nature. The 19th century surge back to faith can

easily happen again. British people will surely awake to the void of life without a spiritual dimension. The British and European scene is a spiritual vacuum, and nature abhors a vacuum! It can be a precursor for a general swing towards God. I could now be writing of something imminent, contemporary, true revival, prayed for over a century, the kind that made us Christian a century or so ago. Where there are channels and little creeks, God's ocean will steal in, and overflow. Let us make them!

Do you hear from the Lord?

Canty, G., (*IWT 16, Do you hear from the Lord?*)

Some do hear from the Lord, about ten times a day and vastly more often than Peter or Paul. Or so it seems. One hostess warned me I could have no pudding – the Lord had told her not to give me any. Lofty claims of elbow intimacy with the Almighty deter others who worry that God never speaks to them like that.

God does speak. God made us that way, in His own image, which means he talks. He made us for fellowship with Him and with one another. How can we have any relationship without speech, either with man or God? A neighbour told me that he and his wife had not spoken for months. The marriage is now at an end, of course.

The Bible begins with an emphasis on God speaking. In the first chapter half the verbs, 14, concern His utterances.

Genesis seems to have been written as a polemic against the prevailing world-wide idolatry of gods that say nothing and do nothing. Right through the Pentateuch, Moses' five books, we have our most fundamental revelation of God and He is represented as communicating. Leviticus is a great display of God reaching out to us, not indirectly but in language. In Leviticus 1:1 where "the Lord called to Moses", the Hebrew

suggests personal terms. By Genesis 12 we find God not only speaking but setting up a personal relationship and even becoming his friend. It is nothing less than that which Jesus had in mind when He called disciples His friends. He said "Everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you." That is what friendship means.

John's Gospel uses 'Word' for the Christ, which would be grossly inappropriate if He were silent. The whole Bible presents us with a God who has things to say, and the whole Bible IS God saying things. In Genesis 3:8 God is the Voice walking in the garden.

God is not dumb, and He is not deaf. The Psalmist expected to be spoken to when he spoke to God. "To you I call, O LORD, my Rock. If you remain silent I will be like those who have gone down to the pit." It pictures for me the sea waves clawing stones and pebbles down the beach and into the depths. But I am not a pebble and God does hear me. Dr. R.T. Kendall once asked me across a meeting 'George Canty, does God hear all your prayers?' I replied that God did. How couldn't He? Psalm 139 says that He knows our thoughts before we even speak.

Hearing and speaking must proceed together. God commands us to hear Him. How can we do so unless He speaks? Like a herald commanding attention we read "Hear the Word of the Lord!" Jesus said He was the good shepherd and "They [the sheep] hear my voice." (John 10:4,16).

God speaks to us in various ways, and usually by Scripture, If we want God to speak to us, it is obviously sensible to read His Word. We are told to let His word 'dwell in us richly', and we should have the 'engrafted word'. It is in our word-consciousness that God can readily communicate with us.

God does not speak just to thrill us with a miracle. It is for fellowship. For myself, I certainly know when God says something specific, for guidance or special help. But it is unlikely that He has half a dozen instructions a day. He leaves me to exercise wisdom, but He still speaks. My daily experience is like the hymn says "He walks with me and He talks with me".

It is the moment by moment assurance that our company pleases Him, like the domestic relationship of a husband and wife. They speak to one another for the love of it, not just for him to give her instructions – which I hope he never does! I have two friends, one of whom I rarely see, who phone me two or three times a week, just for the sake of phoning. Why not? It is just the pleasure of life and of friendship. That is how I myself conduct my relationship with the Lord, to have His reassurance that He is there. Yes I have heard His audible voice, and felt His hand physically upon my shoulder, but more often it is His unmistakable inner voice.

When Paul was heading for one port, we read "the Spirit forbade him." That was all. He waited a while before he felt God had given Him further guidance. One of my church folk told me that during pregnancy the doctor gave her tablets. God does not always explain why on such occasions, but somehow she felt she should not use them. Later she had a shock on discovering they were Thalidomide, the drug that caused children to be born limbless. Her child was perfect and is a friend of mine today. A lady wrote to me yesterday and said she had a Scripture for me. It was the same one that had been dancing in my mind for a day, one so good I hoped it wasn't just my wishful thinking, but her letter - the first like it she had ever written - confirmed it. It is so common – God does speak and does guide.

Now some believe in a 'rhema' word from God. That may be, though something here needs explanation. In Scripture 'rhema' and 'logos' are synonymous, and appear in texts meaning exactly the same thing, 'the word of God'. But rhema is more often used for single statements or words. The Ten Commandments in the Greek LXX version are rhema words, and the Bible as a whole is usually known as the Word, not the rhema. Jesus brought the 'words of God', 'rhemata' in John 3:34, and in Luke 24:44 His words are 'logoi'. But otherwise the different words mean the same thing exactly. The Rhema Doctrine is that the Bible is the Logos but is not for us unless God gives us a 'rhema' word – and then we can claim it. That reduces the Word to only occasional value. But it is always the living word. I heard a preacher last Sunday say that once God speaks to us personally we can go ahead in absolute assurance. Well, yes, but only then? We can also go ahead when we have the open Bible. I would be MORE sure of the written Word than of any subjective prompting. The greatest 20th century theologian, Karl Barth said something similarly faulty, that the Bible is not inspired but that God inspires the readers with words from it. The Bible does not say anything like that about itself: "ALL Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2Tim 3:16) and "ALL the promises of God are 'yes' and 'amen' in Christ Jesus" (2Cor 1:20), not just any that God graciously highlights for us in case we are a bit unsure. Many say 'The Lord told me'. No reason why not, except that usually He hasn't, and the Bible doesn't encourage such familiarity, as if only certain people stand in the special confidentiality or counsel of God. It might have been with the Hebrew prophets but in Christ we are all equally close to God.

