

5. apostleship -

...the rhythm of witness

Acts 1:7-8

8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Rom 1:4-5

"...Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake."

JESUS - OUR LEAD: *In speaking to the 70, Jesus said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. 3 Go; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves." Luke 10:2-4*

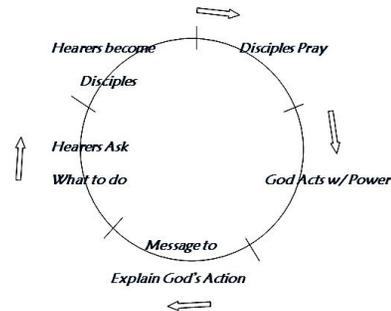
The word "apostle" is loaded with religious connotations, but the word was not originally a "church" word. The word *apostello* literally means to "send out of a stall". The original twelve disciples were called "apostles" not because they had superior virtue or credentials, but because they had been *with* Jesus (Mark 3:14), and for that reason alone, they were in a position to tell, or "witness" to others about His life, death, and resurrection. (Acts 1:21 and 22)

So we have been "sent out of the stall" with the one thing Jesus said would happen when the Holy Spirit does His work in our lives: we have become *Witnesses* (Acts 1:8 above) It means that we are being called out to say what we have seen God do in our lives – to state the message of the Kingdom as Jesus started it in **Matt. 4:17 – Get over yourself! God is in the room!**

But like Peter, who wanted to build Moses, Elijah and Jesus three dwellings so he could sit and enjoy their company a while longer (Luke 9:33), we recognize that it is a part of our human weakness to want to "package" God for our own comfort and convenience. It seems every movement of God among us has ended up being institutionalized, and as soon as that happened it stopped moving - because its "culture" became out of touch with the communities it needed to reach.

"Leadership" in our vocabulary is not a title or a label given to someone, but is instead simply our "influence" as people with "Christ in (us), the hope of glory." Col. 1:26 As we practice the presence of the living Savior in our lives, we bring that presence into the community we live in by demonstrating God's power, and **WITNESSING** to the Source of that power.

Kingdom Movement from Acts:



Program Cycle of Western Church:



We have to be intentional about staying "missional" - In our understanding that means we continue walking in the tension between the community of **faith**, and the not-yet-reached community around us.

We have done this in several ways:

1. **Public Worship Events**
2. **Doing an Alpha Course**
3. **Serving people in need**
4. **Opening a booth at the County Fair**
5. **Holding "Jesus Meetings" in downtown Cambridge**
6. **Sharing the message at the State Fair and other places**

In our culture, whether we meet "house to house", or in a designated church building, the risk is always that we end up isolating in "holy huddles" from the very people we are here to reach. When this happens, we force anyone who would become a part of the faith community to be "extracted" from their current culture, and to lose their connection and relevance to the community that surrounds us. **We strongly believe that "Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world," so there is never any reason to go into "protection mode".** The flow of influence goes from us to those around us, not the other way around.

"We cannot disengage from our community and at the same time bring a living Savior into the context of our world."