

To Catch Coming Wave of Revival, We Must Adopt This New Apostolic Paradigm

As I mentioned in this article, God is moving on the earth in unprecedented ways in preparation for the next wave of revival that could produce the greatest harvest of souls in human history. In order for us to prepare, we need to build thriving churches that maximize the mobilization of every member according to their God-given design and destiny. The key to this result is what we call the apostolic family church model.

Now before we go too much further, let me take a moment to define our terms. There are many well-intentioned leaders in the body of Christ who are convinced that the apostolic gift no longer exists. They believe it ended with the original 12 apostles of the Lamb. However, according to Paul, the apostolic gift is one of five aspects of the ministry of Christ that was given to the church at the time of His ascension and is clearly intended to function throughout time (Eph.4:7-16). These gifts were given:

- At the same time: The ascension of Jesus: verses 7-11.
- For the same purpose: The equipping of the saints for the work of ministry: vs. 12.
- Until the same time: "Until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, into a complete man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (vs. 13-16).

It's impossible to read these verses with an open mind and not see the importance of these gifts to empower God's people to fulfill His purposes on the earth. The church has not yet come into the fullness of Christ so we must conclude that each of these gifts is still in operation today. I imagine that

scholars will continue to debate this issue, but the simplest rendering of Scripture clearly supports importance of these gifts working today.

Unfortunately, there have been some who have used the title and position to control others or promote false ideas. This is why I assert that the gifts listing in Ephesians 4:11 are not about position and titles but about function and fruit. We have been commissioned to make disciples who make disciples (Matt. 28:18-20). A key dimension of disciple making is equipping the saints for the work of the ministry. This is the qualifying function and fruit of the five ascension gifts of Jesus.

One of the biggest obstacles to every-member ministry is the overemphasis of the pastoral gift and the underemphasis on the apostolic gift. A quick word study in the Greek will reveal the impulse of both gifts.

- The impulse of a pastoral leader is to “gather, care and keep.”
- The impulse of an apostolic leader is to “gather, train and send.”

We live in a day when most local churches are centered around the pastor and teacher. Yet, according to Scripture, the church was never intended to be built on the foundation of the pastors and teachers but rather on the foundation of the “apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone” (Eph. 2:20b). Some would argue that this is a reference to the Old Testament prophets, but a few verses later, Paul says that God is *now* revealing things to his holy apostles and prophets (see Eph. 3:5).

Pastors and teachers are both essential to a healthy, thriving church. However, when the pastoral gift is in the driver’s seat, the church will always become increasingly consumeristic and spectator-oriented. We must reset the foundation of

apostolic leadership to see the vision of every-member ministry fulfilled.

My goal in this article is to help us look in the mirror—not to focus on the spots and blemishes of the bride, but rather to see the possibility of fulfilling God’s desires by becoming everything He created us to be. I’m approaching the church as a doctor trying to diagnose a disease. I am speaking to the church as a concerned coach trying to help an Olympic athlete to win the gold. What are the real issues holding us back from maximum health and impact? As a catalytic consultant to churches and movements around the world, I believe we must experience a massive paradigm shift from the pastor-teacher model to an apostolic family model of church.

As I see it, there are three kinds of churches: fantasy, factory or family. Or some combination of all three.

Fantasy church is what John Wimber called, “playing basketball without a ball and without a hoop.” In other words, we go through all the motions of buildings, budgets, programs and services, but we rarely score. The sincere efforts of well-intentioned people produce only minimal impact in the areas of winning souls, making disciples, training leaders and multiplying ministries.

Factory church is often a response to the frustration of fantasy church. Factory church focuses on the right outcomes but with the wrong foundational values. These kinds of churches tend to be hierarchical and program-driven and often lead to burnout and a high turnover.

Family church is our solution to both of these extremes. Apostolic family church does not merely focus on helping people belong but helping people *become* everything that God created them to be. In our next article, “The Tale of Three Churches”, we will go into greater detail about each of these kinds of churches and help you begin to build the spiritual

family that God desires. {eoa}

Michael and Diane Brodeur served as a pastors in San Francisco for over 33 years, and by God's grace, established one of the largest churches the city had seen during that era. Michael and his family moved to Redding, California, in 2010 and have served in a number of ministries, including Jesus Culture, Global Legacy and the Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry (BSSM). Michael launched in 2014 and is currently equipping and coaching hundreds of churches around the world. He is the author of several books, including *Revival Culture: Prepare for the Next Great Awakening*. He also travels globally as a conference speaker and catalytic consultant for churches and organizations. Michael and Diane have seven children and eight grandchildren.

Listen to the podcast below to find out how the movement of *Unite My City* is making a powerful impact and what you can do to change your city.