Nobody in the New Testament talked like that. Even the apostle Paul did not. On only a few occasions did he have special directives from the Holy Spirit. Usually he went ahead, not even asking guidance, having the Word of Christ to go into all the world and preach the Gospel. If we belong to Christ we ARE led of the Spirit, led gently by His hand as we develop our steady relationship with Him. God is not our managing director, but a Friend. He said He would never leave us and never ignores us, but He goes along with us and brings us back when we stray. That is, if we want to be led. Often we don't. We adopt the Nelson touch, read the message through a blind eye. That may mean not reading the Word, or only turning over the leaves when we want Him to say what we want Him to say. Some seek the Lord to speak and give them a new direction. How do they know He has a new direction in mind for them?

God is great company. I am daily so delighted with His care, His organising and His favouritism to us all. I am a convert to what I say in this article. In the beginning of my career I thought God guided saints, men better than me, and that only as a rare thing. It changed everything when I saw God wanted to walk and talk with me. I believed that He did, does, and will speak to anyone who has the open ear of faith.

Church constitutions don't constitute power

Canty, G., (*IWT 5, Church Constitutions don't constitute power*)

Anne Boleyn and all that!

The history of the Tudors has been treated like new news by Press and TV lately, the story of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn for instance. Henry, a 16th century Saddam Hussein monster sent his pert young wife for a French sword to slice through her slender neck, At least it brought her permanent, legendary and romantic popularity. More than that, it triggered off

religious disturbances for centuries. Those disruptive upheavals concerned church order.

A book received great notice about 20-odd years ago suggesting all churches and property be sold, all ministers resign, and everything be unshipped so God could show us the right way. Hailed 'to make us think'. I thought that if God had failed to show people the right way for several centuries, were we likely to do better now? Well, we learn by the past, but dismantle the whole church?

When Elizabeth I reigned the Bible was beginning to be read. It was expected to provide answers to all religious question. The 17th century was explosive with powerful new political moods intertwined with varied religious views. People seized upon any odd Bible text to confirm their particular perspective with dogmatic certainty. Sure that the Bible must tell us everything, 'nonconformists' and radicals found Bible proof they were right appeared in fighting mood - Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Congregationalists, Quakers. An Act in 1667 tried to force everyone to be Church of England. That 400 year old history still repeats.

Church order has been and remains a major cause of division and puts the brake on Christian expansion. The Ecumenical Movement tackled it but 50 years of conferences have produced only paper bridges between Christian bodies. I recall my own sufferings - ah! Newly ordained, I sat for eternities while speakers argued for completely opposite theories, namely central government as against local government. Listening, I felt that many passages and texts quoted were barely relevant and like the Irishman's jacket fitted only where they touched.

Then 20 years ago fresh dogmas upset Pentecostals and some whole congregations seceded from their parent bodies. We

were challenged then with the cry "What is the Spirit saying to the churches?" Adopting an attitude of imperial spirituality various leaders seem to know, and admonished us to re-structure our churches their way.

Now long before that 1980's storm, some of us, Bible teachers, had met to examine the question of church structures. After many meetings over two years testing Scripture for competing dogmas and theories of church order our report was published. It had the answer to the later agitation but alas our labours had been shelved.

The search for the true church pattern is like the search for the Holy Grail, or rather the Will-O'-the Wisp, somebody always at it. Hope never dies! Not long ago the Scripture about 'new wine skins' was dragged unwillingly into the debate to argue that the Holy Spirit would only be happy in a new kind of church (their kind!) Why 'new wine skins' were interpreted as churches I have never fathomed.

The most emphasised 'discovery' on church order today is Ephesians chapter four which states that Christ gave apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, pastors. The conclusion had been drawn that these five (or four?) offices are how churches should be structured. This is pure assumption read into the chapter. The church is not actually mentioned and nothing about "structuring", nor even that Christ gave these officers to the church. The Greek original needs to be better handled, The AV reads - "He gave some apostles, some prophets, etc." which is a bit shaky, and the NIV says Christ gave some to be apostles which the Greek definitely does not say.

The original uses the definite article before each gift "THE apostles, etc", The best rendering is perhaps "He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers" It is a general statement about what Christ has

done, 'he gave' not 'he gives'. But these five (or four) gifts are not the only gifts, but only examples, according to verse 7 - "To every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ". Every one of us is a gift, often gifted.

Going back to our old committee's conclusions. The report was shelved, but has never been challenged, namely that we found no specific directive, blueprint, pattern, order or clear basis for church order in the New Testament whatever beyond the appointment of oversight. It was clear that Apostolic leadership arranged matters in whatever way they saw best in the circumstances.

God does not give directives. He gives wisdom, not only in church order but in all earthly issues. God made us responsible free beings, in His own image, and promised that whatsoever we do will prosper. He leaves it to us exercise wisdom in our ever-changing world, do our best, run our churches, our affairs and lives as Psalmist 32:9 says "Be ye not as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle". God doesn't treat us like trams and He the tram driver.

It isn't appointing apostle or prophet that is effective and there's no Bible warrant to do it. Out and out effort for God, with the Holy Spirit, faith, love and the Word are the open secrets. No new formulae overlooked for 2000 years exists. The Holy Spirit isn't waiting for Bible patterned organisations but Bible-patterned lives.