

The Corinthian Letters

Progressing the Gospel Through Multiplying Churches



The Importance of Apostolic Authority

What exactly is apostolic authority? It scares people. It is almost completely misunderstood in Western institutional Christianity. It has been rediscovered but generally confused in Pentecostalism. (USCAL from USCA)

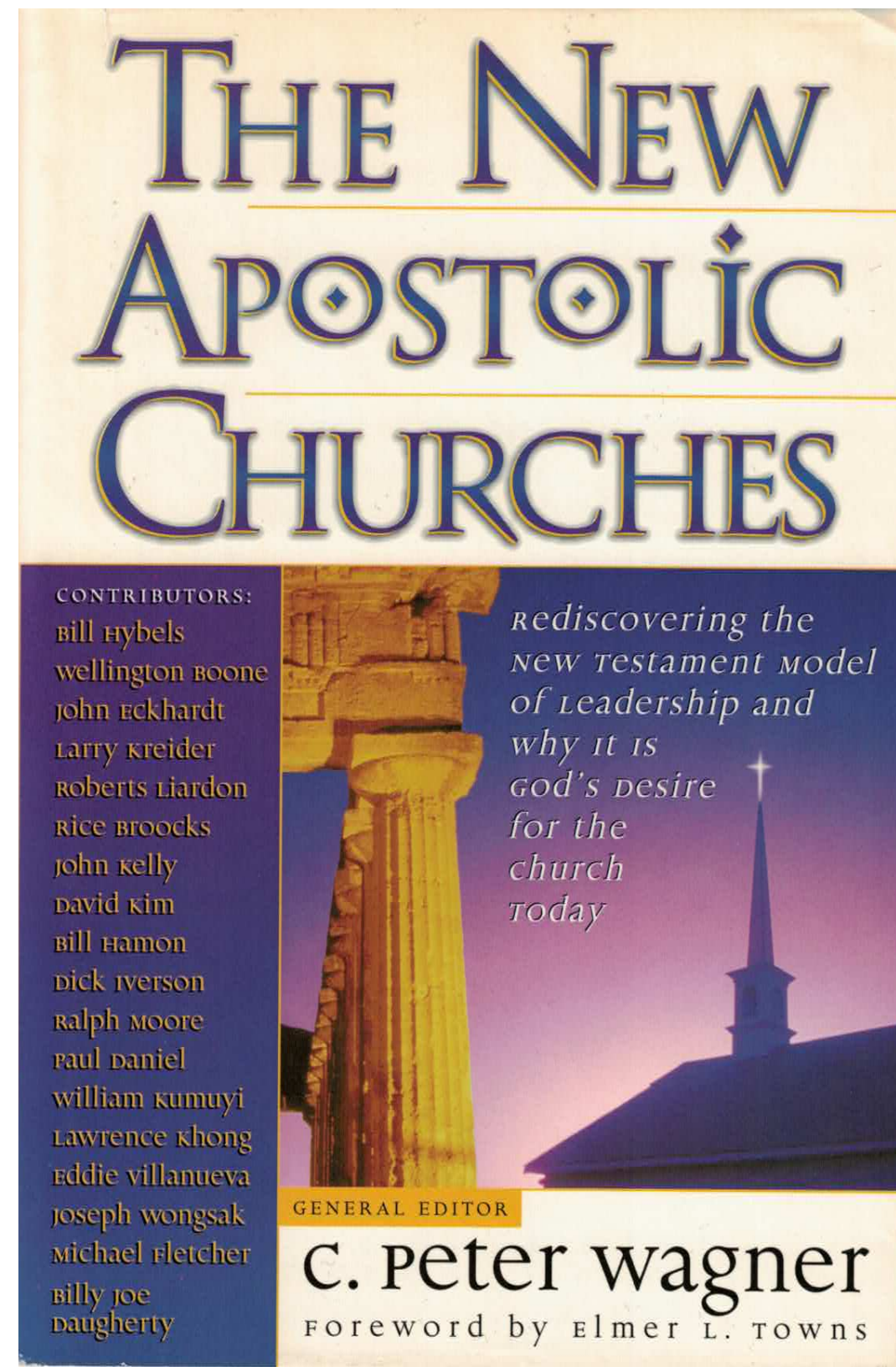
It has taken years to think this through. (our counseling example)

Also: Abraham report

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

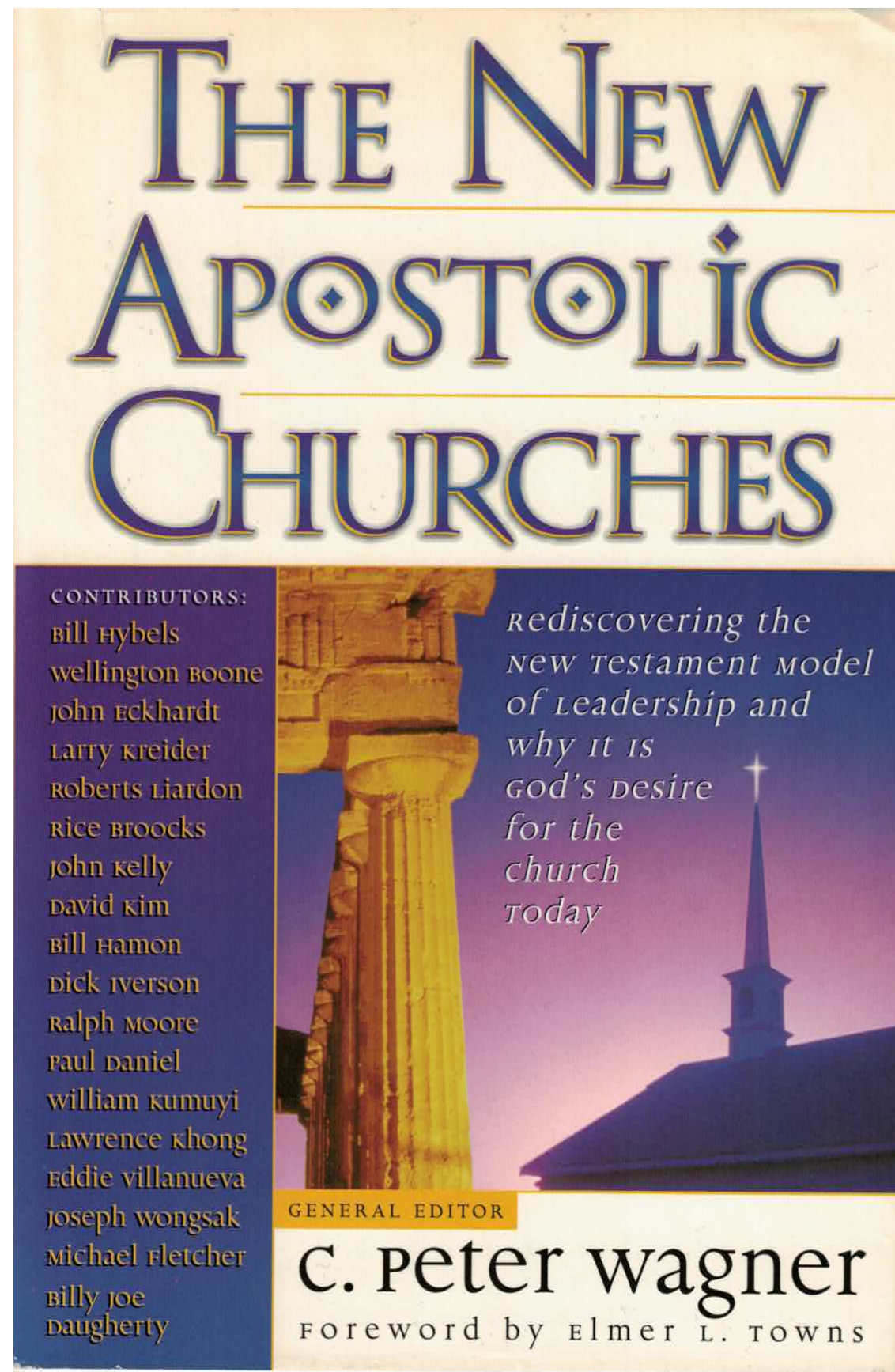
This morning we will focus on apostolic authority. This is a very new concept to many evangelicals and even many of what we call “global Pentecostals” around the world, but it is very confusing to many as well.

The Importance of Apostolic Authority



“The New Apostolic Reformation is an extraordinary work of God at the close of the twentieth century that is, to a significant extent, changing the shape of Christianity around the world.” p. 18

The Importance of Apostolic Authority



“Then, however, I did begin to notice a pattern among the amazing church growth movements:

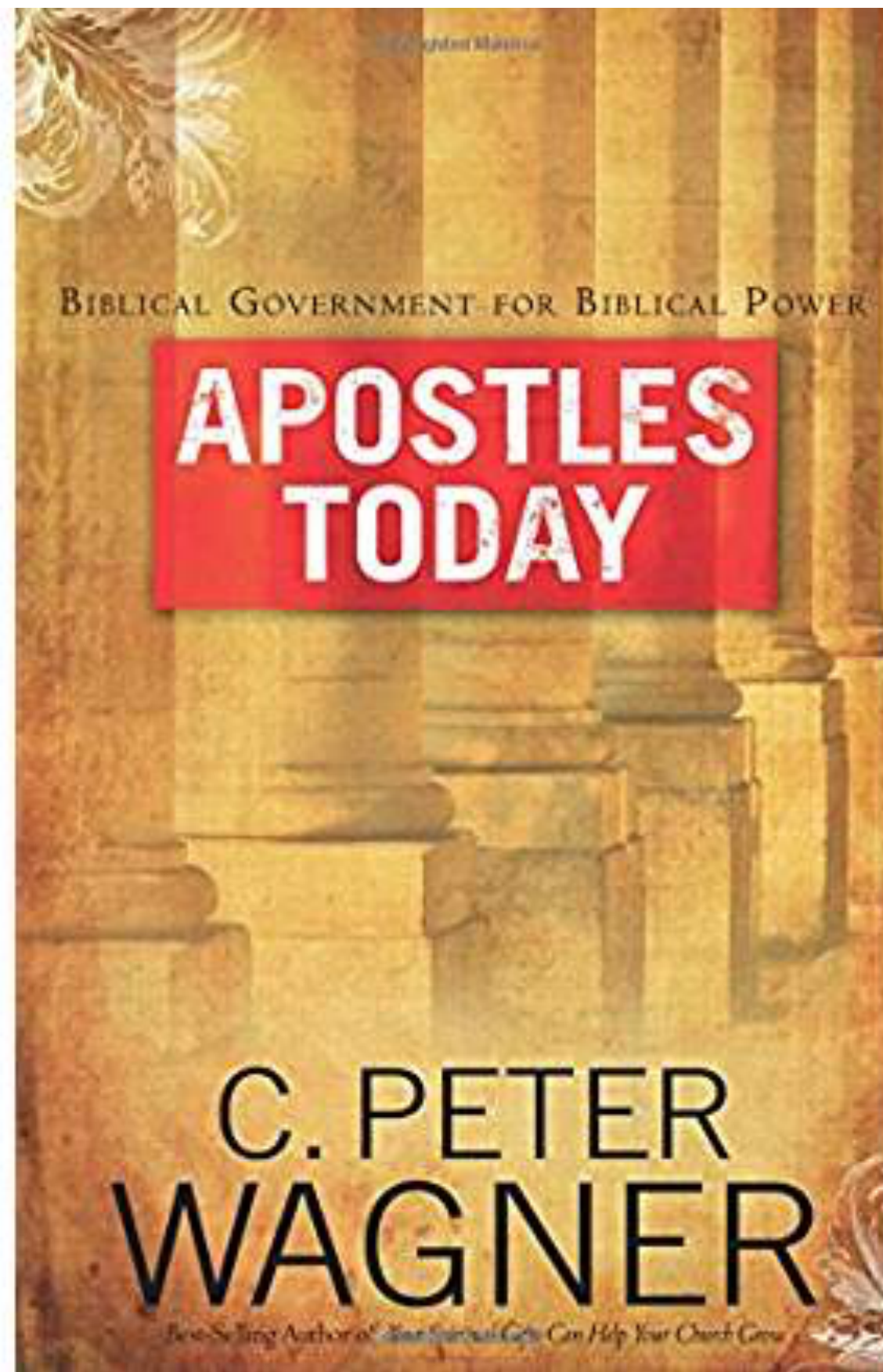
1. The African Independent churches
2. The Chinese house churches
3. Latin American grassroots churches”

Now I add the Church-Planting Movements (CPMs) in India.

This is the heart of the entire BILD ministry.

By the end of today, you will see how this relates to everyone in this room.

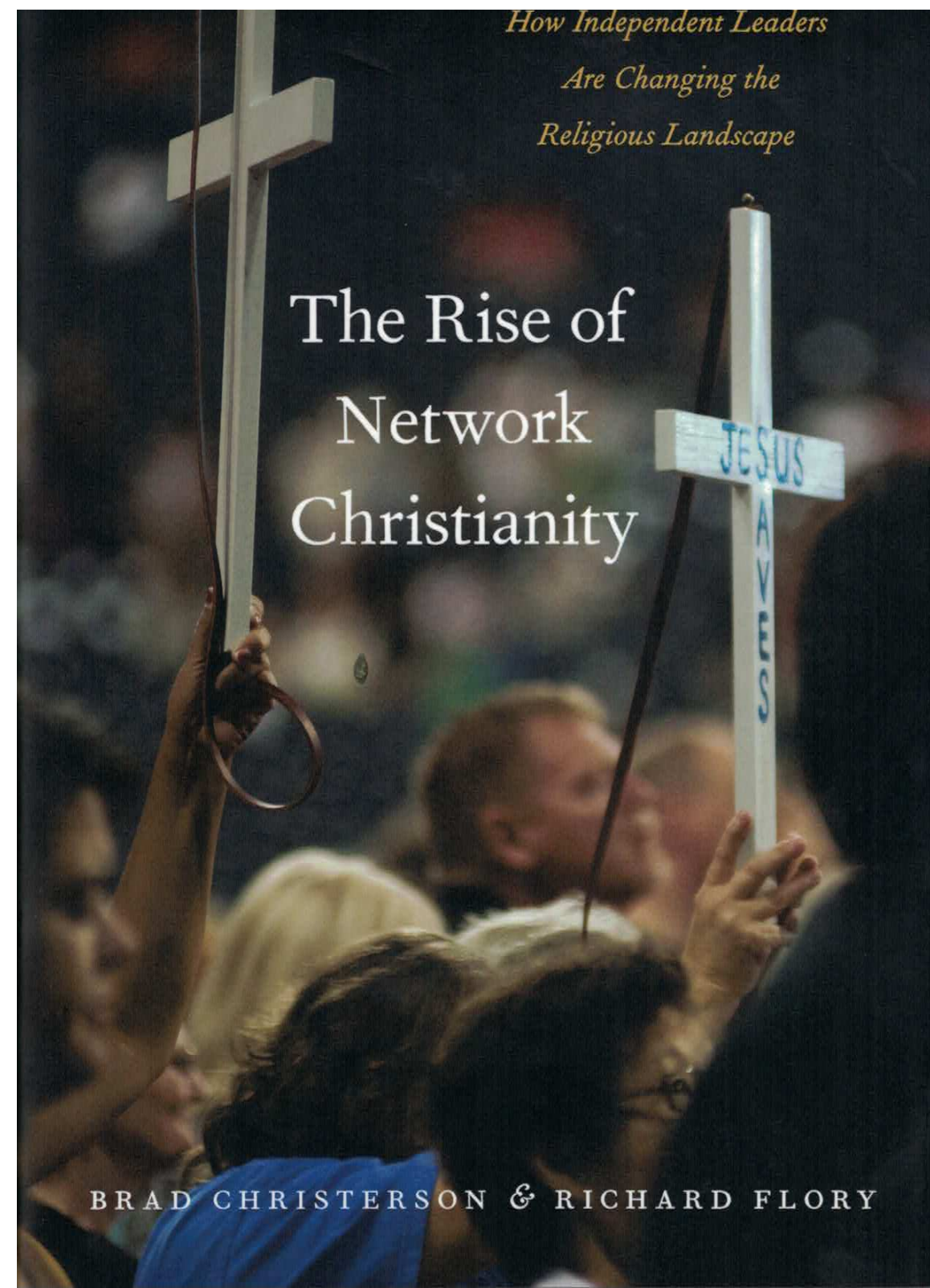
The Importance of Apostolic Authority



“The Second Apostolic Age is a phenomenon of the twenty-first century. My studies indicate that it began around the year 2001. The First Apostolic Age lasted for another 200 years after the first of the New Testament apostles concluded their ministry.”

