

EMPOWERMENT CONFERENCE - 2020

WHO MOVED MY CHURCH CHEESE?



DR. THOMAS HALE, MULTIPLIER

RON COTTLE MINISTRIES, INC.

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I. SYNOPSIS

- A. The church cheese (Who Moved My Cheese?–Spencer Johnson, 1998) moved in 2020. The Coronavirus pandemic has sped up the rise of the apostolic Church (Ekklesia) and the decline of the congregational Church. This workshop will contrast the differences of the two church models and focus on contemporary strategies and steps to build an Apostolic Church Center.

II. STATEMENT OF INTRODUCTION

- A. On April 26, 1876 the people of Vicksburg, Mississippi woke up and discovered that the Mississippi River had moved and left the city high and dry. Their cheese had moved (Who Moved My Cheese?–Spencer Johnson, 1998). In the spring of 2020, the Coronavirus pandemic abruptly changed the world and interrupted every strata of American society, including the church. The American church could no longer gather “in the building.”
- B. Many pastors and church leaders are wondering if the church will ever return to normal. The answer is no. Like a mighty river that has been quietly and covertly building and destroying as it moves, a cataclysmic event has caused a sudden shift in the church and we cannot go back to where we were before. The river has moved. Congregational based churches are shifting, and the forgotten ways of the early apostolic church are returning and speeding up:.
1. **Question:** How many Christians in the year AD 100? **Answer:** Approximately 25,000.
 2. **Question:** How many Christians in AD 313? **Answer:** Approximately 20,000,000.
 3. **Question:** How did they do church with such brilliant success? They were a marginalized group in a tolerating, sometimes persecuting culture, without church buildings on every corner, rampant biblical ignorance, no professional class of pastors, no seminaries, no denominational structures, and a rigorous initiation for disciples of Jesus to prove they were worthy of joining the community of the “baptized.” **Answer:** They were an Ekklesia.

III. We are moving from the age of the congregation to the age of the Ekklesia.

- A. Jesus Himself applied the word, “Ekklesia” to His followers (Matthew 16:16 & Matthew 18:17) and is the Greek word throughout the New Testament translated into English by the word, “church.” Ekklesia is used 114 times in the New Testament.
- B. The word, “Church” comes from the German Kirche (Kear-ka). It did not enter the biblical record until Martin Luther translated the Bible from Greek and Latin into German approximately 450 years ago. The Germanic notion of “church” has so thoroughly unseated the Greek idea of “ekklisia” that when one talks about church today the immediate and nearly universal response is to associate it with a building, a structure, a location, an address. “I go to First Assembly, First Baptist, etc.”
- C. Kirche and ekklisia refer to two very different ideas. A kirche is a location while an ekklisia is a calling, a group of “called out” people united by identity and purpose. Regarding the Ekklesia, Andy Stanley says, “You can lock the doors of a kirche. Not so with the Ekklesia of Jesus.”
- D. The Ekklesia was the ruling body that governed the polis or city state. Jesus could have created a new word; but instead used the common, political word known and understood by Jew and Gentile alike, to define His Church.
 - 1. Jesus intended that His Church be an embassy of His Kingdom and an extension of His government to engage the world and govern it.
- E. The Ekklesia would be the representative of His Kingdom on earth and exercise binding and loosing authority (keys of the Kingdom) to overcome principalities and powers and transform communities where each Ekklesia was established.
- F. The idea of the Church as a ruling Ekklesia has largely been lost and replaced with rescuing sinners from this world and living quiet, unconnected lives until our escape to heaven. We went from changing the world to resisting the world and from engaging the world to escaping it.
 - 1. Most churches see themselves as only sanctuaries and healing centers and not also as armies and world-changers.
 - 2. Most pastors are happy to have a lot of people show up on Sundays whether they affect the culture or not. So, church attendance is high; but cultural effectiveness is low.
 - 3. God has been raising up “para-church” ministries to function like “special forces” to fill the Kingdom void caused by the inaction of the Church.

