



Apostolic Function in the Church

May 25, 2018—Vol. 12, No. 21

by Brandon Kelly, Director of Transformational Ministries

Throughout this year we're walking through a significant aspect of ministry and leadership in the Church. Often referred to as the Five-Fold Ministry, or APEST, it's the description of roles given by God to equip and build up the Church for its mission which is found in Ephesians 4. Over the last month or so, we've looked specifically at apostles.



You can read the initial article about apostles, *Apostles, Sent on Mission*, in the Advocate here: <http://www.cggc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/AdvocateAprilMay2018Web.pdf>.

You can read the last blog post about apostles, *Helping Apostles Be More Effective*, here: <https://cggcenews.weebly.com/blog/helping-apostles-be-more-effective>.

With all of the Five-Fold Ministries found in Ephesians 4, we've been looking at them through the lens of the individual. People who are apostles, leaders who are evangelists, etc. Alongside each of the individual callings is a correlative function that ought to be present in the body of Christ. These functions are the collective and innate purposes of the Church that reflect the ministry of Jesus being continued and carried out today through His body.

So, as we think about the vocation and calling that an individual may have to be an apostle – someone who is sent on mission locally or globally, starts new things, carries the DNA of the Church – we also want to think about the apostolic function that all churches need to have. How does the Church embody the individual calling of an apostle collectively? What are the apostolic behaviors and mindsets that every church should have?

Every church should:

1. **Organize Around Sentness.** The church should be seen as being sent to its community. It should contextualize the Gospel to the community in which it resides (not where the building is located, but where the people who are the church live). Every person who makes up the church should see themselves as a missionary to

their friends, neighbors, and coworkers. Then the church organizes around these ideas. The small groups should be sent to specific people groups, the worship should end with a charge to being sent, and the budget should reflect the calling to exist beyond the four walls of the church's building.

2. **Plant the Gospel.** Through church planting, entrepreneurial endeavors, fresh expressions, and other innovations, the church should always look for ways to plant the Gospel in places where it doesn't already exist. Think neighborhoods, networks, people groups within your city alongside locations outside of your city. How can your church take risks and innovate to see the Kingdom extended?
3. **Maintain Integrity of the DNA.** What's the vision, core identity, and messaging of the unique calling that God has given the church in the greater mission of making disciples and extending the Kingdom? Making those ideas memorable and transferable ensures that the key callings of the church are never weakened or diluted internally, as well as externally, as the church reaches out and sends.

While this is by no means an exhaustive list, it begins to give us an evaluative picture to see if our churches have an apostolic function to them. What is your church missing? Where does your church excel? What steps could you take to function more apostolically?