



**Clergy Leadership for the 21st Century
Clergy Gathering, January 11, 2017
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Three Types of Pastoral Leadership for the 1900's

There are three types of pastoral leadership you observed, were mentored into, were taught in seminary, and read about in books on how to lead ministries within the congregations.

1. Pastor – This model provides pastoral care for the congregation. Pastoral care includes visiting people as well as doing baptisms, confirmation, weddings, funerals, grief counseling, premarital counseling, marital counseling, and life counseling.
2. Priest – The priestly function is the role of God's intermediary with the people. The priest facilitates the relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The priest works on liturgy, writes and officiates the rites of passage (baptism, confirmation, weddings, funerals), administers the sacraments.
3. Prophet/Preacher – The prophet's role is to be the voice of God for the people. The prophet through study and prayer discerns what the Holy Spirit wants the people to know, understand and do.

All of these are extremely important in the life of the church and ministries that must be provided in the life of the church. These roles also perpetuate a consumer role for parishioners. They are recipients of the clergy person's ministry.

These roles and ministries were sufficient at a time when the culture recognized the importance of the church and that belonging and participating in a church was essential to one's wellbeing in life and society. Today, the culture no longer reinforces or encourages people to go to church.

Apostle Leadership

The New Testament, also during a time in which the culture did not encourage or support people going to church, talks about apostolic leadership. It tells the story of Jesus, Paul and Peter, all of whom exemplified apostolic leadership.

Today, the church needs to recruit, equip, mentor and support apostolic leadership because the church is in an environment more like the first-century culture than the early to mid-1900's.

What is apostolic leadership? Apostle means sent on a mission. Twenty-first-century apostles focus on the mission field. First-century apostles did not do the mission, but called, equipped, sent and supported disciples to lead and carry out the mission in the new and emerging faith communities.

This is a radical shift for the church and especially clergy. We were not taught to be apostles but to be pastors, priests and prophets. It was not bad training and it is necessary for leading a congregation, but it is only half of the leadership required in today's environment.

What is Apostolic Leadership

What does apostolic leadership look like? Attributes of today's apostles can be understood through three characteristics – the spirit, skills and attitude of apostles.

Spirit of Apostles - Risk taker, Innovator, Courageous, Collaborator, and Creative problem solver. Apostles have a unique spirit.

Skills of Apostles – Builder, Developer, Explorer, and Organizer. Apostles create something that grows the mission and people.

Attitude of Apostles – Encourager, Investor, Leader of leaders and Coach. Apostles see everyone as a potential leader and pour themselves into the development of people.

Apostles inspire people, create a bigger mission, develop people, and organize the church to accomplish the mission.

Pastors, were you mentored by your home pastor to lead like this? Was half of your seminary training teaching you to lead like this? Did the Board of Ordained Ministry expect you to lead like this? Did the GNJ RIM mentorship program mentor you to lead like this? Does your district superintendent challenge, hold you accountable and support you to lead like this? Did your bishop ordain, consecrate or license you to lead like this?

Apostles

- Integrate the message with daily Kingdom living.
- Provide examples of and steps for how to live the scriptures at the office, school, neighborhood, home and marketplace.
- Focus less on titles and entitlement and more on healthy relationships.
- Use vernacular that is familiar with the marketplace and the neighborhood.
- Strategize and process rather than focus on events, activities or programs.
- Feel comfortable in their own skin whether with high office holders or the homeless.
- Lead people in and through conflict. *They are not conflict avoiders. In fact, their leadership creates conflict and they lead the people into and through the conflict.*
- Have a broader view of cultural engagement than their predecessors.
- Equip people to do the work of God rather than only inform people of God.
- Set ambitious goals and inspire people to achieve them.
- Are more concerned about their emotional intelligence than their knowledge of churchy things.
- Are more concerned about Kingdom legacy rather than personal legacy.

Apostles both engage disciples in the mission field and grow the faith community. They both raise the necessary resources to sustain the mission and take huge risks.



You can look at an apostle's career and see what they have organized, and built, and the people they developed, all of which continue beyond their own leading of the congregation.

Today, apostolic leadership requires the Bishop, Cabinet, GNJ leadership, seminary, and Board of Ordained Ministry to be focused on recruiting, calling, equipping, mentoring and supporting apostles. This is a hard task because we are addicted to the former leadership. It is what we know, what we were trained and mentored to do and what we can do.

The Senior Leaders of the Church Failed Our Clergy and Congregations

Our challenge is that the culture shifted and the church has not changed fast enough. Most of the responsibility falls on bishops, superintendents, connectional ministry directors, seminary presidents and deans and general agency staff for not leading their area of the church to raise up and support apostles. When the church and pastors most needed its senior leaders to be the new prophets, priests and pastors, they failed.

