

Chapter 8

GOD'S SERVANTS AND CHRIST'S APOSTLES

*Who appointed Moses as messenger of God?
Who appointed Paul as Apostle of Christ?
Who appointed Matthias as Apostle of Christ?*

Christianity Today recognizes the concept of apostolic succession. The basis of the doctrine is: Jesus Christ, in order to preserve and to continue His work, delegated His authority to appoint apostles to His chosen Apostles. This is premised on Christ's command before He left them. The following verse is quoted from the New International Version of the Bible, which is the same in almost all versions of the Holy Bible:

Matthew 28:19 "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

This doctrine is further supported by Christ's giving the last sign for the "time of the end." This is the "spread of the gospel of the kingdom to all nations:"

Matthew 24:14 "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; then shall the end come."

The Apostolic Succession doctrine is a basic tenet of all Christian religious sects that comprise *Christianity Today*. All of them trace their origin from the Apostles. Unfortunately such claim became the major cause of present-day religious controversies in the Christian world. Every religious organization asserts exclusivity and therefore the truth. Thus, if one were to ask who the apostles of Christ today, members of every sect cite their respective leaders. Hence, to the Lutherans, the Lutheran pastors are the Christ's apostles; to the Wesleyans, the Wesleyan pastors are the apostles of Christ; to the Roman

Catholics, the pope, the cardinals, the archbishops, the bishops, and the priests are the modern apostles of Christ; to the Pentecostals, the Pentecostal pastors...; to the Baptist...; to the Seventh Day Adventists...; to the Jehovah's Witnesses...; to the Assemblies of God...; to the Church of God...; to the Pentecostal Oneness, their pastors are the true apostles of Christ..., and so on.

Non-Bible believing peoples of the world are certainly wondering. How could a book, considered as holy as the Bible, create such great chaos among the very people who believe in it? Everybody claims the truth to the exclusion of the rest!

It is not surprising to find modern Christianity believing in and practicing the Apostolic Succession doctrine. The apostles themselves believed and practiced this doctrine *before they received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost!* This is recorded in Chapter 1 of the Acts of the Apostles. In fact, this was the first and only act of the apostles after the Lord left them physically, and before He rejoined them spiritually. This is the account as written:

Acts 1:11-17 "...ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. ¹²Then return they unto Jerusalem... ¹³and when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, James, and John and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. ¹⁴These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. ¹⁵And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about a hundred and twenty). ¹⁶Men and brethren, this Scripture must need have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. ¹⁷For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry...For it is written in the book of Psalms,"

Acts 1:20 "For it is written in the book of Psalms, let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and, His bishopric let another take."

Acts 1:21-23 "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²²beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. ²³And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias."

Acts 1:24 "And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou has chosen, ²⁵That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place."

Acts 1:26 "And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles."

Let us take note of the time when the apostles exercised this authority of appointing Matthias as one of them. It was before Pentecost! Matthias was appointed in Acts 1:26. Pentecost occurred in Acts 2:1-4:

Acts 2:1-4 "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. ⁴And they were all filled with Holy Ghost..."

The following are observed from the foregoing act of the eleven apostles:

1. The apostles recognized the need for authority to appoint a fellow apostle. This was realized when one of them was lost. Judas Iscariot betrayed our Lord by selling Him for thirty (30) pieces of silver,¹ and then he committed suicide:

Acts 1:18 "Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. ¹⁹And it was known

¹ Matthew 26:14 "Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went into the chief priests, and said unto them, ¹⁵ What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? and they covenanted with him for thirty (30) pieces of silver."

unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Academe, that is to say, the field of blood."

2. The eleven apostles were aware of what is written in the book of Psalms regarding the prophecy about their lost companion:

Acts 1:20 "For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric let another take."

Psalms 109:8 "Let his days be few; and let another take his office."