C. Peter Wagner, *Apostles Today* (Baker Publishing Group, 2012) Kindle edition, p. 6.

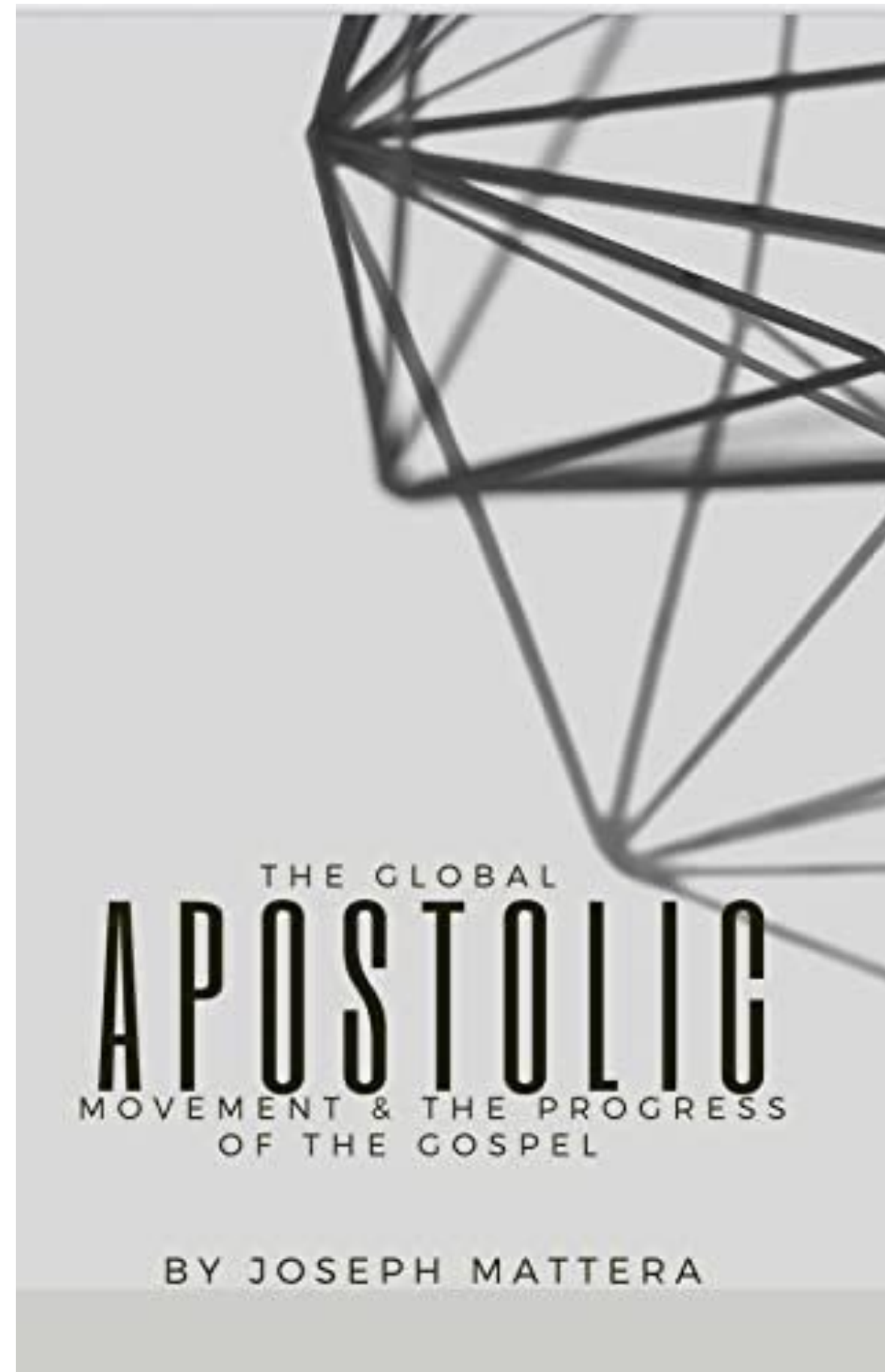
The Importance of Apostolic Authority



The Rise of Network Christianity: How Independent Leaders Are Changing the Religious Landscape by Brad Christerson and Richard Flory (Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 2

“The fastest growing movement in Christianity, both in the West and in the Global South, is now led by a network of dynamic independent entrepreneurs, referred to as “apostles.”

The Importance of Apostolic Authority



A new movement grew up heavily influenced by Wagner, from which was formed the International Council for Apostles. (ICA)

Then came the US Council for Apostles (USCA).

Mattera is now the director, and he is in the Antioch School doctoral program. (He finished with the book as his artifact.)

I convinced him to change the name to US Council for Apostolic Leaders (USCAL), which he did. They put me on the board as the 11th member and their resident theologian—I am the only non pentecostal.

Plus the large-scale movements in the Global South we're working with are part of what is called Global Pentecostalism.

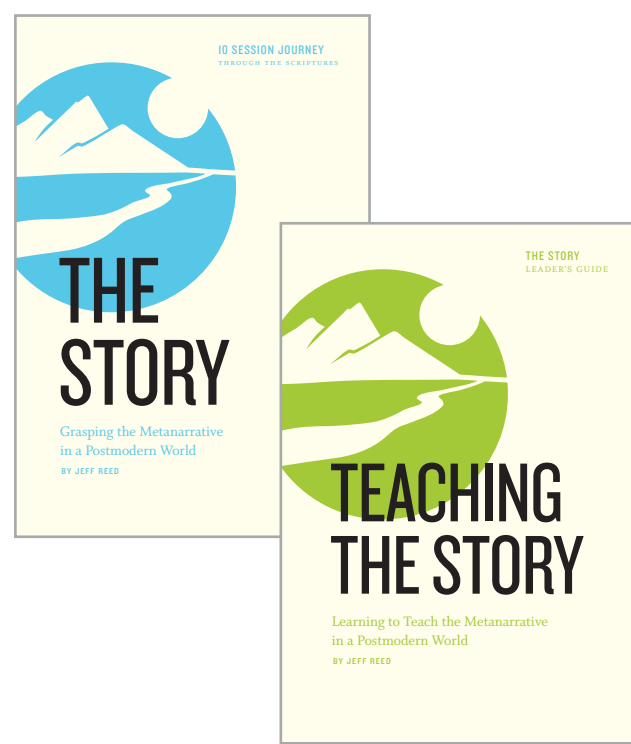
Most evangelicals we work with are accepting the term *apostolic teams*. I am deeply involved in moving forward the teaching we are going to see in 2 Corinthians today.

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

Questions:

1. What was the core role of Paul as an Apostle? What did he see as his primary role and responsibility?
2. What kind of authority did he have amongst the churches? How did he exercise it?
3. Why did he suffer such opposition? How did he handle it?
4. Why was his role so critical? Why did the churches need to listen to him?

The New Perspective on Paul



The New Perspective on Paul



The Later Letters

Book 1: Paul's Later Letters: Fully Establishing the Churches
According to Christ's Design

Book 2: 1 Timothy: Ordering the Churches as Households of God

Book 3: Titus: Setting in Order What Remains in the Churches

Book 4: 2 Timothy: Investing in Intergenerational Apostolic
Leadership

The New Perspective on Paul



The Middle Letters

- Book 1: Paul's Middle Letters: Fully Revealing Christ's Grand Strategy
- Book 2: Ephesians: Revealing Christ's Grand Strategy—the Church
- Book 3: Colossians and Philemon: Implementing the New Church Paradigm
- Book 4: Philippians: Participating with One Mind for the Progress of the Gospel

The New Perspective on Paul



The Early Letters

Book 1: Paul's Early Letters: Fully Establishing the Churches in the Gospel

Book 2: Galatians: So Quickly Leaving the Gospel

Book 3: The Thessalonian Correspondence: Solid Conversion to the Gospel

Book 4: The Corinthian Letters: Fragmentation of the Gospel

Book 5: The Corinthian Letters: Progressing the Gospel Through Multiplying Churches

Book 6: Romans: Complete Treatise of Paul's Gospel

The New Perspective on Paul

Teaching Mastering the Scriptures

Session 1: The New Perspective on Paul: Rethinking Western Hermeneutics

Session 2: Canonical Structure and the New Perspective on Paul

Session 3: Paul's Traditioning Process: Schematic for Setting Churches in Order

Session 4: Paul's Process of Doing Theology in Culture Within the Grand Strategy Schema

Session 5: Paul's Letters as Tools for Building Complex Apostolic Networks

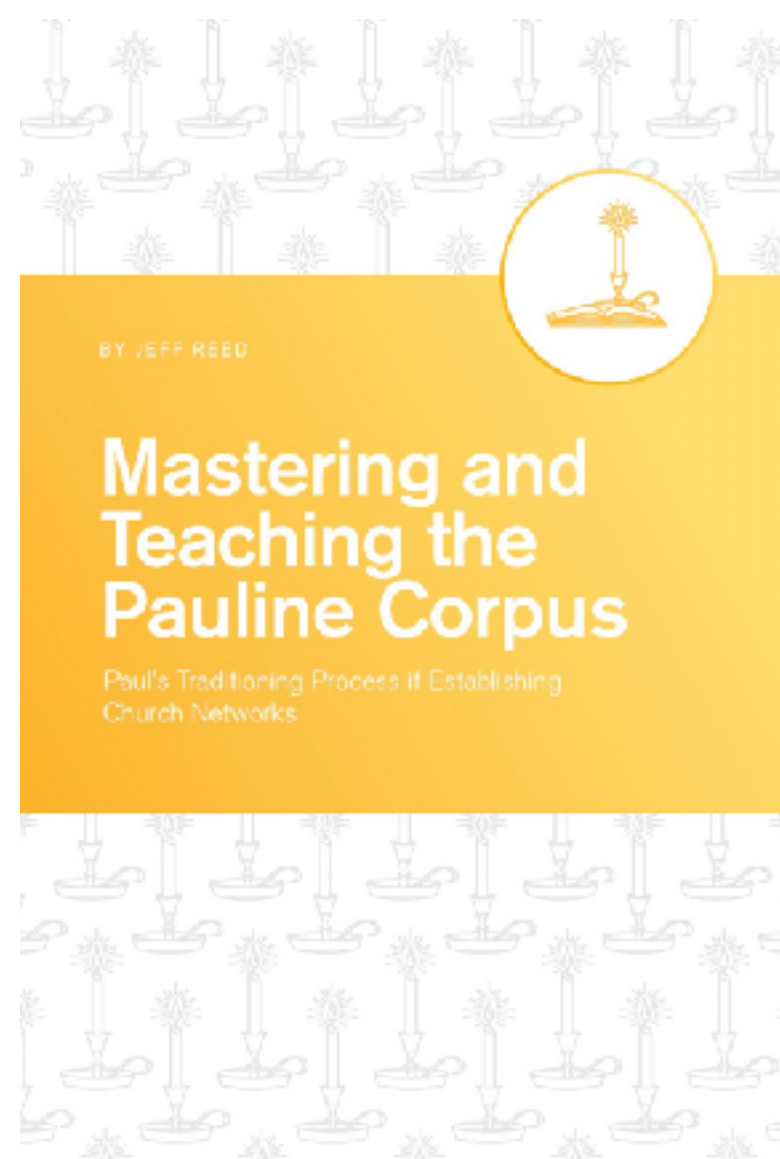
Session 6: The New Perspective on Paul and the Gospels

Session 7: Mastering, Teaching, and Using the Mastering the Scriptures

Appendix 1: Comprehensive Assessment of Complex Apostolic Networks

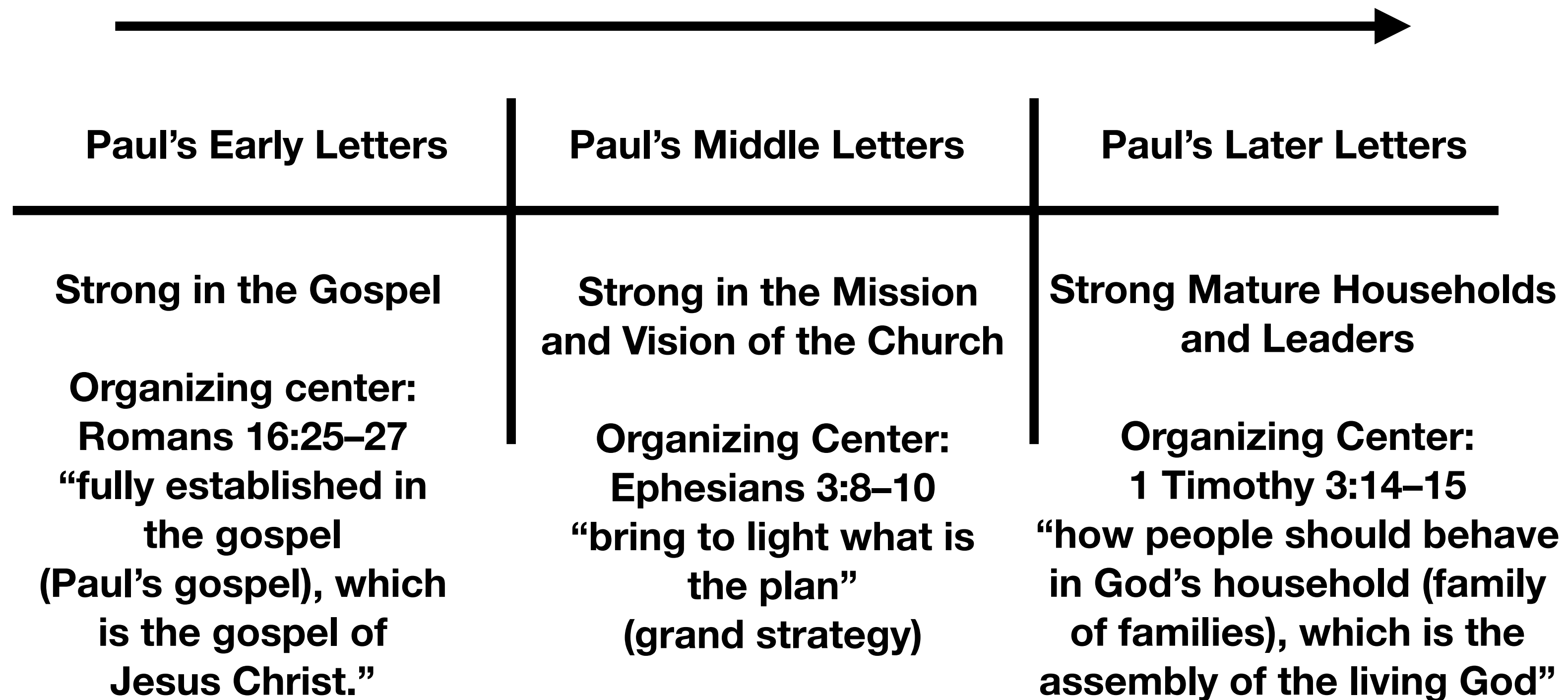
Appendix 2: Annotated Greco–Roman Research Library

Appendix 3: Glossary of Key Biblical Terms and Concepts



The New Perspective on Paul

Topos Schematic (Overall Framework): Establishing Church Networks (Traditioning Paul)