IV. Congregation Versus Ekklesia

- A. **Question:** Are you leading a congregation (kirche) or an Ekklesia?
- B. Here are some contrasts between the Ekklesia and the congregation:
1. The Ekklesia equips (aligns) people for all of life; the congregation equips people for church life.
 2. The Ekklesia effects change in the surrounding community; the congregation effects change only in individual souls.
 3. The Ekklesia challenges the status quo; the congregation assembles to find peace in the midst of the status quo.
 4. The Ekklesia sends out people to serve their communities; the congregation calls their communities to attend their Sunday worship services.
 5. The Ekklesia is focused on transforming and stewarding the earth; the congregation is focused on making it to heaven.
 6. The Ekklesia focuses on spirit-empowered humanitarianism; the congregation focuses on spirit-empowered pietism.
 7. Those in the Ekklesia know they have been sanctified to serve; those in the congregation believe they have been saved to be sanctified.
 8. The Ekklesia has a vision for the entire community; the congregation has vision only for their whole Body.
 9. The Ekklesia seeks to influence each of the seven mountains of culture; the congregation seeks to influence only the mountain of religion.
 10. The Ekklesia measures its success by how many it sends into the world to “re-present” Christ; the congregation measures success by how many it “packs the pews” with.

V. Summary Statement

- A. The movement from thinking of and doing church as a congregation (temple model) to doing church as an Ekklesia (mission model that removes the clergy-laity divide) has been happening over the past few decades. In 2020, it has been super accelerated!



THREE DIMENSIONS OF THE EKKLESIA

Apostolic houses (local churches (*ekklesia*) and business organizations) are like a large tent with three supporting poles. The **center pole** is the apostolic leader functioning in his/her “sphere” of authority (government) with an appointed eldership.

The **second pole** is a group of people (congregation). They are the people that God gathers to the apostolic leader for him/her to resource for the Kingdom. They must, however, be built (trained) to establish the Kingdom. Only spiritual sons and daughters can be built upon. Thus, a third pole is required.

The **third pole** is a training center that “raises up mature sons and daughters” and places (adopts) them into their appointed fields (measures) of ministry and commissions them into the seven spheres (Arts and Entertainment, Business, Education, Family, Government, Media, Religion) of influence.

THE CENTER POLE OF THE EKKLESIA - THE APOSTLE

“An apostle is a Christian leader gifted, taught, commissioned, and sent by God with the authority to establish the foundational government of the church within an assigned sphere of ministry by hearing what the Spirit is saying to the churches and by setting things in order accordingly for the growth and maturity of the church.” (Dr. C. Peter Wagner)

Jesus Himself was the one who applied the term “apostle” to His disciples whom He called and Commissioned. (Luke 6:13). Later on, both Paul and Peter introduced themselves in their epistles with the title “apostle.” It is also important to recognize that “apostle” occurs in one of the lists of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 (see 1 Cor. 12:28). The gift and its accompanying office are significant enough to be declared, along with prophets, as the foundation of the church (see Eph. 2:20).

The word apostle is a transliteration of the Greek word *apostolos*. This is a compound word using *apo*—away from; and *stellos*—one sent as an authorized representative; **an ambassador**.

The first and primary concern of apostles is to establish kingdom order. They are set in place, by call and commission, to bring order into the Church and its local expressions. Apostles lead, not merely by words, but by executive administration. They have unusual authority to direct, command, encourage, and establish God's purposes within the Church, and by extension within the community at large. They are given significant revelation (*rhema*) that allows them to see what others often cannot see.

Apostles establish their ministries in biblical government. They establish biblical parameters. They appoint elders. These elders become wise counsel to them and provide those who follow an assurance of participation in vision and ministry. They ground their ministry in biblical order, setting sound, reasonable, and understandable policies that give stability to the Church (*Ekklesia*).