3. The eleven apostles acted before receiving the Holy Spirit, for this transpired before Pentecost.
4. The act of the eleven apostles in appointing another apostle had the semblance of a divine course, for in doing it they prayed to the Holy Spirit for guidance. What they missed, however, was the fact that they prayed to the Holy Spirit before they received Him.
5. Unwittingly, however, they followed human judgment by selecting a person who was among them "since their baptism by John the Baptist."
6. In the eyes of the one hundred twenty disciples (Acts 1:15) who were to receive the Holy Spirit later (Acts 2:1-4), Matthias, the one chosen by the eleven apostles, became an apostle of Christ.
7. The eleven apostles had all the good intentions in appointing Matthias as an apostle. They were sincere in their act of promoting and continuing the work of our Lord. However, sincerity and good intention do not make the act acceptable to God:

Romans 10:2 "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge."

8. However the apostles, together with other believers, endowed with divine wisdom after receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, submitted to "God's righteousness and His ways²."

² Isaiah 55:8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. ⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts higher than your thoughts."

QUESTIONS ONLY GOD SHOULD ANSWER

It is worth considering the following questions before delving into the subject of Apostolic Succession:

1. In the Old Testament time, who appointed God's messengers and prophets? Who taught them? From whom did they get instructions and guidance?
2. During the time of Christ, who appointed His apostles? How were they appointed? Who taught them? Who guided them in their work?
3. After Jesus Christ left *physically*, who appointed His apostles according to the Scriptures? How were they appointed? Who taught them? Who guided them?
4. Is the authority to appoint Christ's apostles assignable and delegated?
5. What is the truth to the command: Matthew 28:19 (many Bible versions) "*Go ye therefore and make disciples to all nations baptizing them...*"
6. Has there been a change in the mode of appointing God's servants:
 - 1) In the Old Testament time
 - 2) During the time of Christ
 - 3) After Christ left physically but before Pentecost, and
 - 4) After Pentecost up to the present time?

THE APPOINTING AUTHORITY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT TIME

In the Old Testament, the Bible is very explicit in the appointment of God's messengers. Let us take some cases. Before God punished the people on earth with the Great Deluge, He chose *Noah* to be His messenger:

Genesis 6:8 "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."

God made him a preacher of righteousness, solely on God's predilection:

2 Peter 2:5 "Spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly."

Noah never received instructions from anybody. Everything he did was on God's direction.

When God planned to take His people from Egypt, the land of slavery, He chose *Moses* to lead them:

Exodus 3:1-6 "Now Moses ...led the flock to the back side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. ²And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and behold, the bush with fire, and the bush was not consumed. ³And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. ⁴And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, MOSES, MOSES. And he said, Here am I. ⁵And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. ⁶Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God."

Exodus 3:7 "And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; ⁸and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land...unto land flowing with milk and honey..."

Moses was chosen against his will in the beginning (God's chosen were never volunteers).

Exodus 3:11 "And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

Exodus 4:1 "And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee."

Exodus 4:10 "And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue."

Exodus 4:11 "And the LORD said unto him, who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? ¹²now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say."

With his appointment, Moses was assured by God of everything he needed in his work:

Exodus 3:12 "And he (God) said, certainly I will be with thee..."

Exodus 4:15 "...and I will be with thy mouth...and will teach you what ye shall do."

To all the messengers chosen, God had been the teacher and the guide – not any man. After the death of Moses, God did not allow the Israelites to fare by themselves. He chose *Joshua* as Moses' successor:

Joshua 1:1 "Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, ²Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel."

As in the case of Moses, God also had been Joshua's teacher and leader:

Joshua 1:5-7 "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. ⁶Be strong and of good courage, ⁷...turn not from it to the right or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest."

Joshua 1:8 "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observed to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success ⁹...be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

After Joshua, God chose *Judah* and *Simeon* (Judges 1:1-4), then *Ehud* (Judges 3:15-30), *Shamgar* (Judges 3:31), then *Deborah* and *Barak* (Judges 4:1-24). God chose *Gideon* to deliver Israel from the hands of the Indianite, Amalekites, and the people from the East:

Judges 6:12 "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him (Gideon), and said unto him. The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor."

Judges 6:14 "And the Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel...have not I sent thee?"

Like the other chosen servants of God, Gideon was hesitant in the beginning:

Judge 6:15 "And he (Gideon) said unto him, O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house."

