

TrailNotes speaks to forward movement, paying attention to the “landscape” we are passing through in this trail-laced wooded hillside and valley, not to mention the world beyond. *TrailNotes* is an unfolding, ongoing journal of the people who share the trail with us and the things we’re learning and doing.

ElderTalk Have the apostolic and prophetic gifts to the Church ceased? ROBERT KEY

As we move into 2019, I will be doing a series of sermons on the gifts of the Spirit. In the Church at large, there are a number of people who do not believe that all of the gifts listed in Scripture are still in operation today. Of particular concern to some is the gift of apostle. The gift of prophet and the gift of prophecy are subject to the same objections, although by redefining prophecy, these people usually avoid having to deny its existence. In this article I will set forth arguments addressing objections to the continuation of the apostolic and prophetic gifts.

Often the error we hear can be boiled down to something like the following statement:

The apostles wrote the Scripture, and as such, they wrote without error. Since we now have the canon of Scripture, we no longer have apostles, for if someone could hear from God and report what he heard, he would be adding to the Scripture.

I agree that the writers of Scripture wrote without error; however, “writer of Scripture” and “apostle” are not interchangeable terms. To confuse the two leads to other more serious errors.

I also agree that the canon of Scripture is closed—but the move of the Holy Spirit is not. Someone today *can* hear from God and report what he has heard. Yet this should *not* be given the same credibility as Scripture. Remember, we prophesy only in part (1 Corinthians 13:9). We must recognize that, for the purpose of producing the Scriptures, God provided a different level of anointing to the writers of Scripture than to the rest of the believers, either in the pre-canon Church or afterwards. If this were not the case, the Scripture would be as full of errors as the statements of any person today.



Holy Spirit Dove in stained glass window of the Cathedral of Saint Bavo in Ghent, Belgium

To make the canonization of Scripture a mark in time beyond which any one of the gifts of the Spirit may not go (such as the gift to the Church of the apostle—Ephesians 4:11), is an extra-Biblical argument frequently used by those who reject the gifts of the Spirit. This same logic can be used to exclude any of the other gifts.



Painting of the 3rd Council of Carthage (397 AD) by Carle Van Loo in 1753 (at La Basilique de Notre-Dame des Victoires, Paris)

My perspective of the Biblical truth concerning apostles and prophecy is this:

Not all of the New Testament writers were specifically named in the Scriptures as apostles. Mark, Luke and Jude were not designated apostles. They may or may not have been, but we can not conclusively know from the Scripture record. A circular argument which I fear many subconsciously use, would say that they were apostles because they wrote Scripture, but that Scripture is authoritative because the apostles wrote it.

Biblically speaking, who, then, is an apostle if he is not a writer of Scripture? In the generic sense, the Greek word *apostolos* simply means “one who is sent out or commissioned” (see “messenger” in 2 Corinthians 8:22, 23, and Phillipians 2:25.). Used in a more technical sense and translated “apostle,” it is one of the specific gifts to the Church (Ephesians 4:11-13, 1 Corinthians 12:28). The validity of one claiming to be an apostle is the fruit of successful church plants (1 Corinthians 9:2) as well as the testimony of the Spirit by signs, wonders, and mighty deeds (2 Corinthians 12:12).

Although frequently “the apostles” is used to refer to the twelve disciples, the testimony of Scripture clearly includes many others as well. Specifically named apostles are Paul and Barnabas, Andronicus and Junia, and James the brother of the Lord (Acts 14:14, Romans 16:7, and

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Galatians 1:19.).

In 2 Corinthians 11:12-13 there is a caution against false apostles. Since it was possible for even false apostles to arise, the people at that time must have understood that an apostle could be other than a very few select, pre-recognized individuals. Otherwise, a simple list of genuine apostles would have sufficed. Furthermore, in A.D. 1056 a scribe named Leo compiled *The Didache*, a collection of teachings handed down from the end of the first century. In it, he gives guidelines for the testing of the apostles and prophets which circulated through the churches (*Didache* 11:3-6). If the office of the apostle included many in the New Testament Church besides the twelve and continued on down through history, perhaps even as far as A.D. 1056 (as we might suppose since Leo felt the need to include these guidelines in the *Didache*), then we would be hard pressed to find Biblical justification to say that they ceased when the last of the twelve died, or when the Scripture was canonized.