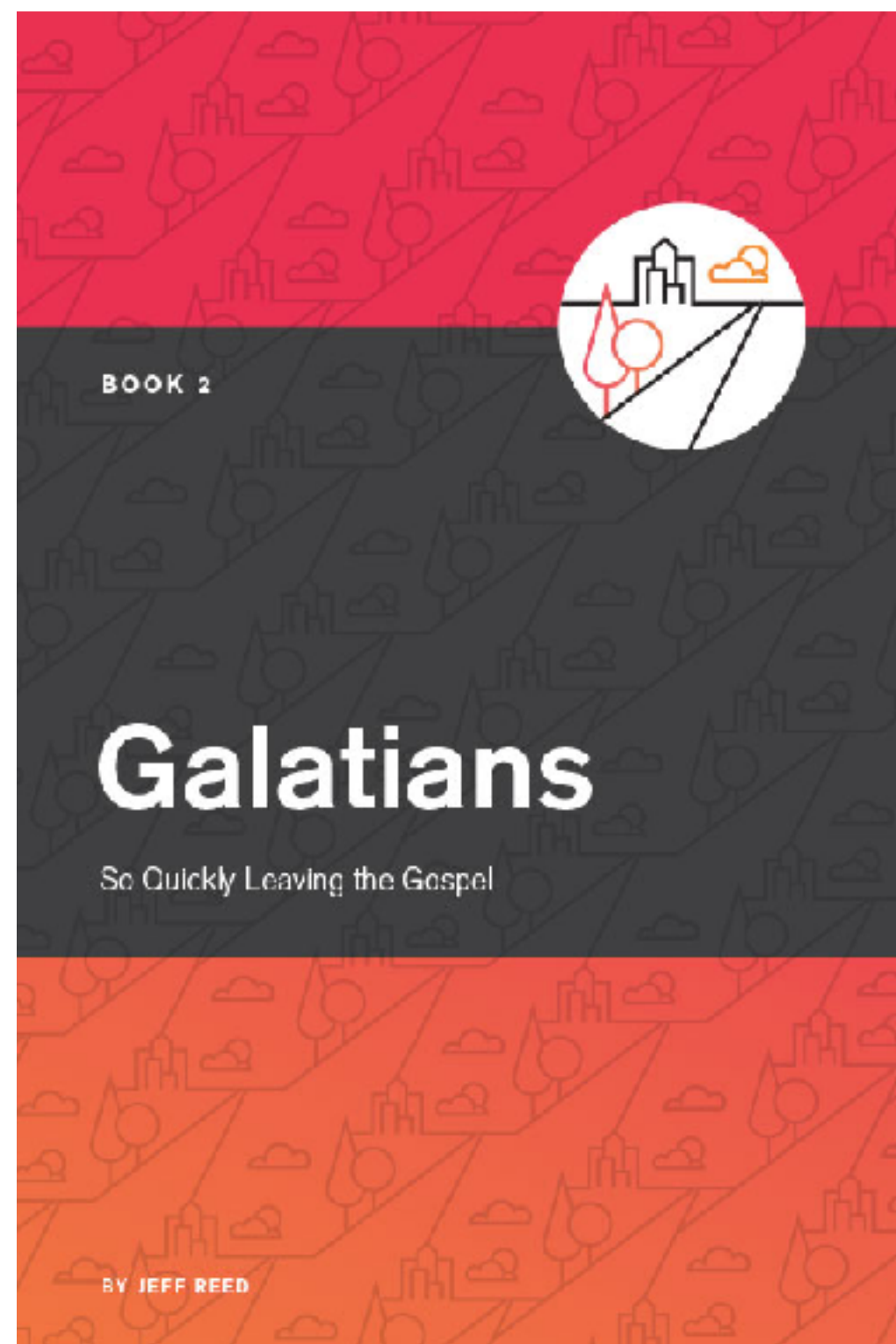


Literary Design: Complex Network Establishing (Encoding) Benchmarks (Traditioning of Paul)



Paul's Early Letters	Paul's Middle Letters	Paul's Later Letters
The Gospel	Mission/Vision of the Church	Mature Households and Leaders
Gospel Formula: 1 Cor. 15:1–6 Peter's 5 sermons, Galatians	Christ's grand strategy Eph. 3:8–10	Churches set in order (household topos) 1 Timothy 3:14–16
Solid conversion: 1 & 2 Thess.	One mature church: equipping saints Ephesians 4:1–16	Solid senior eldership Titus 1:5–9 elders, deacons, women: 1 Timothy 3
"Now concerning..." List of schisms: 1 Corinthians	Household texts (family): Ephesians 5:22–6:9 Colossians 3:18–4:1	Household texts (family of families): 1 Timothy 5:1–6:2 Titus 2:1–21
Gathering Topos: Lord's Supper- Symposium: 1 Corinthians 11:17–14:40	Theology in culture: Philemon	Key, intergenerational apostolic leaders and teams
Perspective of ministry: conflicts without, fears within: 2 Cor. 2:14–7:5	Participation in progress of the gospel: Philippians' model (teams, finances)	Training process, stewardship responsibilities: 2 Timothy
Paul's complete treatise of the gospel: Romans	Network churches: hub (Ephesus), cluster (Lycus Valley), strategic (Philippi)	Leadership virtue/vice cluster lists: 1 Timothy 3:2–4, 8–12; 6:3–5; Titus 1:6–9; 3:3; 2 Timothy 3:2–5
"Pauline cycle" duly recognized gatherings		

The New Perspective on Paul



Galatians: So Quickly Leaving the Gospel, Book 2

Session 1: The Galatian Problem

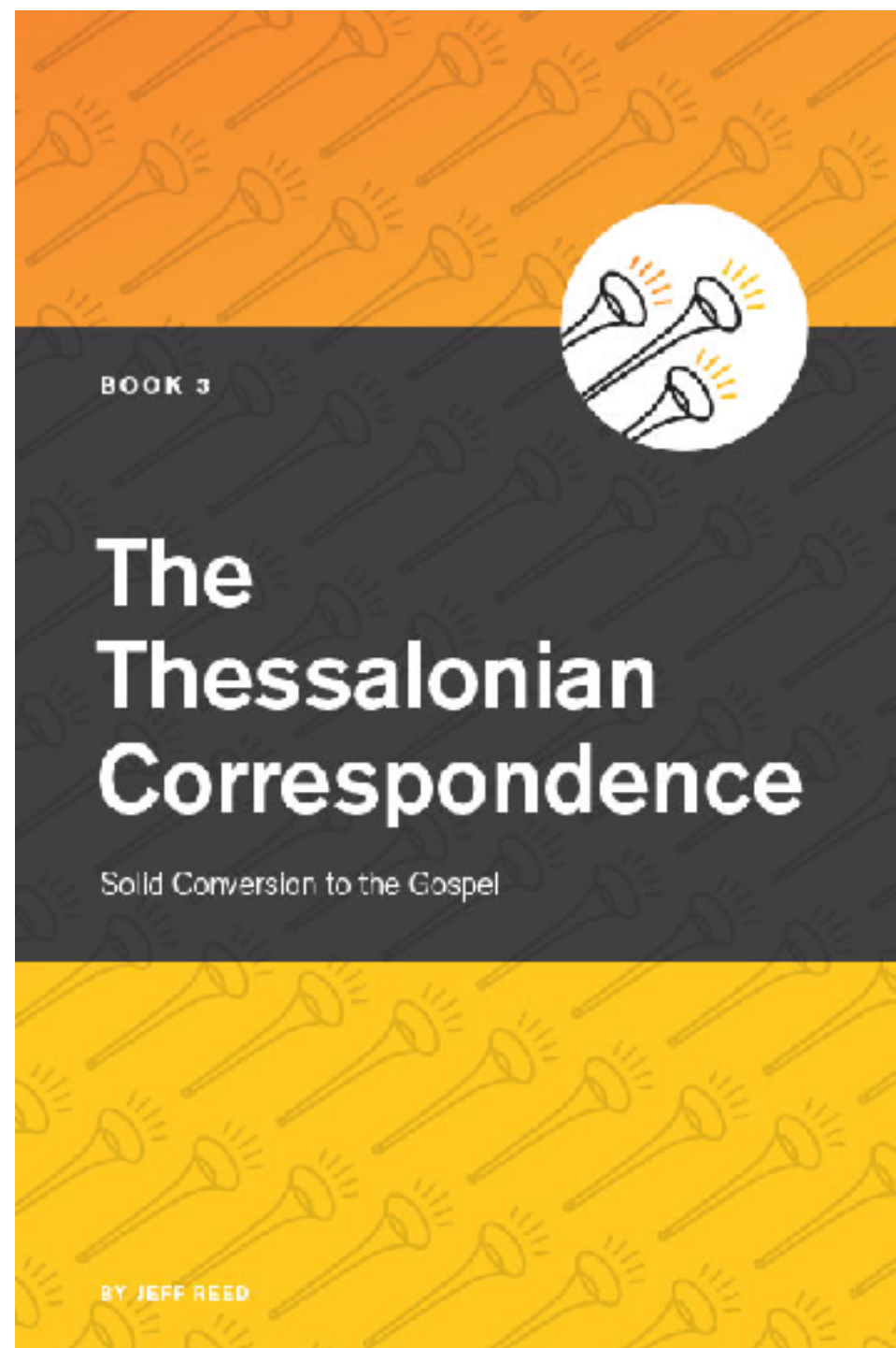
Session 2: The Pure Gospel

Session 3: The Gospel as a System of Living

Session 4: The Gospel and Walking in the Spirit

Session 5: The Gospel and Respecting Leaders

The New Perspective on Paul



The Thessalonian Correspondence: Solid Conversion to the Gospel, Book 3

Session 1: Paul's Concern for the Thessalonians

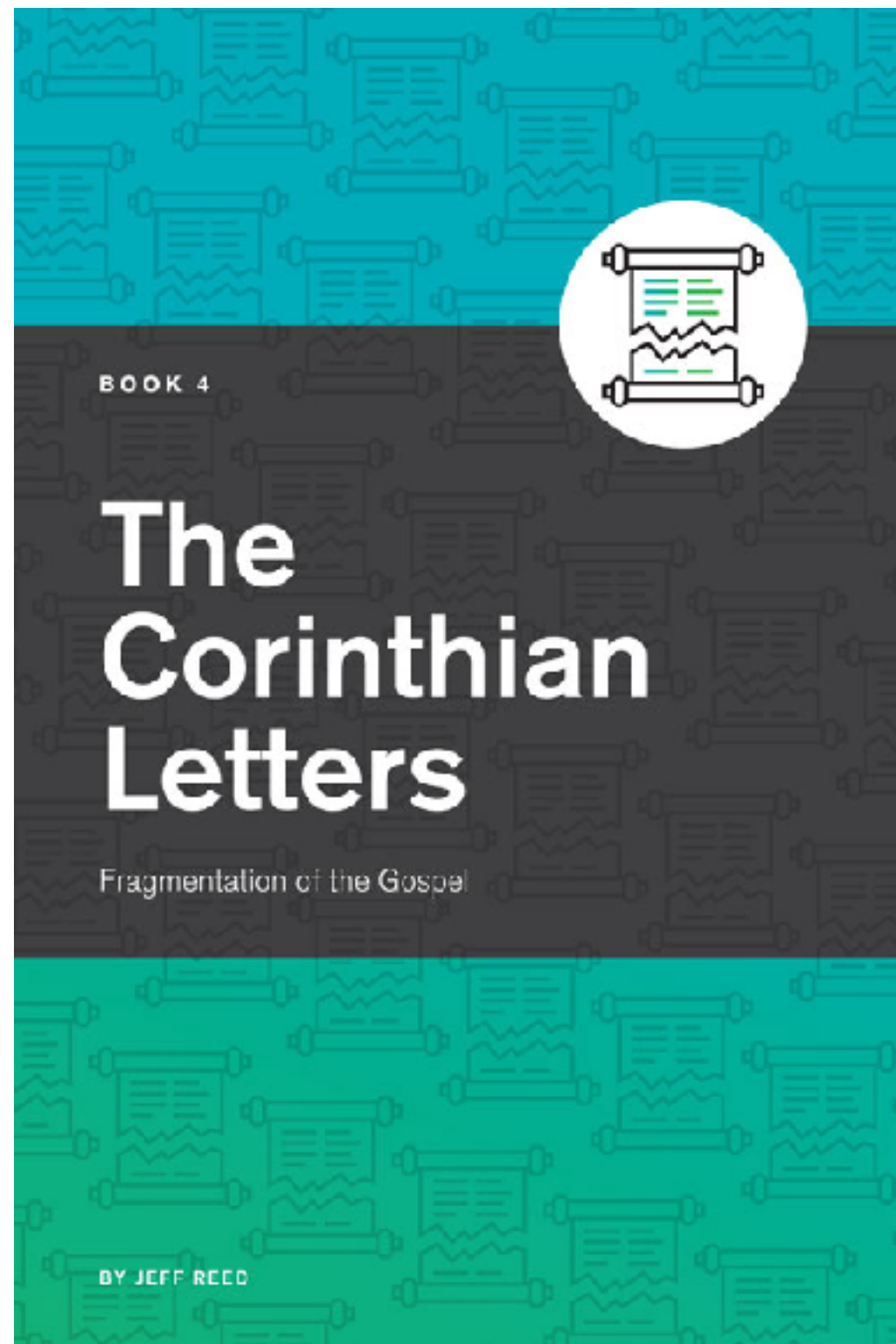
Session 2: Their Dramatic Conversion

Session 3: Three Emerging Problems — Letter 1

Session 4: Further Clarification — Letter 2

Session 5: Solidifying Their Conversion

The New Perspective on Paul



The Corinthian Letters: Fragmentation of the Gospel,
Book 4

Session 1: The Fragmentation of the Gospel

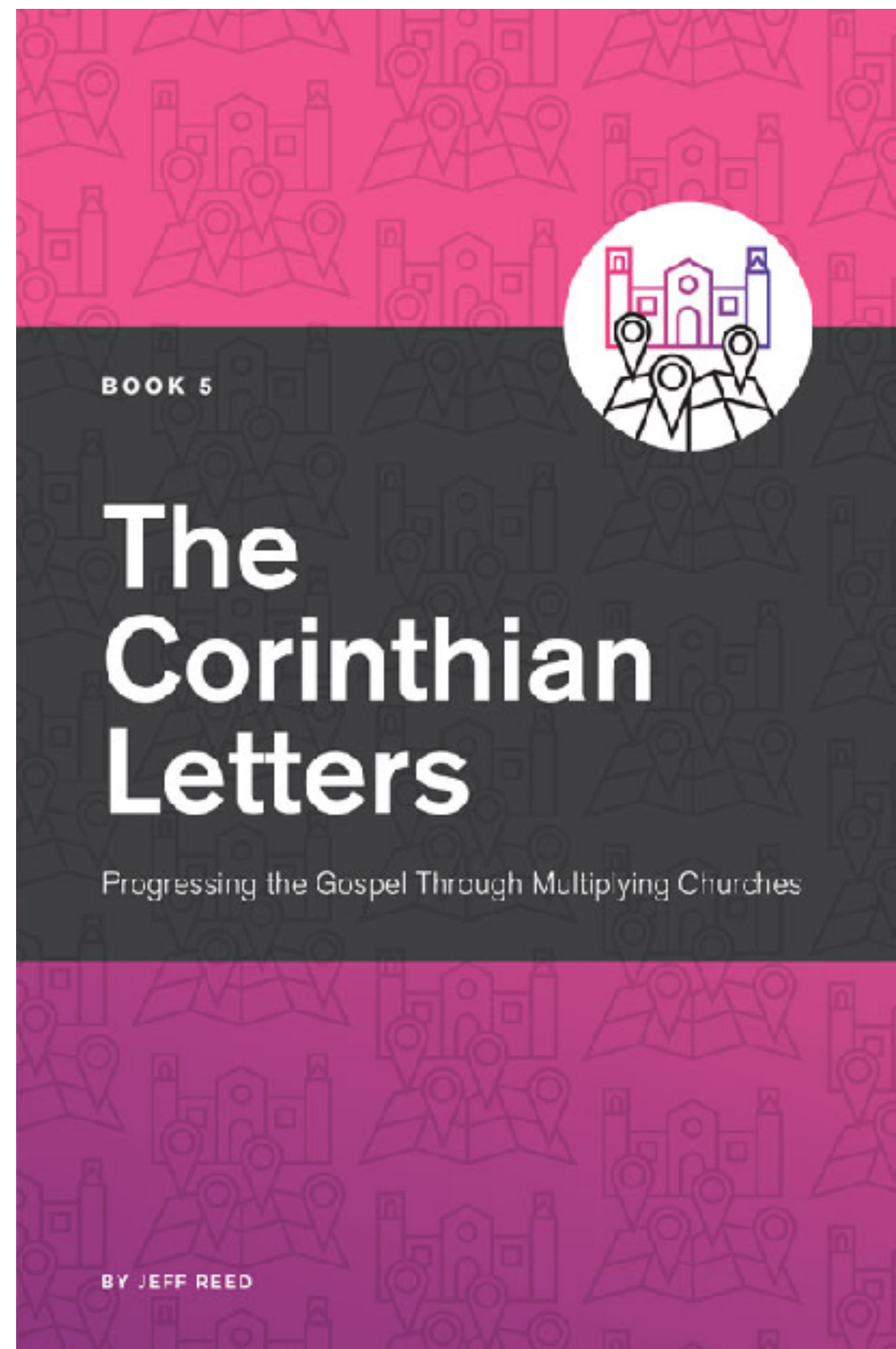
Session 2: Building on One Foundation: The Traditions

