

REVISED AND UPDATED EDITION

# MOVING IN THE APOSTOLIC

HOW TO BRING THE KINGDOM  
OF HEAVEN TO EARTH



JOHN ECKHARDT



**Chosen**

*a division of Baker Publishing Group*  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

John Eckhardt, *Moving in the Apostolic*  
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Published by Chosen Books  
11400 Hampshire Avenue South  
Bloomington, Minnesota 55438  
www.chosenbooks.com

Chosen Books is a division of  
Baker Publishing Group, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Printed in the United States of America

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Eckhardt, John, author.  
Title: Moving in the apostolic / John Eckhardt.  
Description: Revised and updated edition. | Bloomington, Minnesota : Chosen Books, 2017. | Includes bibliographical references.  
Identifiers: LCCN 2016034853 | ISBN 9780800798017 (trade paper : alk. paper)  
Subjects: LCSH: Apostolate (Christian theology) | Church polity.  
Classification: LCC BV601.2 .E35 2017 | DDC 262/.1—dc23  
LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2016034853>

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Cover design by Brian Bobel

17 18 19 20 21 22 23  
7 6 5 4 3 2 1  
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In this point could never our enemies cause us to faint, for our First Petition was, that the reverend face of the Primitive and Apostolic Church should be brought back again to the eyes and knowledge of men.

John Knox, *The History of the Reformation in Scotland*

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## Foreword

God has begun reinstating the gift and the office of apostle.

This may sound at first like a simple statement, but its implications are profound. The Body of Christ is in a substantially more complete form than it has been, perhaps since New Testament times. This means that God is now prepared to do things through His people here on earth that He has been postponing for a very long time.

Since the 1990s (when the first edition of this book was published), the world has seen more quantity, intensity and sophistication of activities involving aggressive spiritual warfare than ever before in recorded history, including the book of Acts. Parallel to this have come new levels of prayer, specifically intercession and prophecy. Partially as a result of this, we now live in the first generation of Christians ever to see light at the end of the tunnel of the Great Commission. No previous generation could even *measure* the remaining task, let alone realistically plan to finish it!

The restoration of the ministry of apostles to the Body of Christ is directly related to this good news. By this I do not mean that there have not been apostles through the centuries of Christian history. There certainly have been, even though

many of them would not have used the title “apostle” to describe themselves. What I do mean is that the Church as a whole did not recognize the crucial role of apostles—they did not understand it.

Therefore, they were unable to bless it, accept it and relate to it in a godly way. For one thing, books like this one were not on the required reading lists of Christian leaders.

I am gratified that a rapidly growing number of leaders are now beginning to move in the apostolic gift and the apostolic office. But not all of them will have the ability to stand back, see what they are doing in the broad picture, analyze what is happening through them and exercise the self-discipline to organize their thoughts and put them into book form as John Eckhardt has done. This is not to put the others down. They are highly effective practitioners, and they are advancing the Kingdom of God in an awesome manner. John Eckhardt just happens to have both the gift of apostle and the gift of teacher.

From the first page, John Eckhardt focuses his whole book on the completion of Jesus’ Great Commission. Nothing could please me more! Too many Christian leaders become so infatuated by the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, the remarkable advances in Christian unity, the drama of spiritual warfare, the evident signs of revival and the excitement of power evangelism that these are in danger of becoming ends in themselves. For God, they are not ends in themselves, but means toward the end of getting lost souls saved. As you read this book, Apostle Eckhardt will not let you forget this incredibly important truth.

The current literature we have on the ministry of apostles is excellent. But *Moving in the Apostolic* is not a repetition or rehash of what the other authors are saying. This is the first of our current books written by one who takes his personal role so seriously that he uses the title “Apostle John Eckhardt” without apology. As a result, this book, more than any of the

others, lets you go backstage, so to speak, and see just what is going on in the heart and the mind of a true apostle. I have no doubt that, as a direct consequence of this book, a number of other apostles who may have been a bit timid will find themselves gaining the courage to use the title “apostle” as well. I do not see this as a trivial thing, because I believe that the biblical *office* of apostle carries a dimension of power with it that the *function* alone cannot attain.