It is not necessary for an apostle to have seen Jesus during His earthly ministry. Even Paul did not, although he saw Him in a vision. The emphasis is on having received commissioning and revelation directly from the Lord (Galatians 1:1, 12; Ephesians 3:1-7). In this present day, apostolic revelation must be treated in the same way as is prophetic revelation (Ephesians 2:20, 3:5). As such, it must be kept under the authority of the Scripture (1 Corinthians 14:37-38). God's hand was more heavily upon the writers of Scripture and they wrote without error.



All prophetic revelation, apostolic revelation, dreams, visions, words of knowledge, or any other revelation or experience received from the Lord must be kept under the authority of Scripture. Again, we prophesy only in part (1 Corinthians 13:9). Even if a believer genuinely receives something from the Lord by direct revelation, it is not of equal authority with Scripture. Believers are human and prone to error. This applies equally with respect to the interpretation and transmission of spiritual revelation and Biblical doctrine. Just as believers can sincerely and in good integrity study the inerrant written Word of God and come up with variant interpretations and applications, so also a message spoken from the inerrant mouth of God may be received, interpreted, and transmitted by an errant but sincere believer. Satan is a deceiver and without a doubt is more than willing to counterfeit and distort any good thing that God does. This does not mean that we are to

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Members of the Pre-K Sunday School Class at GFC on Jan. 6, 2019
Ashley Anschutz, Ezra Fox, and Joel Robertson

FEBRUARY 2019

- 1 Teen Lock-In at the church. 7:30 pm. to Sat. am.
- 2 Men's Breakfast at Hanley Rd. McDonald's, 9:00 am.
- 3 Eric Byrom preaching: Phil. 1:1-3; 27-30, 10:00 am.
Teen Connect Leaders at Byroms. 1:00 - 3:00 pm
- 9 Women of Grace meet in the Tim Barber Youth Building, 10:30 am.
- 10 Eric Byrom preaching: Phil 2:1-11. 10:00 am.
Communion. 
Circle Church Leader's meeting at church, 7:00 - 8:00 pm.
- 17 Robert Key preaching: "Gifts of the Spirit" 10:00 am.
- 20 Deadline for TrailNotes articles, photos & news. Submit all to bucytalent@aol.com.
- 23 "Work as Worship" retreat at GFC, 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. Cost \$30 (includes lunch). Live stream.
- 24 Jon Vega preaching: Colossians. 10:00 am.
Communion. 

"The March of Prayer"

During the month of March, thirty-one churches in Mans- field will participate in "The March of Prayer" with each church observing "The March" for one day during the month. Grace Fellowship's day is March 18. We will have a special prayer meeting. Stay tuned for more information.

CHRIS TRACY...with the LORD!



Chris and Gwen Tracy

Howard Christopher Tracy, 84, died peacefully in his sleep on Thursday, January 17, 2019. "All who knew him will remember him as a Psalm 15 man."

He was the husband of Gwen, father to Matt and Kendra, father-in-law to Cynthia, grandfather to Zane, Zoe, Rocky, and Ruby, and great-grandfather to Stephen Matthew Fletcher.

Prior to his death he expressed that he was looking forward to going to heaven to be with Jesus and his son, Matt, who died on September 6, 2012.

Chris enjoyed singing in the Mansfield Symphony Chorus and the Grace Fellowship Church choir.

For work he was a supervisor at two factories in Lexington. He also built porches, doors, and closets in his home. He and Gwen traveled all over Ohio campgrounds, taking his fold-up bike. The couple enjoyed over 20 years of retirement together and look forward to reuniting in heaven.

Visitation was on Saturday, January 26, at Grace Fellowship Church from 3:00 to 5:00 pm, the Memorial Service following at 6:00 pm with Matt Godsil officiating.

"He will be greatly missed down here, but they are rejoicing in heaven. I'm sure he's already singing to the Lord in the heavenly choir!"

"Our prayers are with all of you in the family."

Love, Dan & Karen Gates

"Work as Worship" Retreat

God designed us to work AND worship together. The Bible is full of examples of men and women living their daily lives on an eternal mission, mingling their faith and work into everyday lives. Come join Christian business owners, CEOs, pastors, and leaders as we explore the connection between faith and work.