Session 3: Schisms in Their Community Life

Session 4: Schisms in Their Community Gatherings

Session 5: Back to the Gospel as Apostolic Tradition

The New Perspective on Paul



The Corinthian Letters: Progressing the Gospel Through Multiplying Churches, Book 5

Session 1: The Pressure of Leading Church Networks

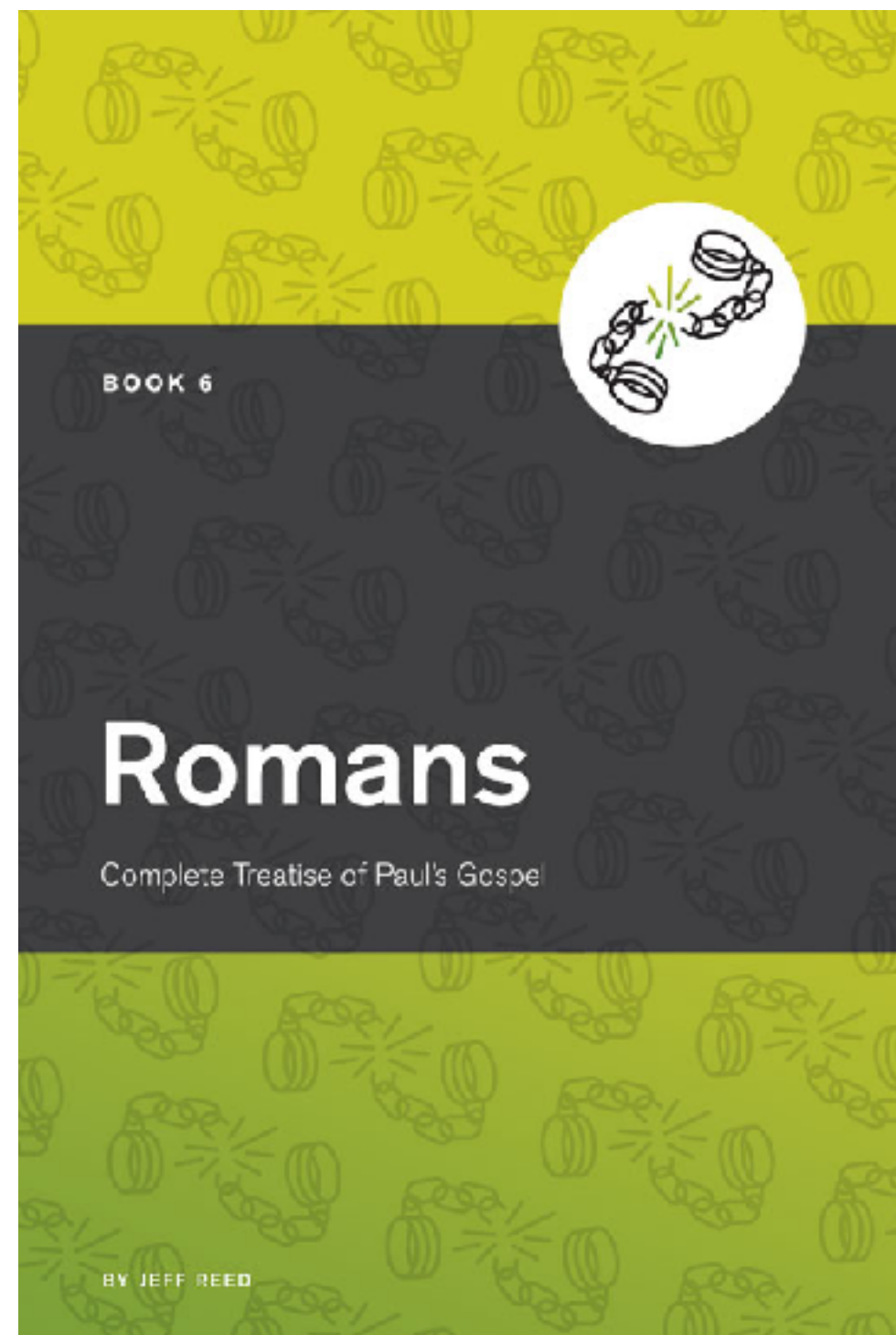
Session 2: The Ministry of the Gospel: Conflicts Without and Fears Within

Session 3: Sacrificing Network to Network for the Progress of the Gospel

Session 4: The Importance of Apostolic Authority

Session 5: The Appeal to the Corinthian Churches

The New Perspective on Paul



Romans: Complete Treatise of Paul's Gospel, Book 6

Session 1: The Intention of Romans

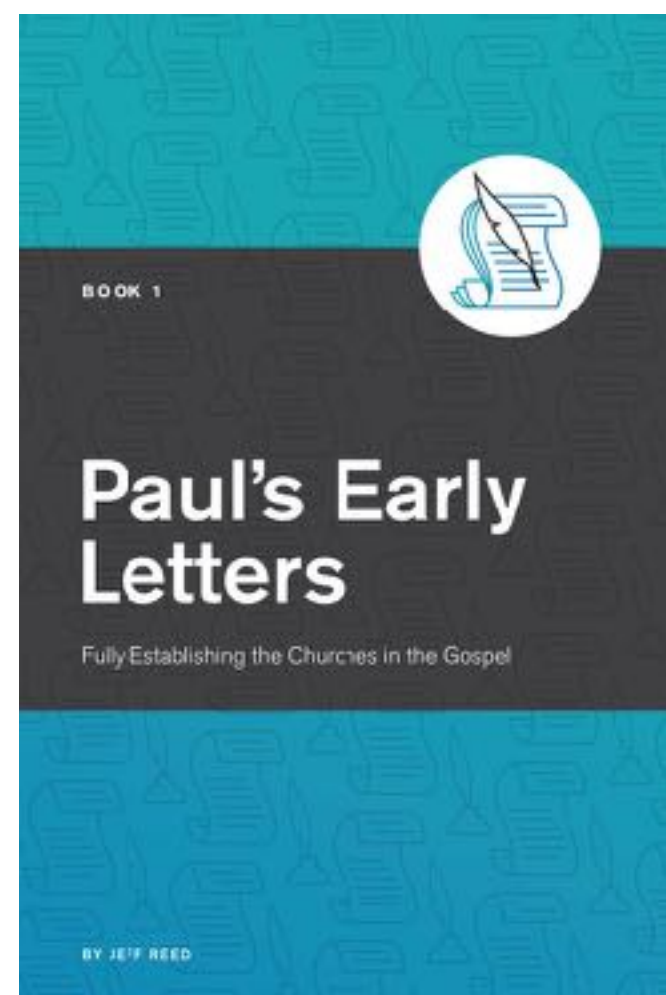
Session 2: The Gospel and The Story

Session 3: The New Gospel Worldview

Session 4: Reframing the Jewish Story

Session 5: The Gospel in Transformed Community

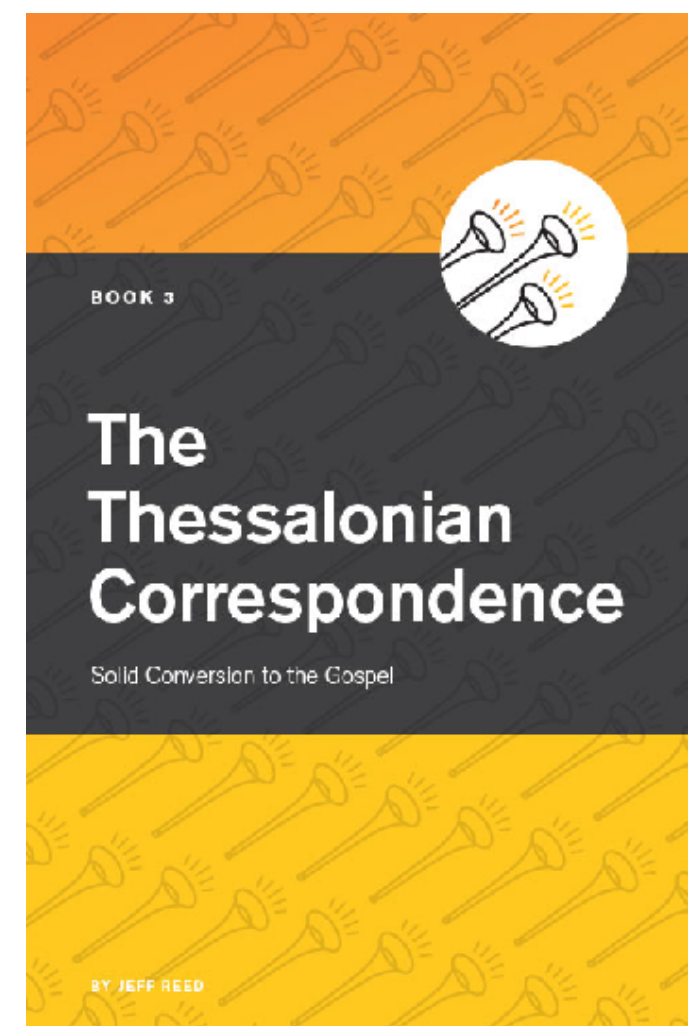
The Corinthian Letters: Fragmentation of the Gospel



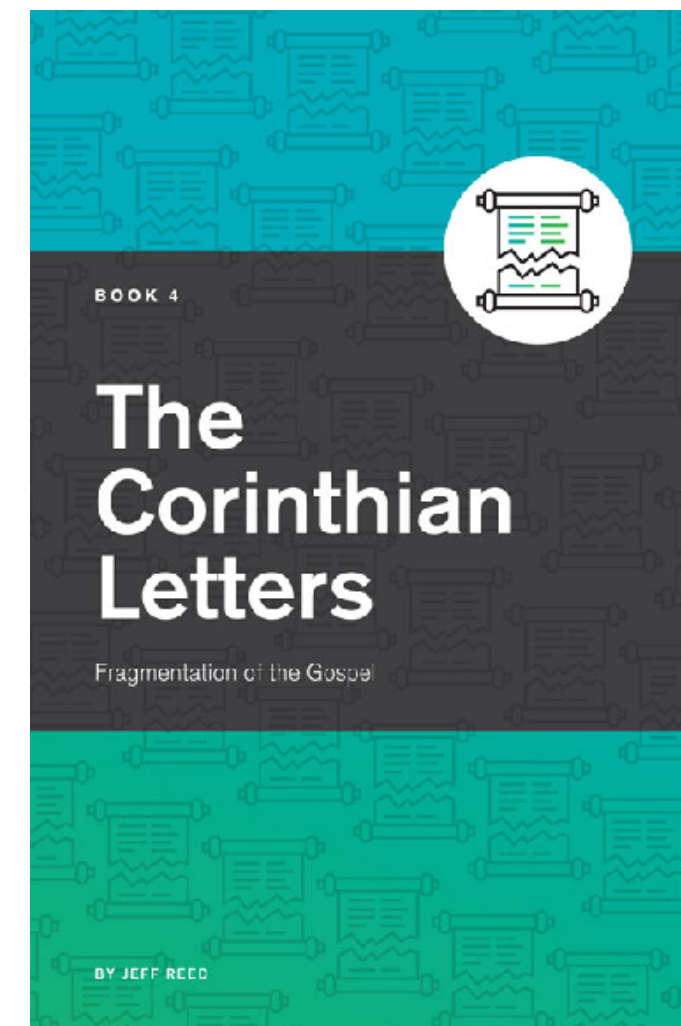
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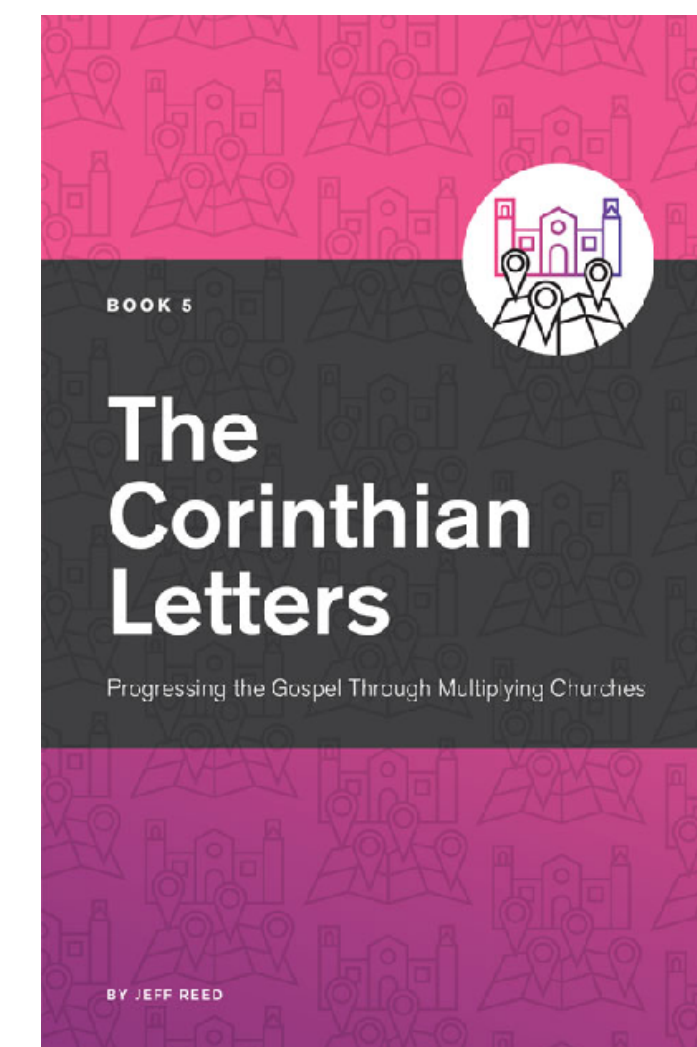
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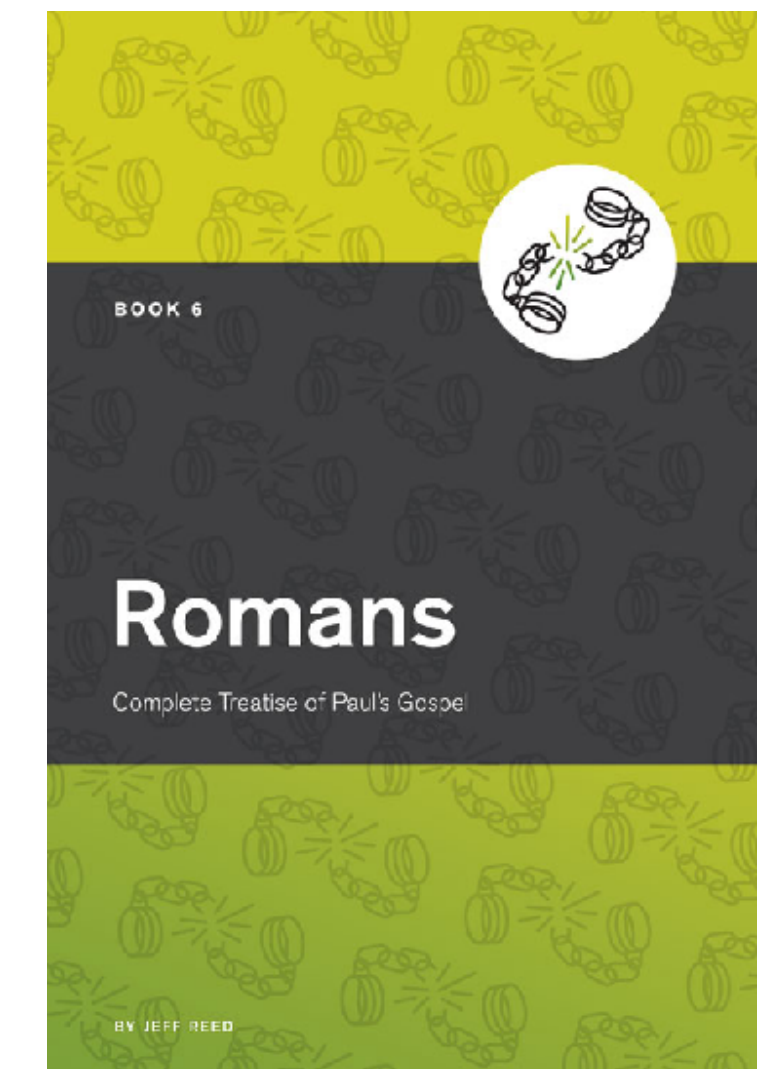
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Sept. 53



June 56



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The Corinthian Letters: Fragmentation of the Gospel

Let's return to our heuristic author's intention statement.