My favorite segment of the book is the chapter on warfare. All the apostles I know would agree with John that a primary role of the apostle is to lead the Body of Christ into aggressive spiritual warfare. But none of them have said it as well! If you are a browser who hardly ever reads a whole book, I recommend that you start with that chapter. It is powerful!

I do hope, however, that you and others will read the entire book—not just once, but several times. When these truths penetrate your heart and mind and the hearts and minds of Christian leaders across the board, the day for actually fulfilling the Great Commission will be right around the corner! I want to be here when it happens, and I know that you do, too.

C. Peter Wagner (1930–2016), chancellor emeritus,  
Wagner Leadership Institute;  
vice president, Global Spheres, Inc.

# Introduction

## *A Time to Review*

If you are thinking, *This book cannot be for me. I am not an apostle, so I cannot get anything out of reading a book about apostles*—think again! Have you ever read the book of Acts and marveled at the power that seemed to be resident in the early Church, yet come away puzzled at the obvious lack of power in the Church today? Or how about Jesus’ words in John 14:12? “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.” Have you ever wondered why we do not see the fulfillment of that promise in the Church today? Have you prayed and fasted and beat your hands bloody against the gates of heaven, only to have your prayers bounce back and lie inert, seemingly unheard and unanswered, at your feet? Because if you have, you are not alone.

God is stirring up in His people a discontent with the average, run-of-the-mill, status quo Christianity that has tided us over, for the most part, since the deaths of the early apostles. God is calling His Church to step out of mediocrity and into

the fullness of its calling and heritage, that the Great Commission might finally be fulfilled and the glorious return of Christ realized. But that will only happen through the restoration of the apostolic ministry and an aggressive appropriation of all that means to the Church.

For this reason, I can say with confidence that if you are a part of the Church, this book is for you. You see, it is time for the Church to review the ministry of the apostolic. If we are reviewing something, we are looking over, studying or examining it *again*. Many have studied this ministry from a historical perspective and concluded that the apostolic age of the Church ended with the deaths of the twelve apostles. According to them, we are therefore living in a day when there are no more apostles. In other words, there is no such thing as a current apostolic ministry.

The Holy Spirit, however, is causing many in the Church to take another look at this ministry. In doing so, we are beginning to see things that were previously hidden from view. This is why we need a review. By looking again, we will see things we have never seen, and we will see things that were previously seen in a whole new light. Many will want to readjust their thinking and teaching.

“Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things” (2 Timothy 2:7). You cannot receive understanding unless you *consider* what is being said, which means to look at thoughtfully. Some will not even consider the possibility that apostolic ministry is for today. Their minds are set on believing that it ceased with the deaths of the Twelve. Some refuse to consider that apostles are alive right now and are currently ministering. But we cannot be closed minded and expect the Holy Spirit to teach us new things. Revelation and understanding come to those who consider what is being said. Please take into consideration what is said in this book, and I pray that the Lord will give you understanding in all things.



## The Apostolic Commission: Mission Impossible?

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Matthew 28:19–20

And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”

Mark 16:15

*Mission: Impossible* was a popular espionage series originally broadcast on network television from 1966 to 1973 and turned into a blockbuster movie in 1996. In each episode, the Impossible Missions Force, a small group of highly trained agents, was sent on a seemingly impossible mission. Despite overwhelming odds, each episode concluded with the mission accomplished.

What kept viewers riveted was the team's ability to confront and overcome each challenge that stood in the way of completing the mission.

This chapter opens with what is commonly referred to as the Great Commission. It was given to a small group of men, chosen by the Lord, whom He called *apostles*. The mission He gave to the remaining eleven apostles (the twelfth, Judas Iscariot, had killed himself) reminds me of an episode of *Mission: Impossible*. These were the same men who had forsaken Jesus and fled at His crucifixion. They had hidden in a room for fear they would share His fate. How could this small, frightened, ragtag group of Galileans fulfill such a Great Commission? How could they overcome the impossible odds stacked against them? How were people going to believe that the One who sent them had died and risen from the dead? What would give them the ability to complete such a mission?