APOSTOLIC LEADERSHIP - THE FOUR "R's"

Apostolic leaders (spiritual fathers) provide to their spiritual sons and daughters and we hold these as core values of Embassy College:

1. **TO RECOGNIZE** - Every person seeks significance in some measure. One of the primary responsibilities of the father/son relationship is to establish that in each other. Recognition is the key, both for the father and the son. The apostolic leaders (father) should recognize and affirm the son's anointing. He does this by causing the son to better understand and appreciate his anointing, elevating his focus and his sense of value. He should also acknowledge the son's anointing publicly and professionally, communicating the importance of his calling and his excellence in ministry to others.
2. **TO RAISE UP** - Secondly, fathers and sons should seek to elevate one another, to raise each other to higher levels of effectiveness, achievement, and opportunity within the Kingdom. Apostolic leaders should always be imparting wisdom so that sons will increase in Biblical understanding as well as ministry excellence. Rightly dividing the Word of truth is of extreme importance, so spiritual fathers must help their sons track faithfully in the Scriptures.

Equipping sons to increase ministry effectiveness, apostolic leaders should demonstrate useful tools and techniques. They should be able to spot and adjust weaknesses, making their sons even more productive and valuable. And as fathers bring personal excellence to the table, they become living examples of integrity, sincerity, and propriety.

3. **TO RELEASE** - Apostolic leaders have a responsibility to send their sons into venues of ministry endorsed as sons, "This is my beloved Son..." and announced as a voice to be reckoned with— "...hear Him." As fathers, the potential for placement is high, just as Paul sent Timothy to Philippi, Titus to Cyprus, and Epaphroditus to Colossae.

Sons, on the other hand, grant release to apostolic leaders to speak into their lives and ministries with authority. The word patriarch comes from two Greek terms—*pater* (father) and *archein* (to rule). Spiritual fathers watch over, guard, and mentor their sons because their sons free them to do so.

4. **TO RESOURCE** - The other area of responsibility apostolic leaders and sons share is to add value to each other's lives. The resources of relationship and revelation are significant weapons in the arsenal of spiritual fathers and sons. There is not a relationship quite as significant in the work of ministry, and the ability to share and evaluate revelation without reprisal is huge.

Apostolic leaders who have more than one spiritual son provide bridges to a variety of ministry opportunities as the spiritual siblings become "bridges" to ministry and paths to extended application of truth for each other. Sons have the capacity to serve their father's needs in every way possible. In doing so, they show forth the honor that exhibits the joy and blessing of being in a father/son relationship.

TWO IMPORTANT CONCLUSIONS

The first is that the office, function, ministry, and significance of apostles has never been removed or replaced within the Christian Church. Although many ignore it, and many others deny it, this biblical office stands as continuing evidence of Jesus Christ's involvement in the order and structure of His Church.

The second conclusion is that the office and ministry of apostles is being profoundly and visibly restored today in vastly increasing numbers globally.

See Dr. Cottle's books: *Leading Transition* ([RCM Bookstore](#)), *Apostolic Architecture* ([Kindle eBook](#)) and *Kingdom Embassy* ([Kindle eBook](#)) for more information.