Judges 6:17 "And he (Gideon) said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then show me a sign that thou talkest with me."

However, God always had His reassuring words:

Judges 6:16 "And the Lord said unto him, surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man."

God's deliverance of the Israelites from their enemies under Gideon is a story full of great spiritual message and lessons. Details are taken up in another Chapter. God chose *Samson*, even before he was born (Judges 13:1-25), to deliver the Israelites from the hands of the Philistines.

God personally handpicked His prophets. Like Samson, God chose *Samuel* even before he was born (1 Samuel 1-3). In his work as a prophet of God, Samuel had always been taught and guided by Him:

1 Samuel 3:19-20 "And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-Sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord."

"And did let none of his words fall to the ground." "Ground" symbolizes man.³ God is of heaven, while man is of the earth or ground. For God's words therefore to "fall to the ground" is to degenerate down to the level of the thoughts and feeling of man. Samuel did not allow this to happen.

God's choice of His servants is not based on the physical and intellectual stature of the person.

1 Samuel 16:7 "But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

God's choice is based on the fear of the Lord, the fear to violate what is written. And this is not on man's understanding but on God's revelation of the meaning of His word.

Isaiah 11:3 "And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. And he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears."

With God's foreknowledge, His servants were foreordained. His selection is based on the person's humility and realization of spiritual littleness. This was demonstrated in His choice of *Jeremiah*:

Jeremiah 1:4 "Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, ⁵Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."

The chosen's hesitation is the evidence of this virtue:

Jeremiah 1:6 "Then said I (Jeremiah), Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child."⁴

³ Genesis 3:19 "...till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

⁴ Jeremiah was not referring to himself as a physical child, but as a spiritual child in the eyes of God. Solomon likewise referred to himself as a little child when he assumed the throne as king of Israel:

1 Kings 3:7 "And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in."

God is the teacher, the guide, and the director of the chosen:

Jeremiah 1:7-10 "But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. ⁸Be not afraid of their faces; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. ⁹Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. ¹⁰See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant."

The Lord's touching the mouth of Jeremiah is not literal. Spiritually, this is putting the power of God, or putting the Word of God in the mouth of the prophet that he speaks with power and authority. In like manner, that is how *Ezekiel* was chosen:

Ezekiel 2:1-4 "And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. ²And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me. ³And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me...even unto this very day. ⁴For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God."

Ezekiel was required to eat a scroll or a book. This book, of course refers to the Word of God, indicating that he was to believe, accept, and absorb everything in the word of God:

Ezekiel 2:9 "And when I looked, behold, a hand was sent unto me; and lo, a roll of a book was therein; ¹⁰And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without; and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe."

Ezekiel 3:1-3 "Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll... ²So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. ³And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with

this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.⁵

Here is the familiar instruction:

Ezekiel 2:7 "And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious."

Ezekiel 3:4 "And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them."

The choice of *Jonah*, and his hesitation to do the work, is a classic. God may prefer the hesitant to that of a willing volunteer for the reasons cited earlier. This may be contrary to the sound judgment of man. God's wisdom based on His foreknowledge, however, is beyond reproach.

Jonah 1:1 "Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah... saying, ²Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it. ³But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid a fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD."

Jonah 1:4-17 "But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. ⁵Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep. ⁶So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, what meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not. ⁷And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. ⁸Then said they unto him, Tell us...for whose cause this evil is upon us; What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art

⁵ Psalms 119:103 "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth."

thou? ⁹And he said unto them, I am a Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land. ¹⁰Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. ¹¹Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous. ¹²And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you; for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you... ¹⁵so they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea; and the sea ceased from her raging... ¹⁷Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."

However, the intended escape of Jonah to Tarshish led him to the very place where he was to preach the Word of God:

Jonah 2:1-10 "...and the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land."

Jonah went to Nineveh, a three-day walk, and performed the task assigned to him by God:

Jonah 3:1-5 "...Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, ²Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. ³So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. ⁴And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. ⁵So the people of Nineveh believed God..."