Can you relate? Have you ever felt that what God has called you to do—or maybe what you secretly dream of doing for God and His Kingdom—is an impossible mission? Do you despair of ever seeing it accomplished? Is it truly hopeless? Or is there, within the apostolic dimension, an answer for you, as surely as there was for the original apostles?

Those same men who had cowered in fear eventually set out and, in the face of overwhelming odds, turned their world upside down. The book of Acts chronicles their exploits in the midst of staggering persecution and opposition. How were they able to do it? What was the key to fulfilling their Mission: Impossible?

## They Were Sent

Before you respond with the standard, obvious answers of “prayer” and “the power of the Holy Spirit,” I want to give you what I believe is an important, yet often overlooked, key.

As a matter of fact, I consider it to be vital to fulfilling the Great Commission today. This key is so important that I have spent years of my life studying and preaching on it. The only reason this time span is not longer is simply because I did not discover this key earlier. I never heard much preaching on it; the Church did not emphasize it.

What is the key? The answer is simple: *They were sent*.

Now, that may not sound profound, but I assure you that upon studying what it means to be sent, you will see its importance and understand why the Church has struggled at times in its attempts to fulfill the Great Commission. The purpose of writing this book is to bring understanding to the whole Body of Christ of what it means to be sent, so that each of us may then go forth and fulfill what God has called and gifted and equipped us to do.

To be an apostle, or to be apostolic, revolves around the concept of being sent. Only sent ones can fulfill the Great Commission. Only sent ones will be able to overcome the impossible odds that stand in the way of being able to say, “Mission accomplished.” The Church cannot succeed without operating strongly in this dimension.

There are several premises I want to put forth concerning this commission:

1. The Church has been given a commission.
2. This commission is an apostolic commission.
3. This commission must and will be fulfilled.
4. Since the commission is apostolic, it will take an apostolic anointing to fulfill it.

What does it mean to be apostolic? Can we *all* be apostolic? What part do apostles have in fulfilling the Great Commission? When do we receive and operate in an apostolic anointing?

How is the Church affected by apostolic ministry? These are some of the questions we will attempt to answer together.

Let's first define the term *commission*. A commission is simply a matter or task entrusted to a person who acts as an agent of another. This means that the task has been authorized by someone with authority. Jesus authorized the apostles to go into all the world to preach. He authorized them to teach and make disciples of all nations (literally, all people groups).

To commission means to authorize, appoint, charge, empower, dispatch and entrust with a mission. Jesus' commission was directly given to the apostles but indirectly given to the Church in every generation. It was not just the apostles' commission; it is our commission today, for after the early apostles died, the commission endured. It has yet to be totally fulfilled and will remain in force until the day it is fulfilled.

### They Were Given Power and Authority

This assignment means much more than evangelizing. Evangelism is only the beginning of the task. Converts must be disciplined. Churches must be planted. Elders must be ordained. The saints must be perfected. As a matter of fact, the work begins before evangelism takes place. Strategic prayer must come first in order to bind the powers of darkness that would hinder evangelism. Evil spirits must be dealt with. Prophetic utterances must be released.

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*The Church in the book of Acts was first and foremost an apostolic Church.*

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Many have believed the commission is an evangelistic commission. Although evangelism is an important part, the commission is essentially *apostolic*, incorporating evangelism to fulfill it. Sent ones do more than evangelize. Sent ones preach, teach, prophesy and do the works of Jesus.

The commission is apostolic because it was originally given to the apostles. It was given and received in this context. The Church in the book of Acts was first and foremost an apostolic Church. They understood that they were sent ones. They knew that they were authorized to carry out the mission. The dominant anointing in the book of Acts was apostolic, and the anointing is what governed all they did. The apostolic set the tone for the early Church; it molded who they were and how they lived.

When I say the commission was apostolic, I mean it was given to sent ones. This is the basic definition of the word *apostle*: It comes from the Greek word *apostolos*, meaning a delegate, an ambassador of the Gospel, officially a commissioner of Christ (with miraculous powers), a messenger, *he that is sent*. Before this word found its way into our Bible, it was a secular term used by the Greeks and Romans to describe special envoys who were sent out for the purpose of expanding the dominion of the empire.

