

“Where does your church get authority to act for God? Does your church perform baptisms for the dead? Does your church have a modern-day prophet leading it? When Evangelical Christians discuss religion with Latter-day Saints they are often met with a long list of questions. This tract will address **one** common question. “Does your church follow the *pattern* of the Bible and have modern-day living apostles?”

The question “Does your church follow the *pattern* of the Bible and have modern-day apostles?” is actually a loaded question. The question assumes, or even creates, a need for modern-day living apostles that the Bible does not. Advertising agencies have masterfully employed this sales technique to sell “anti-bacterial soap.” Americans have been trained by commercials to ask “is that soap anti-bacterial?” Truth-be-told, soap is already antibacterial but advertisers created a need and have sold lots of soap as a result. Is the need for twelve “modern-day living apostles” a created, or a real need?

What are some loaded assumptions in the question “Does your church follow the pattern of the New Testament and have modern-day Apostles?” Some assumptions are: 1) It assumes the Bible established a *pattern* or system of replacement for the Twelve Apostles after they died. 2) It assumes that if a church does not have the Twelve Apostles leading it, they are making it up as they go along without God’s approval. Are these assumptions true? This tract will examine this important question.

There are a handful of Bible verses that are commonly used to support the assumed need for modern-day Apostles. Acts 1:15-26; 1st Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 2:20 and Ephesians 4:11-13 are among the most common cited. The usual LDS argumentation is roughly as follows:

When Judas died the *pattern* was established for replacement, Matthias replaced him (Acts 1:15-26), therefore

we must replace Apostles. Paul said “apostles are first in the church” (1st Cor. 12:28) therefore we still need them today. The Bible says the church was built on a “foundation of apostles” (Eph. 2:20) and we still need the foundation today. Paul also said we have been given apostles “till we all come to the unity of the faith” (Eph. 4:11-13) therefore we need them today to lead and guide the Church. The LDS Church is the same church that Christ instituted while he was here on the earth. It is Christ's church and is called after him. Just as he had twelve apostles, we have twelve apostles.

Perhaps you have been up late at night and seen long infomercials selling products you though you couldn’t care less about. After watching the infomercial for 20 minutes you are amazed how you possibly existed without the special vacuum, miracle hair shampoo, or all-in-one tool that replaces all tools. How does this happen? The skilled advertisers manufacture a need in the viewer by citing statistics, experts, and testimonials. The viewer becomes convinced the need is true, but perhaps it is not. As an outside viewer, I see skilled advertising by the LDS church in creating a need for modern-day living apostles. This is done, in part, by citing parts of Bible verses. An important question must be asked: Does the Church properly use Bible verses to support the need for modern-day apostles, or does it employ skillful advertising techniques to manufacture a need that does not really exist.

What does the Bible teach?

There are at least three ways the New Testament uses the word *apostle*.

1. *Anyone “sent” out from a church.*
2. *Paul and a handful of others.*
3. *The Twelve.*

1. Anyone “Sent” out from a church: The broadest, and least restrictive, use of the word *apostle* in the Bible can be applied to anyone *sent*

out as a *messenger* from a church. The Greek words are *apostolos* and *apostoli* and are translated as *send* and *messenger* in Philippians 2:25 and 2nd Cor. 8:23. This sense of apostle could apply to an evangelist or someone who brings things from one location to another.

2. Paul and a handful of others. Paul, Timothy, Barnabas, Silvanus (Silas), James (the Lord’s brother) and perhaps some others not specifically named (See Acts 14:14; Gal. 1:19; 1st Thess. 1:1 and 2:6). These were also messengers with the biblical gospel. Some of these men even saw the resurrected Jesus and used that as evidence of their calling (1st Cor. 9:1). These men had the privileges of being missionaries, leaders in the Church, and some even wrote scripture (Paul and James).

3. The Twelve. We certainly have apostles today like in #1 and to some degree even #2. However, what we are really asking is, does the “12” need to exist today with replacement members? And do the LDS apostles meet the Biblical qualifications?