God chose His servants, the prophets and messengers, based on His foreknowledge. The choice is not influenced by the physical and intellectual constitution of the chosen. Foremost consideration is the spiritual humility of the subject. This is the realization of his unworthiness, his inadequacy, and weakness⁶:

⁶ Jeremiah 1:6 "...Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child."

¹ Samuel 9:21 "...Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?"

1 Samuel 16:7 "The Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

God does not judge by the appearance:

John 7:24 "Judge not according to the appearance..."

Galatians 2:6 "As for those who seemed to be important - whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance - those men added nothing to my message."

We have seen in the Old Testament time that it was God Himself Who selected the servants to serve Him. It was God Himself Who taught them...guided them...inspired them...directed them...gave them strength. God Himself rebuked them when their thoughts and their actions were not in line with what was set before them. God's chosen servants had their direct accountability to God and not to fellowmen. And never do we read a servant of God appointing a fellow servant or an assistant.

THE APPOINTING AUTHORITY DURING THE TIME OF CHRIST

After reading Chapter 5 where *God introduced himself*, we have now a full and a sated grasp who Jesus Christ really is really is.

1 Corinthians 8:6 "But to us there is but one God, the Father..."

1 Timothy 3:16 [KJV] "And without controversy, great is the mystery of Godliness: God was manifest in the flesh..."

Matthew 1:23 "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

Malachi 3:6 "For I am the LORD, I change not..."
[Definitely this does not relate to His form.]

Exodus 4:10-12 "...O my Lord, I am not eloquent, but I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue."

Hebrews 13:8 "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever..." [Definitely this does not relate to His form, but to the truth in His word with His spiritual language.]

2 Corinthians 3:17 "Now the Lord is that Spirit..."

1 Corinthians 8:6 But to us there is but one God, the Father...and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things..."

John 7:39 ("But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given...")

Matthew 28:20 "...lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Ephesians 4:11 "And he [Jesus Christ] gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."

As in the Old Testament time, in the year AD 30-33 Jesus Christ chose His own servants. This was demonstrated in the choice of Simon Peter and his brother Andrew:

Matthew 4:18-19 "And Jesus... saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

Also of James and his brother John, sons of Zebedee:

Matthew 4:21 "...from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them."

The cognition of littleness and unworthiness was manifested in the chosen servants:

Luke 5:8-10 "When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful

man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: and so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee which were partners with Simon..."

Matthew was likewise chosen:

Matthew 9:9 "As Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, follow me. And he arose, and followed him."

So was Levi:

Luke 5:27 "And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me."

Philip was chosen like the rest:

John 1:43 "The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me."

Jesus Christ was choosing His Apostles! "God in the flesh" followed the same pattern in the choice of His servants:

Ephesians 4:11 "And he (Jesus Christ) gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."

The reasons for Jesus Christ, the "God in the flesh," exercising this function and authority are specifically stated:

Ephesians 4:12 "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: ¹³Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

The following crop up from the foregoing facts:

1. Jesus Christ exercising authority in appointing God's servants confirmed the truth that, indeed, "God was manifest in the flesh." (1 Timothy 3:16)

2. The pattern for the selection of God's messengers was never altered. Sole authority remained in the hands of the Creator.⁷
3. The basis for selection remains the same: It is the real, as distinguished from the counterfeit, humility of the chosen. The chosen messengers' meekness, feeling of littleness, and the realization of unworthiness for the great spiritual privilege – are all revealed through God's foreknowledge.
4. Human considerations like intellectual, moral, social, and physical attributes of the chosen are totally excluded from the divine standard.
5. The reasons for the divine, not man's, standard are: (a) For the perfecting of the saints, (b) For the work of the ministry, (c) For the edifying of the body of Christ.
6. The outcome for the divine standard are: (a) Unity in the faith, (b) Clear and full knowledge of the Son of God. True recognition of the Son follows clear recognition of the Father also:

John 8:19 "...Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also."

7. The ultimate objective for the divine standard is: "Unto a perfect man to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."
8. Human Standard is so subjective that its weakness and flaws are easily exposed. Christianity is divided! God remains a mystery. "Cleanliness" or righteousness is confined only to the "outside of the cup." Jesus Christ called the religious leaders during His time, "hypocrite and blind guides."