Many of these envoys were military generals with authority to go into new territories and fight, if necessary, to establish the Greek or Roman culture in that region. They were also responsible for teaching and training the new subjects in the laws and culture of the kingdom.

These envoys were given power and authority from the king to fulfill their mission. They were responsible for fulfilling their commissions and were given everything they needed to succeed. They were highly intelligent and gifted individuals, specially chosen for the task. They were sent to certain territories and charged to subdue, conquer, convert, instruct, train and establish the new subjects in the culture of the empire.

This word *apostle* has been a part of the Church since the days our Lord ministered on the earth. It now describes the commission given to the first apostles. They were sent into the territories of the earth to convert multitudes of people and

incorporate them into the Kingdom of God. They were given power and authority to accomplish the task. They were responsible for teaching, training and instructing new believers, making them productive citizens of the Kingdom.

Apostles were sent to establish the Kingdom in the hearts of people and to establish churches throughout the world. They were given the power of the Holy Spirit to help them fulfill this mission.

If the commission is apostolic, that means only sent ones can fulfill it. Every church and every believer must have this dimension to be a part of fulfilling the Great Commission. This does not make everyone an apostle, but everyone can be *apostolic*. The Church therefore needs to be first and foremost an apostolic Church if it is to fulfill its mission.

### The Apostolic Spirit

“The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you” (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit is an apostolic Spirit. He is apostolic because He has been *sent* by the Father. He is also a prophetic Spirit, for when He comes, the sons, daughters, servants and handmaidens will prophesy (see Acts 2:17–18). He is an evangelistic Spirit because He convicts and draws sinners to Christ (see John 16:8–9). He is a pastoral Spirit because He appoints overseers for the saints (see Acts 20:28). He is also a teaching Spirit, according to 1 John 2:27.

All believers who have received the Holy Spirit have within them these dimensions. Those believers called to the fivefold ministry described in Ephesians 4:11–12 will have a greater dimension of the Holy Spirit’s anointing in the gift to which they are called. The apostles will have a greater measure of the

apostolic dimension upon their lives to impart and stir up this anointing in the saints.

It is the responsibility of the apostles to release and stir up the apostolic dimension in every believer through teaching, preaching, prophesying and the laying on of hands. When saints become aware of and begin to walk in this dimension of the Spirit, they will manifest the power, authority and characteristics of a sent one.

Jesus the Apostle was sent by the Father, and His words indicated His awareness of that apostleship (see John 3:34; 5:22–30; 6:38–44). A characteristic of the apostolic spirit is an *awareness* of being sent. A sense of purpose and destiny results from the apostolic spirit—a focus upon fulfilling a divine commission. All ministers are sent by the Lord (see Romans 10:15), but the very heartbeat of apostleship is the recognition of being sent.

When the Church loses the apostolic dimension, it loses its sense of divine purpose and mission. Whole denominations dry up and decline because of the absence of the apostolic anointing. The apostolic spirit is necessary for the Church to fulfill the Great Commission to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature (see Mark 16:15). Instead, after the death of the early apostles, the Church became institutional and ceremonial.

“Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (John 20:21–22). Jesus compared the sending of the apostles to His being sent by the Father. He then breathed on them that they might receive the Holy Spirit—an apostolic Spirit. We know that Jesus, as an apostle, is in a class by Himself. Even so, many characteristics of His being sent apply to the apostolic anointing today. The attributes of a sent one should be found in every believer. This is based on the words of our Lord as reviewed in

this text. As we meditate on these words, we will begin to see the apostolic dimension clearly.

As you read this book, your mission—should you choose to accept it—is to receive clarity and understanding concerning apostles and apostolic people; to learn to flow and operate in this dimension; and to become an active part of fulfilling the mission given to the Church.

Unlike the Impossible Missions Force, you can rest assured that, no matter what happens, the Lord your God will never leave you nor disavow you (see Deuteronomy 31:6). This page will self-destruct in five seconds. God go with you, sent one.