Intention Statement for the Corinthian Letters:

To defend his unique role of proclaiming the gospel to the Gentiles in the context of all sorts of rivals, keeping the Corinthian churches in his sphere of authority as he continues to build a network of churches committed to progressing the gospel among the Gentiles

by writing his second letter to deal with internal divisions, rooted in differing social status that were fragmenting the Corinthian churches. (1 Corinthians)

by writing his fourth letter to appeal to the Corinthians to remain under his leadership, despite attacks on his apostleship by rival leaders. (2 Corinthians)

The Corinthian Letters: Fragmentation of the Gospel

Intention Statement of 1 Corinthians

To deal with internal divisions, rooted in differing social status that were fragmenting the Corinthian churches, so the Corinthian churches would fully participate with him in the progress of the gospel

by applying the gospel to the core divisions that developed by factions within the churches

by specifically addressing factions in

- their community life and
- their community gatherings

by taking them back to the gospel as apostolic traditioning

The Corinthian Letters: Fragmentation of the Gospel

Intention Statement of 2 Corinthians

To defend his apostleship in the Corinthian churches, that they might remain in his sphere of authority and therefore participate fully in the progress amongst the Gentiles, for which he was uniquely commissioned

by describing his internal stress in carrying out his stewardship

by describing the heart of the ministry of the gospel as “conflicts without and fears within” as a context for victorious progress

by defending his apostleship and seeking the Corinthians as partners in that progression

Reflections on 1 Corinthians

We learn a lot about how Paul built his network (movement) of churches:

1. He understood that building the foundation correctly meant that they, the Corinthian churches, were to be part of a network of churches progressing the gospel (open door in Ephesus).
2. The churches were expected to give towards the progress of the gospel (supporting Paul's team as needed, giving to other networks of churches in the complex network).
3. Paul's process of establishing churches involved extended personal visits, sending key members of his team, and cooperating with other legitimate teams working amongst his churches.
4. Paul worked hard to make his churches become a genuine network that saw themselves as an extended, empire-wide family of families. He did this through giving, serving, hosting, family greetings, etc.
5. Paul also saw the teaching he delivered (the didache, rule of faith, see Galatians) as common authoritative traditions (faith, deposit, sound doctrine).

Apostolic Authority in 1 Corinthians

Apostolic Authority in 1 Corinthians

1. Paul came to Corinth in the power of the authority of the gospel tradition, not as one asserting personal authority or demonstrating exceptional oratory skill.
2. Paul understood the foundational nature of the gospel in the form of a formulaic statement and framed much of his authoritative teaching on that base.
3. He saw that gospel as the starting point for solving all of the divisions in the Corinthian churches and foundational to building a one mindedness in the churches.
4. Paul delivered the traditions he received from Christ with confidence and authority, yet with a clear understanding that the Corinthians needed to learn how to think at a principle level, producing the cultural flexibility needed to preserve their unity at a practical cultural level.
5. Paul established a process for future apostolic leaders to follow by working flexibly at a principle level from how he dealt with the divisions in the Corinthian churches, a process we are calling the *apostolic traditioning of Paul*.
6. Paul will further model the importance of apostolic authority in 2 Corinthians; as we will see, he will establish the perpetual need for the functions in 2 Timothy.

Apostolic Authority in 2 Corinthians

Apostolic Authority in 1 Corinthians 1:1–2:11

1. Paul saw his apostolic authority including his key apostolic team members; e.g. 2 Corinthians was sent from Paul and Timothy to the church in Corinth.
2. Paul understood the authority he exercised in his letters and in necessary visits included those churches throughout Achaia, of which the Corinthian churches were a hub.
3. Paul saw suffering and persecution as part of the process of bonding them together with him in progressing the gospel as they were informed and prayed for each other in the progress of the gospel.
4. Paul was frank and straightforward and clear in his letters, not manipulative in revealing his plans to them; and when he changes his plans he gives careful, honest explanation.
5. Paul made his travel plans with full intention of completing them as shared with his churches, but he understood the problems and pressures of his churches might cause him to alter those plans in the context of carrying them out.
6. Paul called on the churches to discipline the person who was most likely a church patron whose church was creating the opposition but to not to make it a permanent rejection.

Apostolic Authority in 2 Corinthians

Apostolic Authority in 1 Corinthians 2:12–7:5

1. Paul saw setting difficult strategic ministry priorities and decisions as part of his apostolic authority, as illustrated by his inner anxiety over the churches in Corinth, causing him to leave a wide open door for the gospel in Troas.
2. Paul saw success in his ministry strategies not as the sharpness of his own strategic acumen but only in the fact that he knew he was part of a triumphal procession of Christ, unfolding His grand strategy (triumphal procession).
3. Paul knew his apostolic stewardship was short lived and that he was decaying outwardly and being renewed inwardly, so he was compelled to use all his time and energy as an ambassador for Christ and therefore laying solid foundations in his church networks and key emerging leaders.
4. Paul did not consider formal recognition (letters of commendation) as the proof of his apostolic qualifications but rather the transformed lives of the Corinthian churches and their commitment to sharing in the progress of the gospel, especially in Achaia.

Apostolic Authority in 2 Corinthians

Apostolic Authority in 1 Corinthians 2:12–7:5

5. Paul's apostolic legitimacy was further cemented by both experiencing and handling conflicts without and fears within and by his ability to convince his churches to share in that perspective of ministry, which was contrary to the success of philosophical orators and successful associations of the day.
6. Ultimately, Paul considered his ministry to “not be in vain” but to be successful if his churches grasped the grand strategy of Christ and could carry the gospel with the power he experienced as he brought the gospel to them; then he would have succeeded in his stewardship.
7. Ultimately, Paul understood that “conflicts without and fears within” were key to his success in effectively carrying out his stewardship with eternal results and that his churches must learn to participate fully in that perspective of ministry.

Apostolic Authority in 2 Corinthians

Apostolic Authority in 1 Corinthians 8:1–9:15

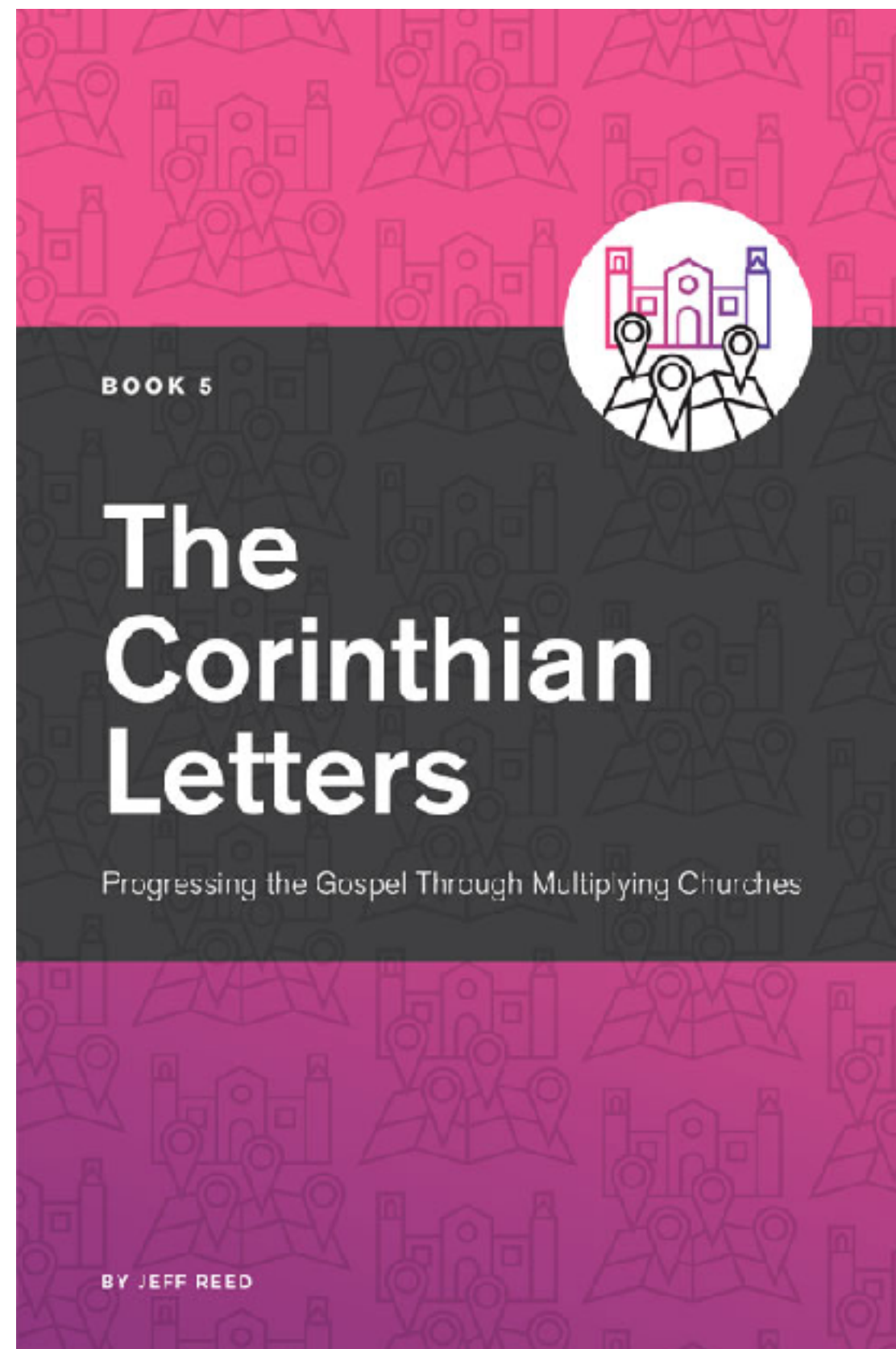
1. Part of Paul's apostolic authority was to think through building a network of networks into a network wide movement to progress the gospel across the empire.
2. Key to this was funding the spontaneous expansion of churches, of which taking a collection was a key part.
3. Paul laid out a plan for a large collection to be taken from his networks of churches both to meet the desperate needs of the poor in the Jerusalem churches, but also to build a serious partnership among his networks and hopefully with the Jerusalem churches.
4. Paul's apostolic authority was clearly seen; when it became clear that the Achaian churches were falling behind in their commitment, he used his apostolic authority (not positional authority) when he said, I am not issuing you an order but seriously advising.

Apostolic Authority in 2 Corinthians

Apostolic Authority in 1 Corinthians 8:1–9:15

5. The nature of his apostolic authority can also be seen by his planning to issue official letters to accompany those sent from the churches of each network to deliver the great gift; he did this in the power of the gospel he stood within and his stewardship, not some official positional authority.
6. He also demonstrated his apostolic authority when he commended Titus as part of his team and a key brother he was sending with him; and he instructed the churches to embrace and follow them and their challenges to complete their gift commitment.
7. He saw limits to his apostolic authority. He did not take responsibility alone for seeing the gift was delivered; he had all sorts of accountability built into the process, but he did establish and instruct his team and the church networks in the processes.

The Ministry: Conflicts Without Fears Within



The Corinthian Letters: Progressing the Gospel Through Multiplying Churches, Book 5

Session 1: The Pressure of Leading Church Networks

Session 2: The Ministry of the Gospel: Conflicts Without and Fears Within

Session 3: Sacrificing Network to Network for the Progress of the Gospel

Session 4: The Importance of Apostolic Authority

Session 5: The Appeal to the Corinthian Churches

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

Now let's turn to 2 Corinthians 10:1–12:21. Again, I am mainly going to trace Paul's defense of his apostolic role and responsibility, with a few additional comments, and then attempt to integrate Paul's understanding of apostolic authority with his argument on the anatomy of apostolic authority, which has been unfolding through his entire Corinthian correspondence.

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

¹ Think of the Messiah, meek and gentle; then think of me, Paul— yes, Paul himself!— making his appeal to you. You know what I'm like: I'm humble when I'm face to face with you, but I'm bold when I'm away from you! ² Please, please don't put me in the position of having to be bold when I'm with you, of having to show how confident I dare to be when I'm standing up to people who think we are behaving in a merely human way. ³ Yes, we are mere humans, but we don't fight the war in a merely human way. ⁴ **The weapons we use for the fight**, you see, are not merely human; they **carry a power from God** that can tear down fortresses! **We tear down clever arguments** ⁵ and every proud notion that sets itself up against the knowledge of God. We take every thought prisoner and make it obey the Messiah. ⁶ We are holding ourselves in readiness to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

2 Corinthians 10:1–6 N. T. Wright

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

Note:

“the weapons we use for the fight... carry a power from God... we tear down clever arguments” 10:4

clever arguments (logismous): “false reasoning, false arguments” (LN)

When Paul speaks of *his power*, he speaks of power arguments, the reasoning power within the gospel. His ability will tear apart the arguments the opposition is using.

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

⁷ Look at what's in front of your face. If anyone trusts that they belong to the Messiah, let them calculate it once more: just as they belong to the Messiah, so also do we! ⁸ For if I do indeed boast a bit too enthusiastically **about the authority which the Lord has given me**— which is for building you up, not for pulling you down!— I shan't be ashamed. ⁹ I wouldn't want to look as if I were trying to frighten you with my letters. ¹⁰ I know what they say: "His letters are serious and powerful, but when he arrives in person he is weak, and his words aren't worth bothering about." ¹¹ Anyone like that should reckon on this: the way we talk in letters, when we're absent, will be how we behave when we're present.

2 Corinthians 10:7–11 N. T. Wright

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

10:8 “about the *authority* the Lord has given me”

authority: “authority, power” (LSJ); “right to control” (LN); “freedom of choice, right to decide” (BAGD); “power, authority, weight, especially moral authority, influence” (PLGNT)

In regards to the churches, the idea is that Paul is given the power from Christ to shape the churches. Think back to 1 Corinthians 2:1–5. Paul did not come with great oratory skill, but in the *power* (authority) of the gospel.