Location:

Grace Fellowship Church

Cost: \$30

Date: Saturday, Feb. 23rd

Time: 8:30 am to 3:30 pm
(Doors open @ 7:30 am)

Register at:

[facebook.com/GFCMansfield](https://www.facebook.com/GFCMansfield)
(then go to "Events")

or

events.rightNowMedia.org/attendee/site/395

Speakers for the live-stream day:

Francis CHAN, Church planter and bestselling author,

Megan ALEXANDER, Correspondent at *Inside Edition*,

Jon ACUFF, *New York Times*

Bestselling author,

Jeffrey WRIGHT, Esq., MBA, CEO UMI,

Steve GREEN, President of Hobby Lobby,

Andrew WEXLER, CEO, Herschend Family Entertainment

Helen MITCHELL, Director for Faith, Work, Economics, Biola University,

Chris PATTON, CEO, His Way At Work & Partner Mike Patton Auto Family,

Liz BOHANNON, Founder & CEO Saeko Designs.

"Hello, Kyoto!"

NICOLE MOORE

Ed's Note: Nicole is one of our English teachers in Japan who serves in Mr. Maki's kindergarten, Wakakusa Gakuen (若草学園). During Christmas break she traveled to Kyoto.

Kyoto is an old city. It served for many years as the capital of Japan prior to Tokyo and is located to the southwest of Tokyo. Since I live several hours north of Tokyo, I could have taken the shinkansen (bullet train) which takes only four hours, but it cost \$190. Being the cheap-skate that I am, I decided to do the less expensive but slower option, which is an overnight bus that takes 9.5 hours and costs \$107.

Let me tell you straight up. I don't consider myself a temple aficionado. I don't believe in what they embody; I know that God is a living Being and does not exist in idols or spirits of nature. I've seen my share of temples here in Japan so I've kind of adopted the attitude, "Seen one, seen them all." But when I saw Kiyomizudera looming on the hill ahead of me, it kind of took my breath away. It was big!! This had the power to impress even the usually unimpressed me.



The Three-Storyed Pagoda at the Kiyomizudera Temple complex, Kyoto, Japan

Kimono rental shops were all over, and girls in kimonos were EVERYWHERE!



Kimono girls!

(More coming!)

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throw out the good gift of God because there is a counterfeit out there. We do not stop spending twenty dollar bills because they are the most frequently counterfeited. Since there are counterfeit spiritual revelations, we must be more careful to test the revelation against the Scriptures. The very fact that there is a counterfeit gives testimony to the validity of the real thing. If twenty dollar bills were not valuable or did not exist, there would be no purpose in counterfeiting them.

When God was preparing the Old Testament believer for the changes that would come about with the advent of the New Covenant, He provided numerous passages of Scripture pointing to the Messiah and the Covenant of Grace. When He poured out the Holy Spirit with the associated gifts and manifestations, He declared that this was the "last days," the final era, that there were no changes to precede His final coming (Acts 2:16-21). In this passage, the evidence that the people were seeing



on the day of Pentecost is blended seamlessly into the final return of Christ.

There is only one passage of Scripture which I have ever heard used to claim that the canonization of Scripture was to signal the end of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 13:9-10 says, "For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away." I reject the unsupported presupposition that "that which is perfect" refers to the canon of Scripture. Rather, I believe it refers to the perfection to be seen when Christ returns and sets the new heaven and the new earth in place. To say that prophecy, which is "in part" has ceased, is also to say that knowledge, which is also "in part," has ceased. The testimony of the remainder of the New Testament is that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are in use, and we must assume were properly used, so that apart from the excesses in Corinth, little instruction was necessary.

I believe that the real reason that so many people want to consign the gifts of the Spirit to a previous era is that they themselves have not experienced them and they judge according to their own experience. Thus, many theologians put forth arguments which deny the fullness of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Rather, we should look at what the Scripture says should be our normal experience and seek the Lord to fill us again that we may not be found lacking.

Grace Fellowship Church

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Eric Byrom	Presiding Elder
Jadaé Fox	Elder
Andy Heining	Elder
Robert Key	Elder
Jon Vega	Elder
Jon Vega	Treasurer
Kay Berry & Karen Gates	Women
Lori Barker	Missions
Andy Heining	Worship
Circle Church Serve Group	Greeters
Angel Vega	Dance
Judy Nichols	Prayer Chain
Kay Berry & Jadaé Fox	Office
Kathy Barth, Manfred & Janet Adalem	Communion
Andy Anschutz	Sound/Power Point
John and Donna Kurtz	TrailNotes