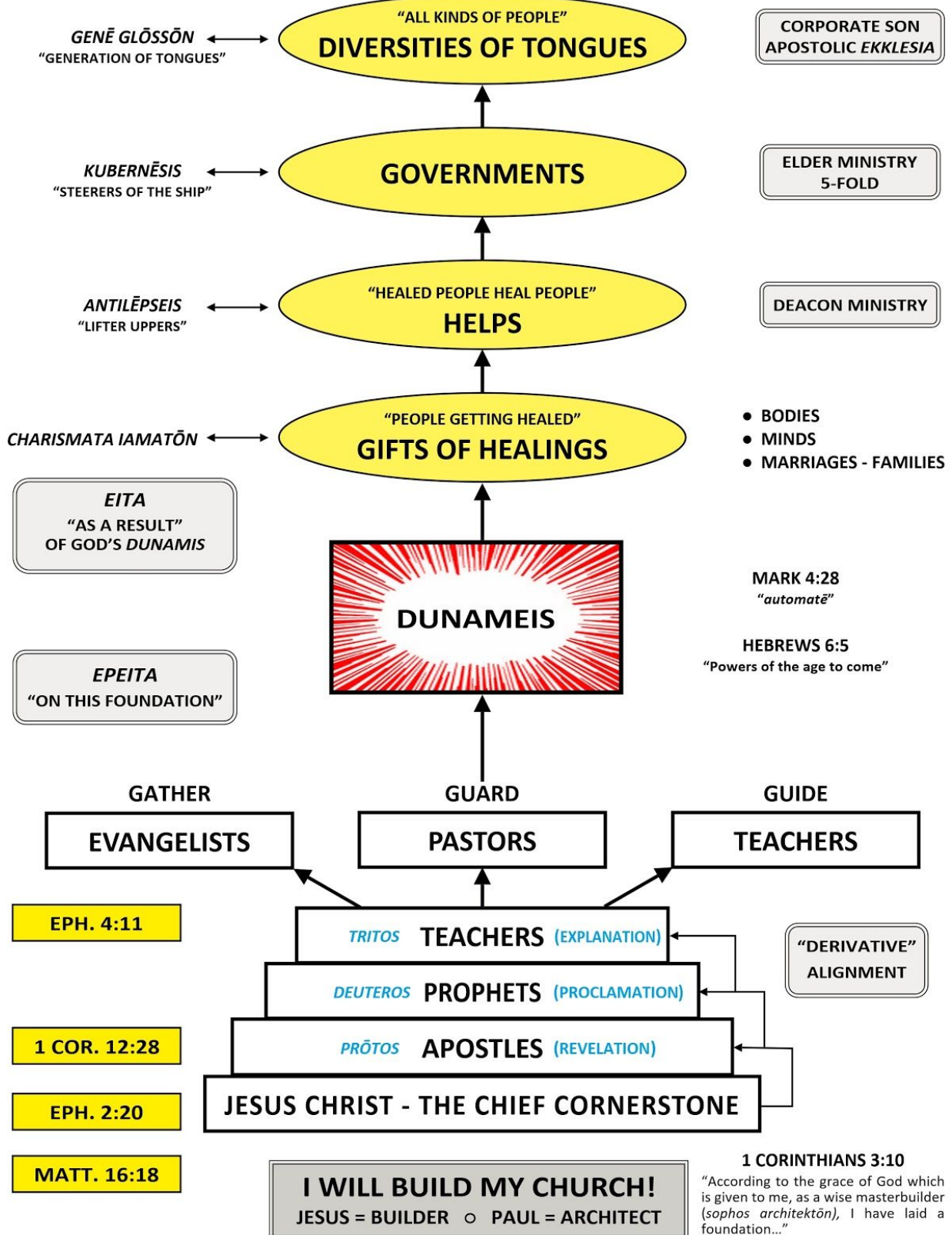
BACKGROUND TEACHING FROM EMPOWERMENT CONFERENCE 2019

Webpage Resources: <http://bit.ly/2w6pXE5>

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B. Many pastors and church leaders are wondering if the church will ever return to _____.

The answer is _____. _____ based churches are shifting, and the forgotten ways of the _____ church are returning and speeding up:.

1. **Question:** How many Christians in the year AD 100? **Answer:** Approximately _____.

2. **Question:** How many Christians in AD 313? **Answer:** Approximately _____.

3. **Question:** How did they do church with such brilliant success? **Answer:** They were an _____.

III. We are moving from the age of the _____ to the age of the _____.

- A. Jesus Himself applied the word, “Ekklesia” to His followers (Matthew 16:16 & Matthew 18:17).
- B. The word, “Church” comes from the German _____ (Kear-ka). The Germanic notion of “church” has so thoroughly _____ the Greek idea of “ekkllesia” that when one talks about church today the immediate and nearly universal response is to associate it with a _____.”
- C. A kirche is a _____ while an Ekklesia is a _____, a group of “called out” people united by _____ and _____.
- D. The Ekklesia was the _____ body that governed the polis or city state.
 - 1. Jesus intended that His Church be an _____ of His Kingdom and an _____ of His government to _____ the world and _____ it.
- E. The Ekklesia would be the _____ of His Kingdom on earth and exercise _____ and _____ authority (keys of the Kingdom) to overcome principalities and powers and _____ communities where each Ekklesia was established.

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