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

Paul's Defense of His Apostolic Role and Responsibility

1. Paul's authority rested in the authoritative word given to him from Christ (embodied in his letters) and his gifted ability to hold the teaching against any human arguments made against it.
2. He was humble in his general teaching, but he exercised the authority needed to hold the churches to that body of teaching, challenging any arguments brought against it, knowing the Word of Christ carried supernatural power.
3. Though he was weak, Paul's weapons (his letters and his arguments of defense) carried enormous spiritual power, which he would teach boldly and confrontationally (even face to face) as needed.

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

¹² We wouldn't dare, you see, to figure out where we belong on some scale or other, or compare ourselves with people who commend themselves. They measure themselves by one another, and compare themselves with one another. That just shows how silly they are! ¹³ But when we boast, we don't go off into flights of fancy; **we boast according to the measure of the rule God** has given us to measure ourselves by, and that rule includes our work with you! ¹⁴ We weren't going beyond our assigned limits when we reached you; we were the first to get as far as you with the gospel of the Messiah. ¹⁵ We don't boast without a measuring rule in the work someone else has done. This is what we hope for: that, as your faith increases, **we will be given a much larger space for work**, according to our rule, ¹⁶ which is **to announce the gospel in the lands beyond you**, not to boast in what has already been accomplished through the rule someone else has been given. ¹⁷ "Anyone who boasts should boast in the Lord!" ¹⁸ Who is it, after all, who gains approval? It isn't the person who commends himself. It's the person whom the Lord commends.

2 Corinthians 10:12–18 N. T. Wright

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

¹³ We, however, will not boast beyond limits, but will keep **within the field that God has assigned to us**, to reach out even as far as you. ¹⁴ For we were not overstepping our limits when we reached you; we were the first to come all the way to you with the good news of Christ. ¹⁵ We do not boast beyond limits, that is, in the labors of others; but our hope is that, as your faith increases, **our sphere of action among you may be greatly enlarged**, ¹⁶ so that we may proclaim the good news in **lands beyond you**, without boasting of work already done in someone else's sphere of action.

2 Corinthians 10:13–16 NRSV

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

Paul's Defense of His Apostolic Role and Responsibility

Key word here

field—“area, sphere, territory” (LN); “sphere of action or influence” (BGD)

“as your faith grows”—when faithful in current sphere of church networks, God will enlarge it. That we can boast in!

“may be greatly enlarged, so that we may proclaim the good news in lands beyond you”

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

Paul's Defense of His Apostolic Role and Responsibility

4. Paul's authority was not a formal authority based on rank, in which one has higher rank than another and boasts they are more important because of position.
5. Paul's boasting was in stewarding the field God had given him; as the churches' faith grew, he sought to enlarge that sphere by seeking to proclaim the gospel in other lands.

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

¹ I'd be glad if you would bear with me in **a little bit of foolishness**. Yes: bear with me, please! ² I'm jealous over you, and it's God's own jealousy: I arranged to marry you off, like a pure virgin, to the one man I presented you to, namely the Messiah. ³ But the serpent tricked Eve with its cunning, and in the same way I'm afraid that your minds may be corrupted from the single-mindedness and purity which the Messiah's people should have. ⁴ For if someone comes and announces a different Jesus from the one we announced to you, or if you receive a different spirit, one you hadn't received before, or a different gospel, one you hadn't accepted before, you put up with that all right. ⁵ According to my calculations, you see, **I am every bit as good as these super-apostles**. ⁶ I may be untutored in speaking, but that certainly doesn't apply to my knowledge. Surely that's been made quite clear to you, in every way and on every point!

2 Corinthians 11:1–6 N. T. Wright

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

⁷ Did I then commit a sin when I humbled myself in order to exalt you? When I announced the gospel of God to you without charging you for it? ⁸ I robbed other churches by accepting payment from them in order to serve you; ⁹ and when I was with you, and was in need of anything, I didn't lay a burden on anybody, because my needs were more than met by the brothers who came from Macedonia. That's how I stopped myself from being a burden to you—and I intend to carry on in the same way. ¹⁰ As the Messiah's truthfulness is in me, this boast of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaëa. ¹¹ Why? Because I don't love you? God knows ...!

¹² I'm going to continue to do what I've always done, **so as to cut off any opportunity** (for those who want such an opportunity!) for anyone to look **as if they can match us in the things they boast** about. ¹³ Such people are false apostles! The only work they do is to deceive! They transform themselves so that they look like apostles of the Messiah— ¹⁴ and no wonder. The satan himself transforms himself to look like an angel of light, ¹⁵ so it isn't surprising if his servants transform themselves to look like servants of righteousness. They will end up where their deeds are taking them.

2 Corinthians 11:7–15 N. T. Wright

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

Paul's Defense of His Apostolic Role and Responsibility

6. Paul had the view that he needed to get the churches established in Christ's teaching so he could turn them over to Christ and they could continue to mature in Christ and impact their area, but he was afraid their minds were being corrupted—that they were not one minded, embracing a different gospel.
7. Paul was untutored in speaking (not a skilled or trained orator from the professional class), but he was very skilled in his knowledge; his arguments were superior at every point.
8. Paul worked hard to cut off the churches from so-called apostles (orators of light) who did not follow the teaching he was delivering.

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

¹⁶ I'll say it again: don't let anyone think I'm a fool! But if they do— well, all right then, welcome me as a fool, so that **I can do a little bit of boasting!** ¹⁷ What I'm going to say now, I'm not saying as if it came from the Lord, but as if I was a fool, as if I really did want to indulge myself in this kind of boasting. ¹⁸ Plenty of people are boasting in human terms, after all, so why shouldn't I boast as well? ¹⁹ After all, you put up with fools readily enough, since you are so wise yourselves. ²⁰ You put up with it if someone makes you their slave, or if they eat up your property, or overpower you, or give themselves airs, or slap you in the face. ²¹ Well, I'm ashamed to say it: we weren't strong enough for that!

2 Corinthians 11:16–21 N. T. Wright

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

²¹ Whatever anyone else dares to boast about (I'm talking nonsense, remember), I'll **boast as well.** ²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. ²³ Are they servants of the Messiah?— I'm talking like a raving madman— I'm a better one. I've worked harder, been in prison more often, been beaten more times than I can count, and I've often been close to death. ²⁴ Five times I've had the Jewish beating, forty lashes less one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; I was adrift in the sea for a night and a day. ²⁶ I've been constantly traveling, facing dangers from rivers, dangers from brigands, dangers from my own people, dangers from foreigners, dangers in the town, dangers in the countryside, dangers at sea, dangers from false believers. ²⁷ I've toiled and labored; I've burned the candle at both ends; I've been hungry and thirsty; I've often gone without food altogether; I've been cold and naked.

2 Corinthians 11:21–27 N. T. Wright

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

²⁸ Quite apart from all that, I have this daily pressure on me, my care for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak and I'm not weak? Who is offended without me burning with shame? ³⁰ **If I must boast, I will boast of my weaknesses.** ³¹ The God and father of the Lord Jesus, who is blessed forever, knows that I'm not lying: ³² in Damascus, King Aretas, the local ruler, was guarding the city of Damascus so that he could capture me, ³³ but I was let down in a basket through a window and over the wall, and I escaped his clutches.

2 Corinthians 11:28–33 N. T. Wright

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

Here Paul boasts, but his point is not that he is this great man; his weakness shows everywhere.

See “Paul and Boasting” in the quotes. It’s a very important difference.

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

Paul's Defense of His Apostolic Role and Responsibility

9. Paul defends his authenticity as an Apostle by reminding them he worked harder than anyone, under great opposition; he traveled constantly; and he burned the candle at both ends.
10. He adds to that the daily pressure on him of caring for the churches as part of his authenticity.

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

¹ **I just have to boast**— not that there’s anything to be gained by it; **but I’ll go on to visions and revelations** of the Lord. ² Someone I know in the Messiah, fourteen years ago (whether in the body or out of the body I don’t know, though God knows), was snatched up to the third heaven. ³ I know that this particular Someone (whether in the body or apart from the body I don’t know, God knows) — ⁴ this person was snatched up to paradise, and heard . . . words you can’t pronounce, which humans aren’t allowed to repeat. ⁵ I will boast of Someone like that, but I won’t **boast of myself, except of my weaknesses.** ⁶ If I did want to boast, you see, I wouldn’t be mad; I’d be speaking the truth. But I’m holding back, so that nobody will think anything of me except what they can see in me or hear from me, ⁷ even considering how remarkable the revelations were. As a result, so that I wouldn’t become too exalted, a thorn was given to me in my flesh, a messenger from the satan, to keep stabbing away at me. ⁸ I prayed to the Lord three times about this, asking that it would be taken away from me, ⁹ and this is what he said to me: “My grace is enough for you; **my power comes to perfection in weakness.**” So I will be all the more pleased to boast of my weaknesses, so that the Messiah’s power may rest upon me. ¹⁰ So I’m delighted when I’m weak, insulted, in difficulties, persecuted, and facing disasters, for the Messiah’s sake. When I’m weak, you see, then I am strong.

2 Corinthians 12:1–10 N. T. Wright

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

¹¹ I've been a fool! You forced me into it. If I was to have received an official commendation, it ought actually to have come from you! After all, I'm not inferior to the super-apostles, even though I am nothing. ¹² The signs of a true apostle, you see, were performed among you in all patience, with signs and wonders and powers. ¹³ In what way have you been worse off than all the other churches, except in the fact that I myself didn't become a burden to you? Forgive me this injustice! ¹⁴ Now look: this is the third time I'm ready to come to you. And I'm not going to be a burden, because I'm not looking for what belongs to you, but you yourselves. Children, after all, shouldn't be saving up for their parents, but parents for their children! ¹⁵ For my part, I will gladly spend and be spent on your behalf. If I love you all the more, am I going to be loved any the less? ¹⁶ Grant me this, that I didn't lay any burden on you. But— maybe I was a trickster, and I took you by deceit! ¹⁷ Did I cheat you by any of the people I sent to you? ¹⁸ I urged Titus to go to you, and I sent the brother with him. Did Titus cheat you? He behaved in the same spirit as me, didn't he? He conducted himself in the same manner, didn't he?

2 Corinthians 12:11–18 N. T. Wright

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

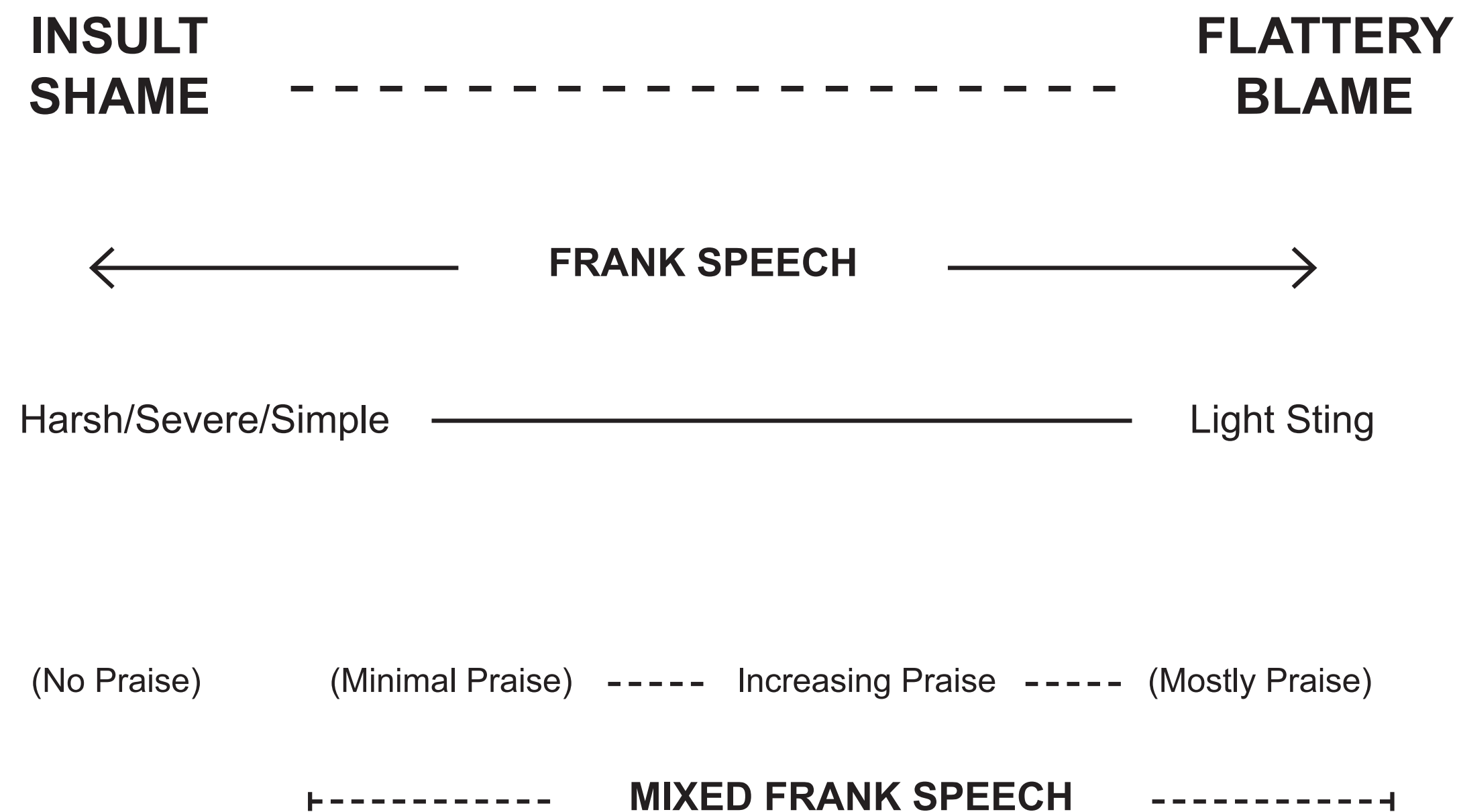
¹⁹ You will imagine we are explaining ourselves again. Well, we're speaking in God's presence, in the Messiah! My beloved ones, it has all been intended to build you up. ²⁰ I'm afraid, you see, that when I come I may find you rather different from what I would wish—and **I may turn out to be rather different from what you would wish!** I'm afraid there may still be fighting, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorder. ²¹ I'm afraid that perhaps, when I come once more, my God may humble me again in front of you, and I will have to go into mourning over many who sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and shameless immorality that they have practiced.

2 Corinthians 12:19–21 N. T. Wright

The Importance of Apostolic Authority

Here are the climax passages that frame in Paul's idea of frank speech. Again, see "Paul and Frankness" in the quotes section.

THE PRACTICE OF PASTORAL CARE



The Importance of Apostolic Authority

Paul's Defense of His Apostolic Role and Responsibility

11. Paul continues his defense by describing the special experience he was given to see parts of the heavenly places behind Christ's building of His Church, along with the thorn in the flesh (probably some kind of recurring illness) he was given, a weakness the false apostles were exploiting.
12. Paul's commendation includes their very existence as churches. He is not invalidated by super apostles undermining his weakness, or financial needs claiming he is a huckster just seeking money, noting that Titus, one of his team members, exhibits the same traits as him.
13. Paul's intense letters and his powerful arguments, always causing conflicts, are because he is afraid they will still be torn apart by divisions and disorder.

The Importance of Apostolic Authority Today

Role and Responsibility of Apostolic Leaders Today

1. The authority of apostolic leaders rests in the authoritative Word given to the churches from Christ (embodied in the apostolic writings) and their gifted ability to hold the teaching against any human arguments made against it.
2. Apostolic leaders might be humble in their general teaching, but they will exercise the authority needed to hold their churches to that body of teaching, challenging any arguments brought against it, knowing the Word of Christ carries supernatural power.
3. Though apostolic leaders often appear insignificant, their weapons (Paul's letters and his arguments of defense) carry enormous spiritual power, which they teach boldly and confrontationally, even face to face as needed.