Biblical Qualifications for the “Twelve”

The men in the LDS Church claiming to be the modern-day 12 Apostles are all fairly old men. Are they old enough? The reality is, they would have to be roughly 2000 year old to meet the biblical qualifications for *The Twelve*. Frequently the replacing of Judas with Matthias in Acts 1:15-26 is cited as evidence of a Biblical *pattern* that when one of *The Twelve* dies, he is to be replaced. Fortunately, that same passage actually gives the minimum requirements, and they were fairly simple. The individual had to have accompanied the other Apostles all the time the Lord Jesus went in and out among them. This accompaniment started at the baptism of John till Jesus was taken up to heaven (Acts 1:21-22). Were any of the LDS apostles there when John the Baptist was baptizing people in the Jordan? No. Did any of the LDS



apostles watch Jesus go back into heaven? No. To meet the minimum requirements to be one of *The Twelve* you have to be 2000 years old. Even Paul did not meet these strict requirements. Paul did see the risen Jesus but he was not with them from the baptism of John until the ascension and he made a distinction between his apostleship and *The Twelve* (1st Cor. 15:5).

Notice the word *pattern* in the frequently asked question “Does your church follow the *pattern* of the Bible and have modern-day apostles?” The replacing of Judas does not establish a *pattern* at all. The text simply records that Judas was replaced, not establishing any *pattern*. Loaded questions can be very misleading.

The fact is, there is no biblical evidence the office of *The Twelve* was to be a revolving office. However, there is evidence the number was fixed with the original twelve, the only one replaced was Judas and his situation was unique. There are at least two strong evidences of this. First, the Apostle James was not replaced when he was martyred (Acts 12:1-4). There was no urgency to fill the vacancy, no council gathered to vote for his replacement. A second strong evidence is a glimpse we are given of the future new Jerusalem in Revelation 21. The New Jerusalem will have twelve foundations and we are told these foundations will have the “names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (21:14). We have the names of the twelve in the Bible, there were no replacements after Judas, nor is there a biblical *pattern* to do so.

What about 1st Cor. 12:28; Eph. 2:20 and 4:11-13?

“And God hath set some in the church, **first apostles**, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers... “ (1st Cor. 12:28)

“And are built upon the **foundation of the apostles** and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone...” (Eph. 2:20)

The basic LDS argument from these verses is “if apostles are first in the church and they are the foundation, then we must have modern-day living apostles.” This however, is a very forced, and unnecessary conclusion. Keep in mind what has already been discussed. The LDS apostles are not old enough to qualify (Acts 1:21-22). The phrases “in the church first apostles” and “foundation of the apostles” do not necessitate a pattern for modern-day twelve apostles.

Notice it says they are the “foundation.” Once a foundation is built, it never needs to be built again. Christians today do look “first” to the teachings of the apostles as they are the “foundation.” Do Christians today have twelve apostles? Yes, their names are listed in the Bible and we look forward to meeting them in heaven. Ephesians 4:11-13 says,

“And he gave some, **apostles**; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: **Till** 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:”

Does the word “till” mean we are to have modern-day living apostles as the LDS church claims to have? No. The assumption is that if we do not have *living apostles* we must simply be leading ourselves without God’s established authority, this however is just an untrue assumption. Christians today, as well as the past, refer to the apostles doctrine, laid out clearly in the Bible, we will do this “till” Jesus returns. The context in Ephesians reveals that Jesus would receive “glory in the church... throughout **all ages**” (Eph. 3:21). That means there would not be any generations that would be missing something that was required, such as 12 current apostles, if replacements were necessary.

Summary: 1) The current LDS 12 apostles are not old enough to meet the Biblical requirements. 2) There was not a pattern established to replace *The Twelve* when they died. 3) The 12 apostles were apart of the foundation of the church and it does not need to be rebuilt.

Do we need modern-day living 12 apostles? I don’t think we have exhausted the leadership of the 12 dead ones. Christians will continue to follow them “till we all come to the unity of the faith.” Come Lord Jesus Come.

More Free Downloadable Tracts
www.thenarrowschurch.org/reasonable-questions-for-lds

Contact
(435) 592-2605 thenarrowschurch@gmail.com

Reasonable Questions series

DO WE NEED LIVING APOSTLES?

by james hazelton