

10 Absurd Practices in the Contemporary Apostolic Movement

The apostolic movement is considered by many to be the fastest-growing expression within the church in the world today. My book, "The Global Apostolic Movement and the Progress of the Gospel," is among several I wrote and is considered a must-read. In some of my writings, the blessings and abuses of this movement are covered in detail. (Refer to my book, "An Anthology of Essays on Apostolic Leadership.")

As an adherent and proponent of the apostolic movement, some of the unbiblical practices therein have concerned me greatly. Many of my colleagues also consider them absurd and, in some cases, harmful. To be clear, the preponderance of the global apostolic leaders I know do not practice the following list of 10 absurdities.

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1. Making apostolic decrees. Some believe they can utter things with their mouth that will shift the atmosphere and bring things to pass simply because they are "apostles." My walk in apostolic ministry for almost four decades has exposed me to the extraordinary moves of God. I have no recollection of miraculous occurrences resulting from any uninspired (robotic) apostolic decree.

What does work: Often, during corporate gatherings, a person can be inspired by the Holy Spirit to make declarations by "calling those things that are not as though they were," resulting in dramatic answers to prayer (Mark 11:23-24, Rom. 4:17-19).

Making an uninspired decree, conjured up by human emotion or intent, just because a person claims apostolic authority is absurd.

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2. Claiming to be the “apostle” of a city or nation. Unfortunately, some claim to be the “apostle” of their nation or city. Not even in the first-century church did anyone claim to be the primary apostolic authority in their city!

(In Jerusalem, there were 12 apostles; even Paul worked with Peter, Barnabas, Apollos and a host of apostolic workers in the churches he founded (Acts 13-15; 1 Cor. 1:12, 3:4).

In large cities, several key apostolic voices usually represent various expressions of the body of Christ. Proclaiming one individual to be “the apostle” of a large city or nation is absurd!

3. Claiming apostolic equality to the original 12 apostles. Some also claim that certain contemporary apostles are equal to the original 12. This is absurd! Since the second century, all apostolic function has been small “a” apostolic ministry forever; there will only be “12 apostles of the Lamb” (Rev 21:14b).

4. Claiming the apostolic title without fruit. Over the past several decades, numerous people have claimed the title of apostle with few followers or impact. Claiming the title without corresponding fruit is an absurdity.

5. Claiming to be the “apostle” over thousands of churches. Some leaders have told me they oversee tens of thousands of churches (most of them in developing countries). My question to them is, “How many of the pastors of these churches are you walking with? What structure ensures each pastor or regional

collective is being cared for?" To make exaggerated, self-inflating, undocumented statements of "global apostolic oversight" is absurd.

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6. Apostles claiming all pastors must submit to them. Self-proclaimed "apostles" state that all the pastors in their region should submit to them. Thankfully, this absurd and presumptuous declaration about regional oversight rarely happens.

7. Claiming extra-biblical divine apostolic revelation. In rare instances, some people claim to have apostolic revelation that nobody else in the church has. One such claim appeared on Facebook in which a person titled themselves "Chief Apostle" on the earth. The cultlike structure under him is comprised of other sycophantic apostles who promoted his teachings. Most of his diminutive following of these so-called apostles are commissioned to mimic his teachings. Any contemporary movement that claims special apostolic revelation is cult-like, sectarian and absurd.

8. Commissioning unqualified people as apostles. Many so-called apostles (and prophets) give people words in public gatherings that "they were called to be apostles" without even biblically vetting them (1 Tim. 3:1-15). Many have witnessed hundreds of people commissioned at once as apostles during pastoral conferences.

The above absurd practices cause confusion, inflate egos and violate biblical protocols too numerous to cite here.

9. Self-commissioned apostles. I have met many people who claim to have been divinely commissioned as an apostle merely by a vision, dream or subjective spiritual experience. (All these experiences can be more psychological than spiritual.) True apostolic commissioning should also be confirmed and initiated by other recognized spiritual leaders in one's city

in order to be legitimate. At the very least, other legitimate apostolic leaders in a denomination or apostolic movement should vet and matriculate them through a process before said commissioning. Consequently, a person commissioning themselves to be an apostle without legitimate confirmation is an absurd practice. (Unless said divine commissioning takes place in a country or region where no church or gospel witness is sufficient to give adequate confirmation and matriculation.)

10. Autocratic apostles. Some apostolic leaders frequently make significant decisions impacting their church or movement without obtaining a consensus through a mature team of ministry leaders and elders. (I am not advocating for a Presbyterian form of government.)

This absurd practice violates the spirit of true apostolicity related to church governance (Acts 2, 13:1; Acts 15; Gal. 2).

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