The Importance of Apostolic Authority Today

Role and Responsibility of Apostolic Leaders Today

4. Apostolic leadership's authority is not a formal authority based on rank, in which one has higher rank than another and boasts that they are more important because of position.
5. Apostolic leadership's boasting is in stewarding the field God has given them; and as the churches' faith grows, apostolic leaders seek to enlarge that sphere by proclaiming the gospel in other lands.

The Importance of Apostolic Authority Today

Role and Responsibility of Apostolic Leaders Today

6. Apostolic leaders hold the view that they need to get the churches established in Christ's teaching so they can turn them over to Christ and the churches will continue to mature in Christ and impact their area (spontaneous expansion), but they often cannot, because churches are being corrupted by other teachings, therefore they are not one minded, but they are embracing a different gospel and teaching.
7. Apostolic leaders are often not from the professional class or the most skilled speakers, but they are very skilled in their knowledge; their arguments are superior at every point.
8. Apostolic leaders are willing to cut off the churches under their influence from so-called apostles (orators of light) who do not follow the teaching Paul delivered to the early churches.

The Importance of Apostolic Authority Today

Role and Responsibility of Apostolic Leaders Today

9. Their authenticity as apostolic leaders is seen in that they work harder than anyone, often under great opposition; they travel constantly; and they burn the candle at both ends, with little or no personal reward.
10. They can be seen carrying the daily pressure on themselves of caring for the churches under their sphere of influence.

The Importance of Apostolic Authority Today

Role and Responsibility of Apostolic Leaders Today

11. They often describe special experiences that shaped their calling, along with weaknesses that professionals in formal positions exploit.
12. Their primary qualification as apostolic leaders is the church networks under their influence. That is not invalidated by others with official positions and “professional training” or those with significant resources (the “majority” in paradigm terms). They possess an apostolic team who exhibit the same passions and abilities.
13. They are known for powerful arguments, based on Paul’s intense letters, which often cause conflicts, out of their concern to see churches established in the apostolic teaching—disrupters.

The Importance of Apostolic Authority Today

What is BILD?

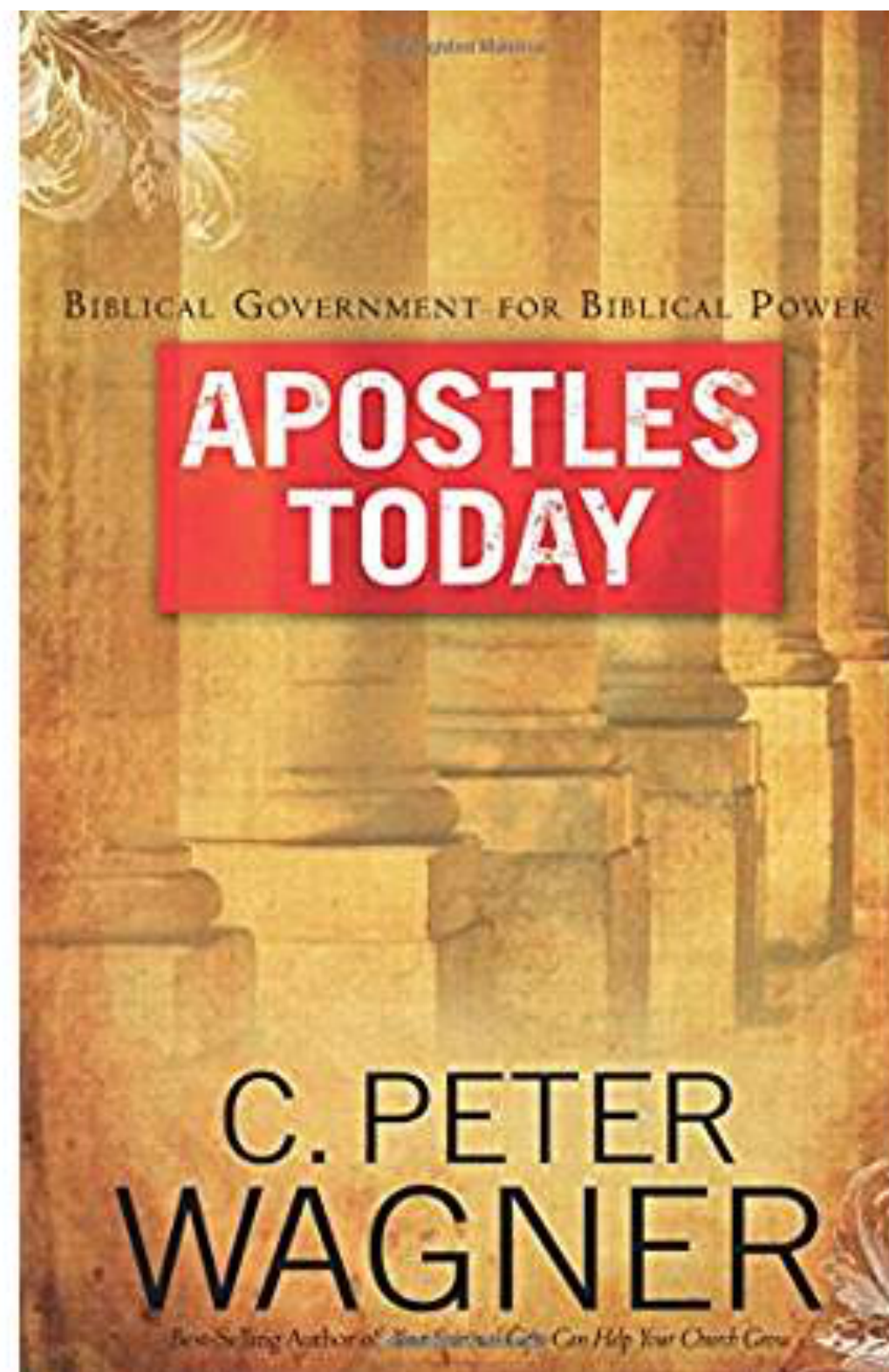
an apostolic team with 2 powerful tools

Who am I? Who are you? exercise

Why should this matter to you?

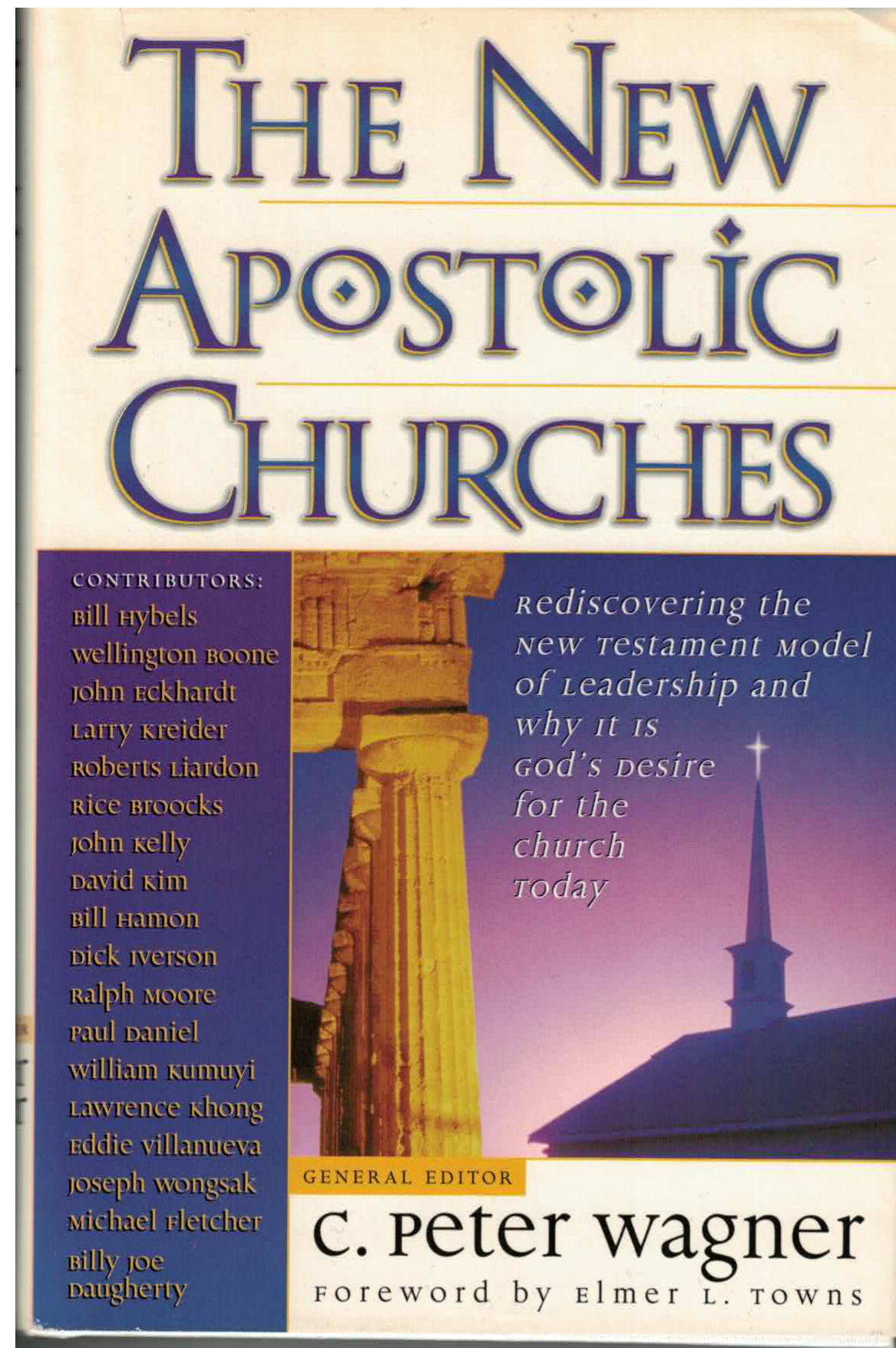
Wagner: It gives real significance to each believer— participation in the progress of the gospel.

The Importance of Apostolic Authority Today



“Protestant denominationalism over the past 500 years has been, for the most part, governed by teachers and administrators, rather than by apostles and prophets. That means that denominational executives are actually administrators— good, godly and wise ones, but administrators nonetheless. Most pastors of local churches are assumed to be teachers (at least ever since the sermon became the central point of weekly congregational gathering), with the sermon being their primary vehicle for teaching their people.”

The Importance of Apostolic Authority Today

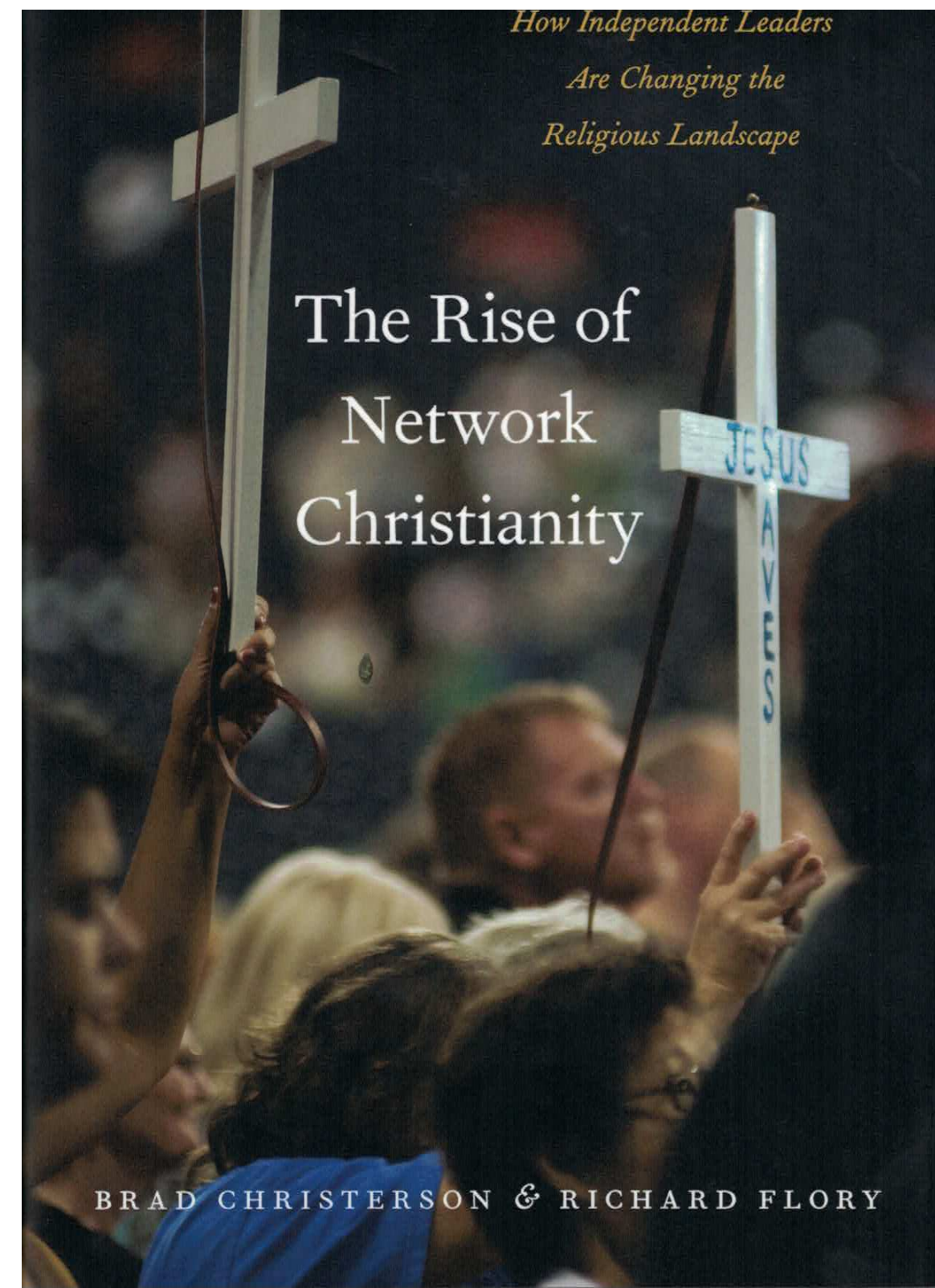


Being part of the new apostolic churches, gives every believer the chance to be a vital part of the progress of the gospel just like what happened in the early churches of the New Testament.

We are experiencing that today:

- Our wealth helps key leaders and churches around the world.
- Our service as a resource center, an Antioch type church, makes us strategic in God's plan.
- The use of our gifts plays a significant part.