⁷ Isaiah 44:24 "Thus saith the Lord...I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself."

John 1:3 "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

Colossians 1:16 "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible...all things were created by him..."

Ephesians 3:9 "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." (KJV only)

THE APPOINTING AUTHORITY AFTER CHRIST

The Bible has clearly shown how God's servants were appointed in the Old Testament time. The Scripture likewise demonstrated the "procedure" during the time of Jesus Christ. The question now is, how about the period from the time Jesus left His disciples physically up to the present? Questions that need to be answered:

1. What is the Doctrine of Apostolic Succession?
2. Who were/are the successors of the original apostles?
3. Who has/have the sole authority to appoint Christ's apostles?
4. How were/are they appointed?
5. How were/are the chosen apostles taught?
6. Who taught/teach/teaches them?

It was discussed how the eleven (11) apostles initiated the Apostolic Succession doctrine. They appointed *Matthias* as the successor of Judas Iscariot. To them, therefore, Matthias was the twelfth (12th) apostle of Christ.

It is from this example shown by the apostles that the appointment of Christ's "apostles, evangelists, prophets, pastors, and teachers" in the different religious sects composing *Christianity Today* is based. Scriptural support for the practice is found in almost all versions of the Bible, except one; among them are the following as stated in:

NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

Matthew 28:19 "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father..."

THE LIVING BIBLE

Matthew 28:19 "Therefore go and make disciples in all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father..."

NEW CATHOLIC EDITION OF THE HOLY BIBLE (Confraternity-Douay version)

Matthew 28:19 "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father..."

Does this mean that the pattern shown in the appointment of God's servants in the Old Testament, and continued during the time of Christ, to be

discontinued? Was it really the plan of God to revise the mode of choosing His messengers called "Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers?"

Who has the authority to answer the questions, but God alone through His Word! The following facts need to be considered in relation to the questions:

1. The eleven apostles appointed Matthias when Jesus Christ no *longer was physically present* as He had by then ascended into heaven.⁸
2. The eleven apostles appointed Matthias before Pentecost (Acts 1:16-26) before they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4).
3. It was after Pentecost that the Apostles were to be guided into all truth by the Holy Spirit:

John 16:13 "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth..."

After Pentecost, the apostles must have realized that their act of appointing Matthias as an apostle was not in line with the truth. That is why never do we read having appointed apostles like Matthias.

4. Another realization of such mistake was the violation of the command of our Lord in:

Luke 24:49 "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."

When the apostles chose Matthias as an apostle replacing Judas Iscariot, they acted before receiving wisdom and power from on high. They did not tarry as commanded.

5. Without the promised "wisdom from on high," the eleven (11) apostles overlooked that it was Jesus Christ Himself Who chose each of them!
6. Why did the Apostles miss the pattern set by God in the Old Testament, and continued by Jesus Christ who is "God in the flesh?"

⁸ Acts 1:11 "...Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

7. It is clear the apostles used their human reasoning in usurping the appointing power of God.
8. Modern Christians cite Matthew 28:19 "*Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations*" in defense of the act of the eleven (11) apostles, for they accept such act.

Let God reveal the truth regarding "make disciples" in Matthew 28:19. There is only one Bible translation which has a different account of the verse in question. This is:

THE AUTHORIZED OR KING JAMES VERSION OF 1611

Matthew 28:19 "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father..."

It is, therefore, a case of one Bible version against many. Following man's way of the majority should prevail, all versions "*make disciples of all nations,*" instead of simply, "*teach all nation*" is the reliable translation. Thus, the birth of the Doctrine of Apostolic Succession!

9. How then can this question of "*make disciples of all nations,*" and "*teach all nations*" be resolved? God has a way of revealing the truth, and exposing man's deceit in tampering with His word.
10. This is by comparing what *Matthew* supposedly heard and wrote, with what another servant of God wrote on the same subject. We are referring to *Mark*:

NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

Mark 16:15 "He said to them, 'Go into the entire world and preach the good news to all nations.'"

THE LIVING BIBLE

Mark 16:15 "And then he told them, 'You are to go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere.'"

