

Affirmations and Confessions
Concerning apostolic and prophetic ministry
A Call for Humility, Purity and Integrity in the Charismatic Renewal

Section 1 - Preamble

Those of us in leadership who believe in the legitimacy of apostolic and prophetic ministry today, confirm the need for accepted ethics of integrity and accountability. We stand firmly against certain aberrations (See Section 3: Mistakes) promoted by some charismatic leaders and some who identify themselves as apostles and prophets.

This statement is fueled by genuine love for the different members in the Body of Messiah and is meant to be a call for repentance, righteousness, humility, honesty, purity, integrity, accountability and correctability among all of us who believe in the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit.

Let us remember that Jesus (Yeshua) is the Chief Priest and Apostle of our faith (Heb. 3:1). Since He is Lord of all, any ministry should reflect an attitude of service and submission. Prophecy should always be motivated by love (I Cor. 13:2) and be given with the awareness that we only know in part (I Cor. 13:9). Therefore, the way we express ourselves should be void of any arrogance and self-promotion.

We believe in the five leadership gifts from Eph. 4:11 ff. — apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. It is sometimes beneficial to identify people who are functioning in these gifts so they can be released to fulfill their callings for the benefit of all. (Discernment is always necessary. Just as there are real apostles and prophets, there are also false apostles and prophets [Rev. 2:2, Matt. 24:11]).

Naming these functions should never be for the purpose of elevating the status of any individual, but only to clarify his or her service within the Body. When all understand their gifts and functions, they can work together in harmony to advance the Kingdom of God more effectively. Leaders should never find their self-worth or identity from ministry labels or titles.

The functions of apostles and prophets are described briefly in Ephesians 4:11-16 and chronicled throughout the book of Acts. Today in different cultures and streams of the ecclesia, these gift ministries find their expressions in different ways. Teachings about the roles of apostles and prophets in the body today are widespread, yet quite diverse.

All ministry leaders should be held to standards required of elders as outlined in 1 Timothy 3. They are normally affirmed and installed in these roles by a team of elder-level leaders, and walk in mutual submission with them. Apostolic and prophetic ministry are normative functions in the New Covenant ecclesia, along with evangelists, pastors, teachers, elders and deacons.

Individual charismatic gifts, including prophecy, are also to be seen as normative for New Covenant believers and not as elevating the person to a prideful, mystical level of importance over others (Numbers 11:27; Acts 2:17-19; I Corinthians 12:4, 11; 14:1, 24, 31, 39).

Section 2 - Affirmations

We affirm that:

1. Apostles and prophets have always operated in the church.
2. The restoration of the use of the terms *apostle* and *prophet* is not to establish a movement to replace other church streams, but to clarify these scripturally-based ministries.
3. New Covenant leadership is not measured by titles, but according to the fruit produced and by godly influence in peoples' lives. Apostles in the Book of Acts were recognized as such by the congregations that followed them.
4. Apostolic leadership should not seek to assert authority over others who do not see themselves as called to their sphere or stream. (1 Cor. 9:2; 2 Cor. 10:13).
5. An apostle may have an oversight role, but oversight is ideally exercised among a plurality of leaders who are mutually accountable.
6. Part of the calling of apostles and prophets is to seek unity and cooperation with all church streams that are true to the Gospel (Jn. 17:21).
7. Charismatic leaders today should understand and affirm the basic biblical doctrines that have always unified true believing Christians. All teaching should be tested by the authority of the Scriptures.

Section 3 - Mistakes

We recognize the following mistakes:

1. **Lack of Humility:** The functions of apostle and prophet require genuine humility and a desire to lift up others. We repent of arrogant statements that have come from some who have perpetuated these aberrations.
2. **Dishonoring of Historic Church Streams:** We reject any presentation of the restoration of apostles and prophets that would delegitimize the historic church streams, suggesting that they were not truly an authentic part of the full ecclesia.
3. **Claim to Authoritative Influence Like the Canonical Apostles and Prophets:** There is a great difference between the canonical apostles and prophets, and those who serve as apostles and prophets within the Body since their time. Modern day apostles are not equal to the 12 Apostles of the Lamb (Rev. 21:14).
4. **The Royal Apostle/Pastor Model:** We repudiate the model that elevates the role of apostle or pastor to a type of dictator or king where unilateral decisions are made without accountability. The biblical model of leadership includes teamwork and mutual submission.
5. **Non-Accountable Apostle/Prophet/Pastor:** We reject the claim that ministry leaders are not accountable to other leaders; and that only God can remove an apostle/prophet from their position (perhaps by the leader's death), even in the case of gross moral failure. We reject the use of "touch not God's anointed," to suggest that leaders are *only* accountable to God, as this often leads to abuse.
6. **Unaccountable Prophecy:** Prophecies in the church today are to be tested by mature elder-level leaders. Those who prophesy in a way that is proven to be inaccurate, need to repent and submit to a team of senior ministers for reevaluation.

7. **Imbalanced Prosperity Teaching:** We reject the misuse of the Bible's teaching on prosperity that places manipulative emphasis on giving to the one who is preaching as the primary way to receive blessing and enrichment. We believe that God meets our needs and provides abundance, so that we can bless others, not to accumulate material wealth for ourselves (Luke 12:15).
8. **Ignoring Biblical Character Standards:** We reject the idea that apostles and prophets are beyond the standards of character required for all elders, as taught in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. The higher the level of leadership, the greater the demand for character (James 3:1).
9. **Undue and Unbiblical Authority:** Leaders should never pressure people to obey their instructions beyond the dictates of the individual's own conscience and of the Scriptures; nor use their leadership position as a means of demanding obedience to them.

Section 4 - Conclusion

As charismatic leaders, we acknowledge that there have been at times excessive claims, moral compromise, financial mismanagement and prideful attitudes. We stand against any and every misuse of God's holy gifts.

We understand that the application of the issues raised here will be quite different in different cultures, and we trust that the Holy Spirit will lead each one of us in how best to fulfill them.

It is our hope that these measures of self-correction will help pave the way for a healthier future, an increase of divine love and a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Body of Messiah.