1. They failed at being the new prophets who called and challenged leaders to become apostles.
2. They failed at being the new priests who provided new rites of passage that lifted up and guided leaders to become apostles.
3. They failed to be the new pastors who encouraged, coached and supported leaders into an apostle role.

The senior leadership of the church has not always cast a vision for apostleship and then inspired, equipped and coached clergy into the new role that the mission field demands from them. We have not always called forth your own creativity, resourcefulness and wholeness. Instead, bishops and other senior leaders wanted you to work harder and longer, do and suffer more, and keep doing the same things, only better. We did not recognize that better, harder and more only lead to our failure more quickly.

I confess that the senior leadership of the church failed you as clergy and I ask for God's forgiveness and your forgiveness.

Apostles Rise Above Their Circumstances

While the senior leadership of the church failed our clergy and congregations, this did not deter some pastors from becoming something different – leaders who were builders, adventurers, explorers, innovators, creative risk-takers, and developers. It did not stop some of our clergy from leading people into new forms for organizing and being the church.

However, the church put stumbling blocks in apostles' way. We said these new renegades (new apostles) just wanted to do their own thing. We talked behind their back, made excuses why they could achieve and we couldn't, left them out there on their own rather than showing interest in what they were doing and we didn't seek to learn from them. We made it much harder for them than it needed to be as they led their congregations into the emerging future.



Each of us will need to search our own souls and inspect how we treated apostles. Today, I confess that the senior leadership and the church as a whole failed our apostolic clergy and I ask for God's forgiveness and your forgiveness.

Today I want to lift up a leader who used his priestly, prophetic and pastoral role as an apostolic leader. Ivan Alberts, pastor of Christ Church in Jersey City, has led his congregation to accept and even embrace tearing down its building for a vision of building a high-rise that will house church space, a daycare and apartments. It was not an easy journey, but he envisioned an innovative idea, organized the people to explore the idea, built support, and is leading the congregation in a sustainable creative ministry that will capture new generations of believers. Thank you, Ivan, for being an apostle.

I also want to lift up Frank Fowler who could be coasting right now. He has further built and developed Trinity Church in Hackettstown. They are worshipping over 600 and probably have a higher percentage of worshipers engaged in mission than any other GNJ congregation. They bought property around town where they do outreach ministry. They have people from companies and community residents giving them checks, big checks. So when worship attendance slipped by 10-15 people, Frank didn't say, "Well it was a bad year" or "The culture changed." No, Frank called the staff together and he called the church leadership together, explained the challenge and asked, "What are we going to do to turn this around?" That's apostolic leadership.

The Hard Work of Transition

I know it is hard for some of you to transition from a leadership model that used to work very well in the past to a new leadership role that is necessary for today.

- I understand there are some of you who are within a few years of retirement and the energy, time and congregational disruption required to make this shift seems hardly worth it.
- I understand there are some of you who did not sign up for this type of leadership. You are a good priest, pastor, prophet and this is what you were called to do, not apostolic leadership.
- I understand there are some of you who are beaten and bruised by one idea after another from bishops.
- I understand the pressures and demands of growing congregations and raising money has you wearied, frustrated and even in some cases depressed.

I confess that senior leadership of the church failed our clergy and I ask for God's forgiveness and your forgiveness.

Going forward the cabinet and I will:

- Do everything we can to help those approaching retirement to continue in a full time appointment and resource you to finish well.
- Come alongside of our clergy who are struggling to lead their congregation to health and work with you through coaching and other resources.
- Assist those who want to change and move from an effective former style of leadership to the new apostolic leadership style through coaching, PaCE groups, Team Vital and Communities of Hope.
- Advocate for renewal time for clergy to spiritually, emotionally, physically, and mentally recharge for the next steps in the journey.
- Work to hold down and continue to decrease shared ministries to keep the focus on the mission field around your congregation.
- Not require or force you to change but to inspire you and support you into change. We will work with the willing and ready.
- Continue to improve our leadership so that we become the change we want to see.

I confess that bishops and cabinets have not always worked like this and I ask for God's forgiveness and your forgiveness.

The cabinet and I need from you to:

- Accept that you are called to the mission. More often than not, that mission is in your community and you are to lead the church into the community.
- Lead the congregation to deeper faith in Christ and service in the world.
- Connect and relate well with church leaders, members and community residents.
- Develop leaders within the congregation.
- Raise sufficient funds for community and world mission, ongoing congregational ministry, shared ministries, and salary and benefits.
- Increase vitality through inspiring worship and messages, leading the church to attract and make new disciples and engaging disciples in small groups, community hands-on mission and generous giving.
- Be the best that God has gifted you for the mission and the church.

I am not here to make it easier for you. I am not here to reduce your anxiety. I am not here to tell you everything is going to be alright. I am here to lead and equip you to proclaim good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, and that this is the year of the Lord's favor. -Luke 4:18

What does it look like for you to claim that this is the year of the Lord's favor for YOU!