NEW CATHOLIC EDITION OF THE HOLY BIBLE (Confraternity-Douay version)

Mark 16:15 "And he said to them, Go into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature."

It is clear in the Bible versions citing "*make disciples of all nations*," differ from Mark 16:15 "*preach the good news/preach the gospel to all nations*." Could Matthew have possibly heard differently from Mark? Is not the Bible supposed to be the Word of God, which should be perfect and free from any contradiction? Take note now how the King James Version of 1611 expresses:

Matthew 28:19 [KJV] "Go ye therefore and teach all nations..."

This perfectly concurs with *all Bible versions written by Mark!*

Mark 16:15 "...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

11. Jesus Christ has clearly shown through His Word, incorporated in the Holy Bible, that He never delegated His authority of appointing apostles. Man tried to usurp this divine power, but his devious act is exposed!
12. God never permits His Word to be ravaged as to permanently hide the enemies' wicked design.

Events after Pentecost further established the truth just revealed. Our Lord never recognized the appointment of Matthias by the apostles, who did it before they received the Holy Spirit! Jesus Christ appointed Saul of Tarsus, now known as *Paul* the apostle, formerly a persecutor of the church, to take the place of Judas Iscariot!

CHRIST APPOINTING HIS APOSTLES IN HIS PHYSICAL ABSENCE

Who appointed Paul as an apostle of Christ? Let it be emphasized that Jesus Christ was no longer physically present when Paul became an apostle of the Lord. By that time, Jesus had already ascended into heaven (Acts 1:11). Paul was commissioned in Acts 9. But no doubt, Paul was a real apostle of Christ:⁹

⁹ Romans 1:1 "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God."

² Timothy 1:1 "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus."

Galatians 1:1 [KJV] "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)"

Galatians 1:1 [NIV] "Paul, an apostle - sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead."

1. For the Natural Man, it is difficult to comprehend how a physically absent Christ could appoint His apostle. But that was what happened! And it confirmed this truth:

Ephesians 4:11 "And he (Jesus Christ) gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."

The pattern for appointment of God's servants in the Old Testament time, later continued during the time of Jesus Christ, and then after Pentecost, has never changed! Truth never change. "God never change. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."

2. Is it difficult for Jesus Christ to appoint apostles today as He has appointed Paul – all the time? Was not Jesus Christ visible and sometimes invisible after His resurrection? Is it hard for Jesus to appoint His servants in His physical absence? That is precisely what God did in the Old Testament!
3. Truly it is difficult for the Natural Man understand that truth never change – that God never change as He said in Malachi 3:6? While everybody says, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today..." and Jesus Christ is the truth (John 14:6), can many believe this?

Ecclesiastes 3:15 "That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past."

GOD'S WAY AND MAN'S WAY

Isaiah 55:8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Man could have been very sincere in spreading the gospel. Unfortunately, sincerity to God is not enough if it is not based on knowledge.

Romans 10:2 "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge."

God's ways are indeed too high to comprehend even by His original apostles before they received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Examples:

1. Christ's ability to appoint God's servants in His physical absence. The original apostles preempted our Lord in choosing *Matthias*, a successor to their lost brother.
2. Christ's preference for Saul of Tarsus, a notorious persecutor of His own followers. This is the account of the notoriety of Paul as an enemy of the truth. Paul at the execution of Stephen:

Acts 7:58 to Acts 8:3 "And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit...and Saul was consenting unto his death."

Paul's persecution of the early church:

Acts 9:1 "And Saul, yet breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, ²And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem."

Paul's own account of his destruction of the early church:

Acts 26:9-11 "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. ¹¹And I punished them in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities."

3. Who among the eleven (11) apostles of Jesus Christ, when they held a meeting before Pentecost looking for the successor of Judas Iscariot ever thought of Saul of Tarsus, their own persecutor, as the worthy man in the eyes of our Lord?
4. Man's ways are dictated by his thoughts and feelings. These are the faculties that obstruct total trust in God and absolute acceptance of the truth. These are the hindrances for the free movement of God's power in man. No wonder man cannot see God's might in His great *spiritual miracles!* What man sees are the counterfeit physical miracles.
5. Man cannot accept that Christ is capable of appointing His servants in His physical absence in our time. Therefore, man takes unto himself this divine role of appointing apostles under the unscriptural Apostolic Succession doctrine. Could this be what Jesus said in:

Matthew 24:23 "...Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. 24For there shall arise false Christ's...and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

Man does not realize that this is the cause of disunity in *Christianity Today!* "Many Christs appointing Jesus' apostles!"