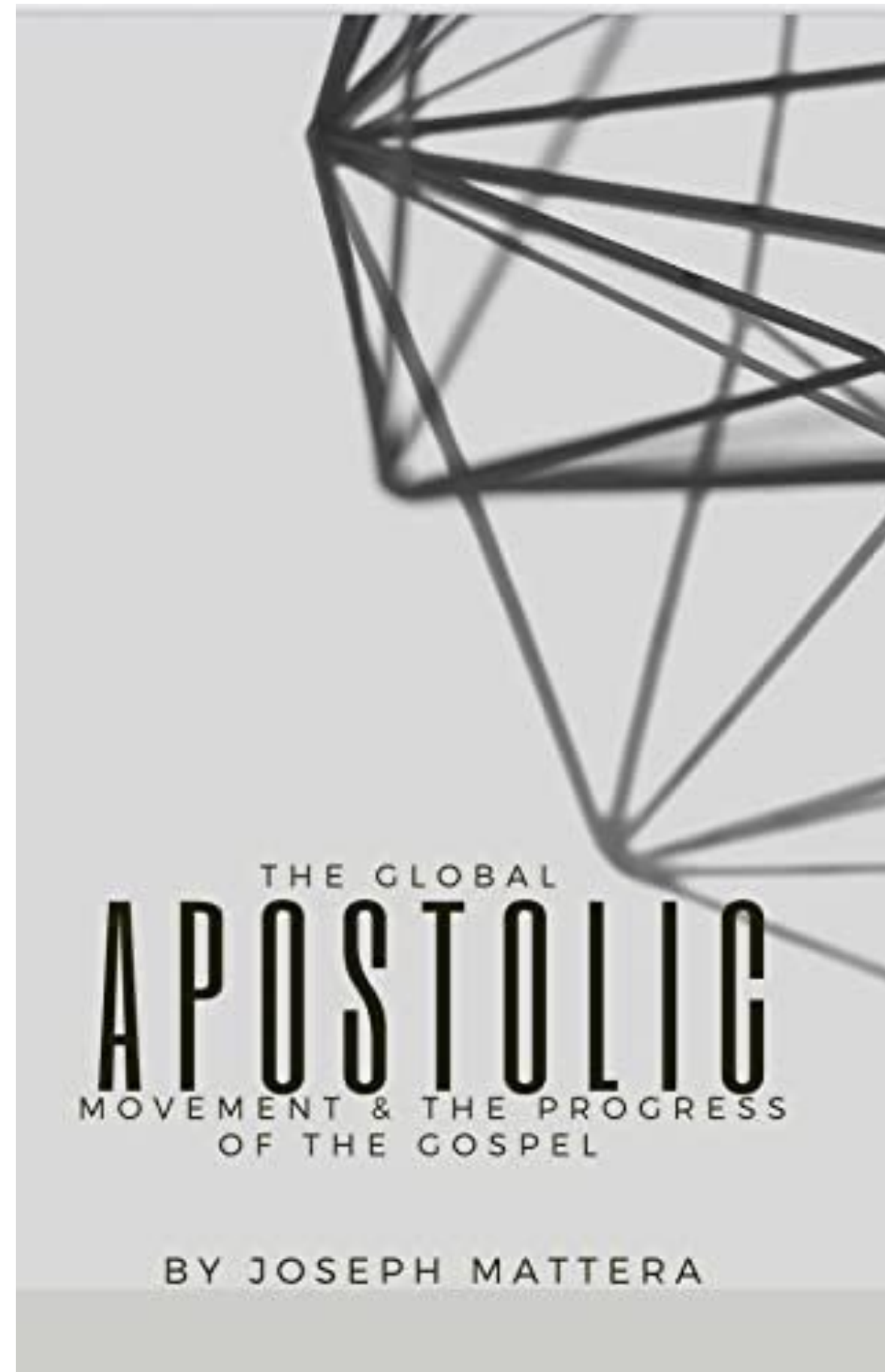
The Importance of Apostolic Authority Today



The Rise of Network Christianity: How Independent Leaders Are Changing the Religious Landscape by Brad Christerson and Richard Flory (Oxford University Press, 2017)

“The fastest growing movement in Christianity, both in the West and in the Global South, is now led by a network of dynamic independent entrepreneurs, referred to as “apostles.” p. 2

The Importance of Apostolic Authority



A new movement grew up heavily influenced by Wagner, from which was formed the International Council for Apostles. (ICA)

Then came the US Council for Apostles (USCA).

Mattera is now the director, and he is in the Antioch School doctoral program. (He finished, with the book as his artifact.)

I convinced him to change the name to US Council for Apostolic Leaders (USCAL), which he did. They put me on the board as the 11th member and their resident theologian—I am the only non pentecostal.

Plus the large-scale movements in the Global South we are working with are part of what is called Global Pentecostalism.

Most evangelicals we work with are accepting the term *apostolic teams*. I am deeply involved in moving forward the teaching we are seeing in 2 Corinthians today.

The Anatomy of Apostolic Authority

Let's go back to the nature and importance of apostolic authority as discovered in Paul's Corinthian correspondence.

We have made 39 points across both letters on *Paul's authority*.

Now, I want to condense the essence of the anatomy of *apostolic authority*: its nature and importance.

The Anatomy of Apostolic Authority

The Importance and Nature of Apostolic Authority in the Corinthian Letters

1. The nature of apostolic authority is not a person or position, but the power of the gospel.
2. There are key apostolic leaders gifted like Paul with apostolic gifts like Paul's (apostle, prophet, and teacher) who have whole spheres on ministry; they should seek to increase that sphere.
3. Gifted leaders on an apostolic team (Ephesians 4:11 types) share in the apostolic authority by nature of their gifts and the team they are on.
4. Churches that become fully established and key partners share in that authority and will accomplish things greater than they can imagine; it is a greater purpose as well.
5. Key apostolic leaders can expect a life of "conflicts without and fears within."
6. Apostolic leaders should expect constant challenges to their person and to their churches, producing almost a daily pressure across a lifetime of ministry.

The Anatomy of Apostolic Authority

The Importance and Nature of Apostolic Authority in the Corinthian Letters

7. Those exercising apostolic authority according to their gifts and sphere of ministry should anticipate the enlargement of that sphere throughout their ministry as they are part of Christ's triumphant march toward His kingdom, but it will look very different than man's expectations of success.
8. Apostolic leaders must master a balance left to them in Paul's model and letters: on the one hand delivering the apostolic tradition especially received from Paul's letters, holding all their churches to that apostolic teaching, while at the same time practicing great cultural flexibility in directives that are their opinion (Paul greatly advised them) or are the cultural decisions of senior elders and their churches that are completely up to them.
9. Apostolic authority is not positional authority nor personal authority in the gifts themselves nor in great oratory skill, but the authority is in powerful, well-thought-out arguments and the capacity and skill to win conflicts in common speech debate.

The Anatomy of Apostolic Authority

In these letters, Paul is establishing his understanding of his *apostolic authority*. We will build on it in the later letters, where we will see the perpetual nature of it. But here he is laying foundations that we must be careful not to miss.

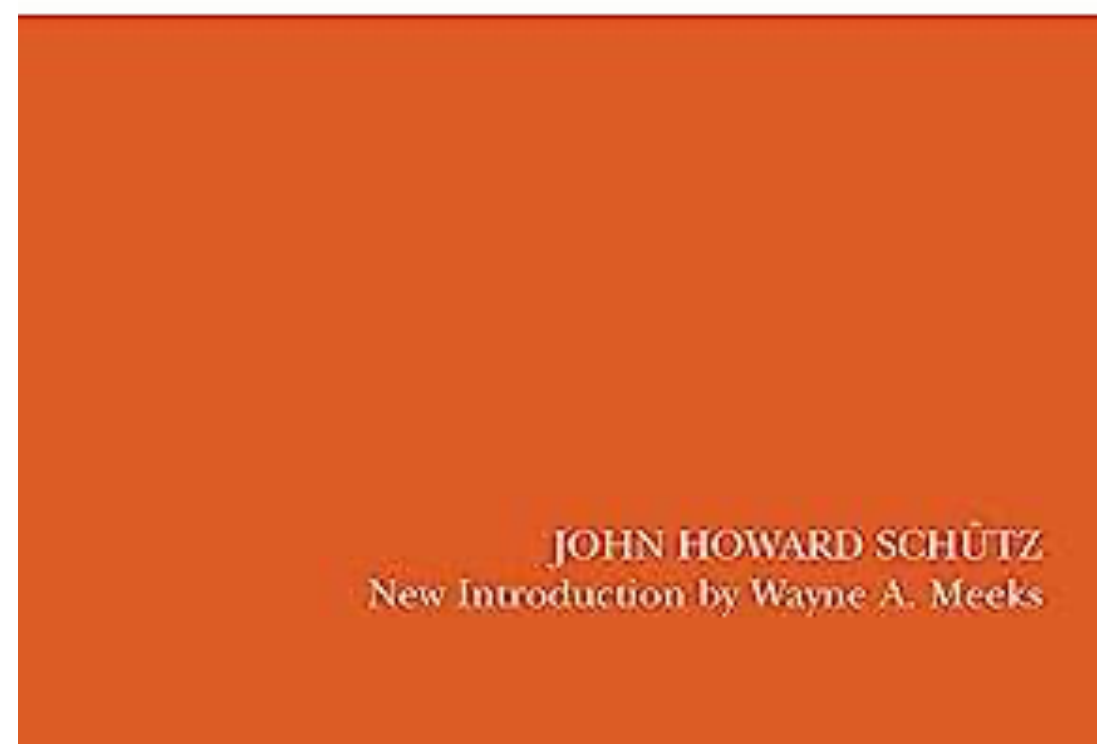
This understanding is key to understanding apostolic authority in our churches today, enabling us to practice a very key concept, mostly missing since the first 300 years of the Early Church.

It is misunderstood by Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches, Evangelical Protestant churches, and Classical Pentecostal churches. It is very important to grasp to establish Global Pentecostalism and the emerging next Christendom.

The Anatomy of Apostolic Authority



Paul and the Anatomy
of Apostolic Authority



Keith's last words

"Find an apostolic leader and his team, and attach your church to them."

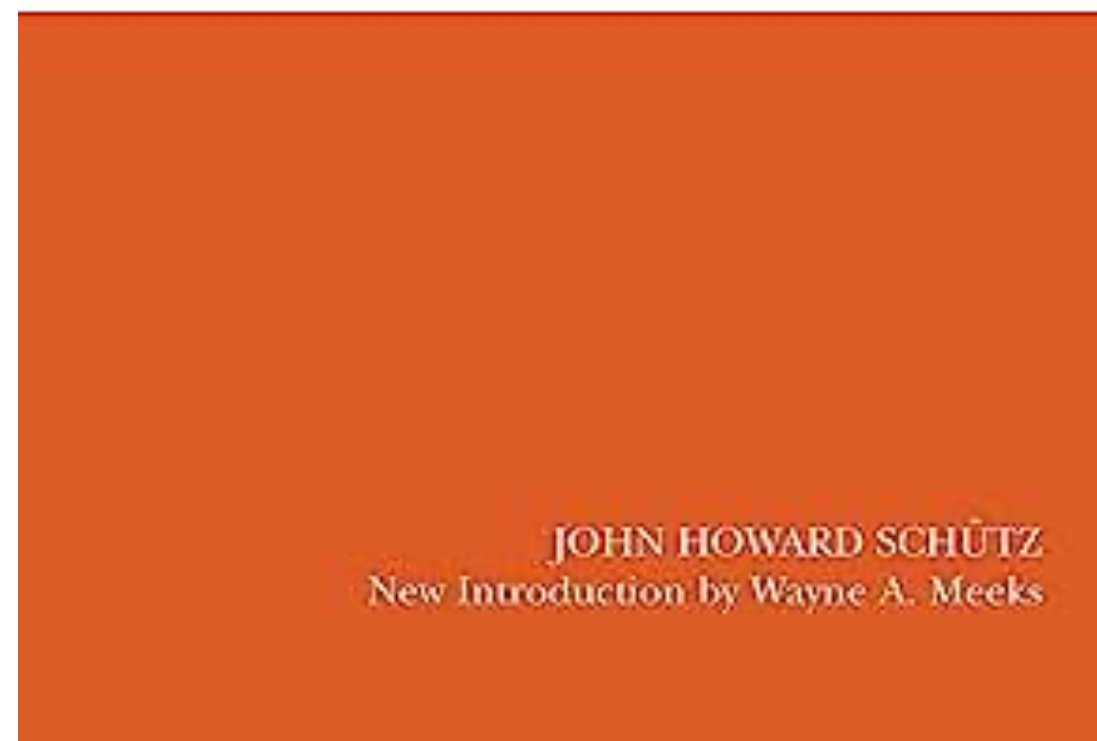
Schutz

"Precisely because the apostle is himself subordinate to the gospel, the establishment of the norm of the gospel carries with it the establishment of the authority of the apostle."

The Anatomy of Apostolic Authority



Paul and the Anatomy
of Apostolic Authority



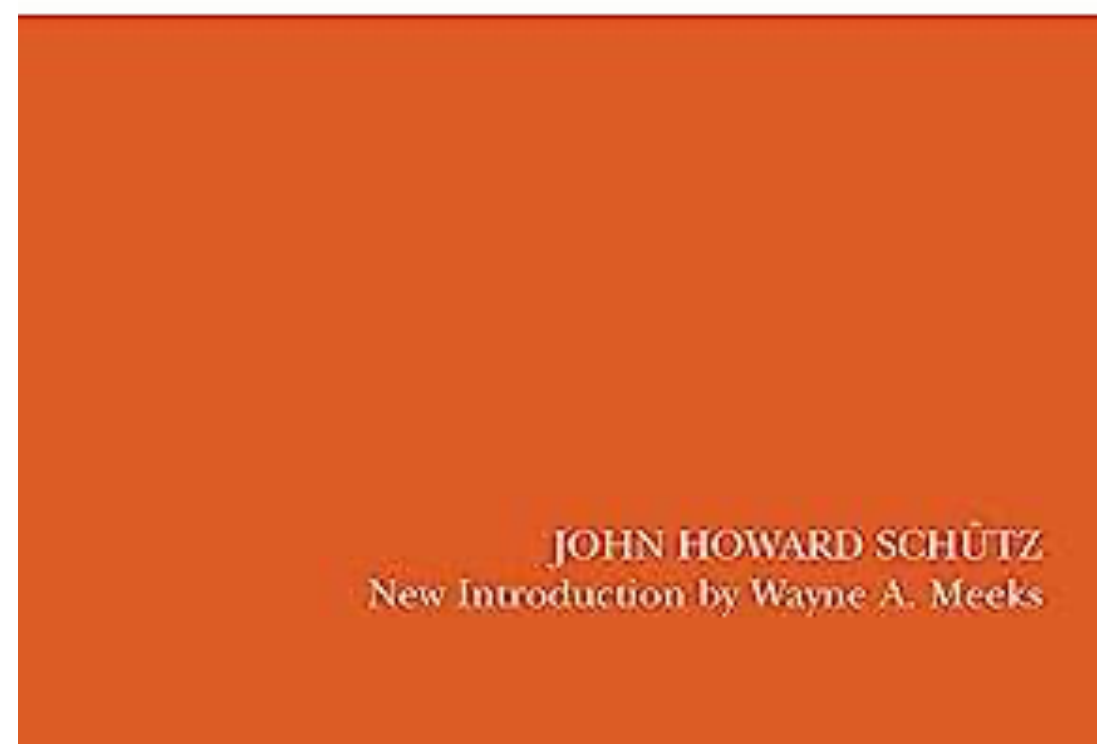
“His central point, which is the leading motif of this book, is that *authority* is best understood as the interpretation of power. That is, the *authoritative person*, in this case the apostle, calls upon the willing acceptance of his power by the followers by providing for them an interpretive framework, in the form of a master narrative or a pregnant constellation of metaphors, that makes sense of power, which they themselves may experience or have experienced. In a sense, then, the interpretive process makes that power available to them.”

W. A. Meeks, Introduction to *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority*, the Westminster John Knox Press Edition, C. C. Black, M. E. Boring, & J. T. Carroll (eds.), (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), p. xxi.

The Anatomy of Apostolic Authority



Paul and the Anatomy
of Apostolic Authority



“Precisely because the apostle is himself subordinate to the gospel, the establishment of the norm of the gospel carries with it the establishment of the authority of the apostle.” p. 161

“The gospel’s authority covers both the apostle’s original responsibility and the continuing responsibility for the community.” p. 182

The Anatomy of Apostolic Authority

Paul's self-understanding:

I came with power (2:1–5) not oratory skill.

I received authoritative tradition (15:1–6), passed on to me.

I delivered authoritative traditions (11:1, 2, 16), received from Christ, for all churches to practice.

Thus, the *apostolic traditioning of Paul* means any future, key, gifted apostolic leaders operate under the power of the apostolic traditions, not official positions and not as great orators, and that power is extended to their apostolic teams and partner, network churches.

The Anatomy of Apostolic Authority

Issue: The importance of apostolic leadership/teams today

Questions:

1. What is the importance of apostolic leadership today? Why do you think it is resurfacing at this point in history?
2. What would apostolic leadership look like today? What would be the makeup of apostolic leadership today?
3. What kind of authority does apostolic leadership carry? Is it a formal authority or of a different kind?
4. How does the idea of apostolic leadership and apostolic teams reshape our understanding of local church leaders? of the profession of pastor and missionary?