HOW CHRIST'S CHOSEN APOSTLES ACQUIRE DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

The pattern for teaching God's chosen servants had been established since Old Testament time. Beginning from Noah, to Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, David, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the rest, all were taught by God by divine revelation – and not by any man or group of men. Watch how God continued the practice.

1. God manifested Himself in the flesh to show the *way*. Take note of Jesus' two roles: Jesus Christ chose His apostles (Father's role). He taught His chosen disciples (Father's role). He was addressed *Teacher* by the Jews (Father's role), but never did He admit that He was the real Teacher (Son's role as model). He confided this to His apostles in:

John 16:12 "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. ¹³Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth..."

2. Jesus taught His disciples but things had not been clear to them.¹⁰ Jesus showed the *way* that, as a human being (Son's role as model), He could not make His disciples understand spiritual things. Jesus showed that He could not be their real *Teacher* (Son's role) or any man or group of men for that matter.
3. It is the Spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit, Who was to be their real Teacher, as our Lord told them in John 16:12-13.
4. This was proven after Pentecost. It was only then that the chosen people recognized their extraordinary or supernatural knowledge and wisdom.
5. It was not Jesus, the man (Son's role), who made them understand, but the Holy Spirit (Jesus in Father's role). (2 Corinthians 3:17 "*Now the Lord is that Spirit...* ").

Deuteronomy 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD."

Mark 12:29 "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The LORD our God is one LORD."

6. At the appointment of Paul, Jesus no longer was in His human manifestation. It was in that state that Paul realized Jesus Christ was the *real teacher*, as he emphatically put it in:

Galatians 1:11 "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. ¹²For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Paul never believed Jesus Christ while still in His human body. It was after Jesus' physical absence that Paul recognized Him Who He is! It was Jesus in that state, the Spirit of truth, who taught him about the gospel.

¹⁰ Luke 18:34 "And they understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken."

Mark 8:21 "And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?"

Matthew 15:15 "Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable. ¹⁶ And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding?"

7. Paul was never taught the real gospel by any man or group of men. When Paul studied under Gamaliel, a noted teacher of the law,¹¹ he never recognized Jesus Christ and did not find the truth.¹²
8. It was by divine revelation that Paul acquired spiritual knowledge and wisdom. How many people believe that Jesus Christ is still capable to doing this in our time? This is the test for belief and trust in Him.
9. Paul's discovery of the divine Teacher was equally shared by the other apostles, earlier chosen:

John's revelation:

1 John 2:27 "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie...."

James' revelation:

James 1:5-8 "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraided not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."

¹¹ Acts 5:34 "Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people..."

¹² Acts 22:3-5 "I am verily a man *which am* a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, *and* taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. ⁴ And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. ⁵ As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished."

Paul summarized it in:

1 Corinthians 2:13 "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

10. Nowhere in the entire Bible can we find God directing that His *Chosen Messengers* teach and train, so as to endow knowledge and wisdom on other *Chosen Messengers*. Rather, *Chosen Messengers* receive direct instructions from God, by divine revelation. These are now used by God to convey things to His chosen people.

God is "speaking over the microphone." The chosen servants act as "the speaker system." Any sound coming from the *Speaker System* without the *Speaker* on the microphone is cacophony. How many people can distinguish the "sound coming from the *Speaker*" and the sound originating only from the *Speaker System*?

11. This truth seems too hard to believe. It is difficult to comprehend as the revelations about Jesus Christ in this regard:
 - a. Jesus in His human manifestation did not admit that He was the real teacher, but the Spirit:

John 16:12 "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. ¹³Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth..."

- b. Paul testifies however, that it was Jesus Christ Who taught him. But notice the time when Paul said that. Jesus Christ was no longer in His human manifestation:

Galatians 1:11 "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. ¹²For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but the revelation of Jesus Christ."

- c. Jesus Christ was identified as the Spirit in:

2 Corinthians 3:17 "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

Who is the Lord? Who is the Spirit?

Isaiah 42:8 "I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images."

- d. The chosen messenger of God need not be taught by any man or group of men:

1 John 2:27 "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie...."

- e. Jesus rebuking the Scribes and Pharisees emphasized that there is only one Teacher:

Matthew 23:8-10 "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. ⁹And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. ¹⁰Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ."

By divine revelation Jesus Christ is identified in Chapter 5. He is not simply the physical Jesus that "many" people profess to know.

12. Ephesians 4:11 states that it is Jesus Christ who appoints apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and *teachers*. One will wonder whether there could be no contradiction with what Jesus said in Matthew 23:10 that there is only one (1) Teacher.
- a. The dual role of Jesus needs to be emphasized. Since He is the Father in the flesh, He is the Teacher and the appointing power in Ephesians 4:11. However, His role as Son of God showing the way to His Disciples, He did not claim to be Teacher when He said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." (John 16:12-13)
- b. Jesus, the Father in the flesh, the Teacher is the "Speaker" on the microphone. Jesus as Son of God is like the teachers in Ephesians 4:11, acting as "speaker system" emitting only what comes from the microphone.
- c. The "teachers" in Ephesians 4:11 simply say the word coming from the Teacher. They are not capable of making the listeners

understand what they are saying. It is the Teacher who makes them comprehend what is being taught.

- d. The "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers" in Ephesians 4:11 are never given the authority to appoint persons in these positions.
- e. With the foregoing scriptural revelations, God exposed the error of the eleven apostles who appointed Matthias as successor of Judas Iscariot. Unwittingly, they usurped the authority of our Lord. No wonder their appointee was never recognized by Jesus Christ as evidenced from the dearth of acts as an apostle. Nothing is heard from Matthias.
- f. As a rebuke to the eleven apostles, our Lord appointed Paul instead and to him greater works was given as shown in the Epistles.

To conclude, the doctrine of Apostolic Succession is but an invention of man. For details read the following chapter, THE APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION DOCTRINE.

SIMILARITIES OF THE ORIGINAL AND MODERN APOSTLES

Comparing the modern "Apostles of Christ" under the Apostolic Succession Doctrine, with the original apostles of Christ before Pentecost, shows the following similarities:

1. Both are deprived of divine wisdom, as evidenced by their mistake of appointing fellow apostles.
2. Both are victims of spiritual ignorance: The eleven (11) apostles invoked the help of the Holy Spirit in choosing Matthias even before receiving Him at Pentecost. The modern apostles profess to have the Holy Spirit. Jesus, however, gave the proof for the truth: "when the Spirit of truth will come, he will guide into *all truth*." Both the original and the modern apostles disregarded Ephesians 4:11 where Jesus Christ is the appointing authority.¹³

¹³ Jesus Christ is the sole authority for the appointment of His apostles.

Ephesians 4:11 "And HE gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."

3. The purported divine acts of both are not acceptable to God: Matthias, the appointee of the eleven (11) apostles was rejected by Christ by virtue of His appointment of Paul as the real replacement for Judas Iscariot. The modern apostles' appointment of fellow apostles does not give glory to God, for this has been the cause of disunity and division in *Christianity Today*. Every religious sect asserts exclusive claim to their respective doctrines. This results in chaos among Bible-believing people which was absent in the pure Christianity in AD 30-96.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE ORIGINAL AND MODERN APOSTLES

The original apostles of Christ, realizing their mistake, never repeated it. After receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, they entrusted all facets of their ministry and the spiritual affairs of the Church to the invisible Christ. The book of Acts and the Epistles bear this out.

The modern apostles, on the other hand, refuse to relinquish this function of appointing fellow apostles. They reject the exclusive authority of God in His Word. The following warning, therefore, is most appropriate to those who found the truth:

Colossians 2:8 "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

