

# The Fracture of the Apostles' Doctrine

by David A. Huston

*As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine....*

**1 Timothy 1:3**

IMMEDIATELY AFTER PENTECOST, the apostles began teaching the doctrine they had learned directly from Jesus. This doctrine came to be called “the apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42). Later, Paul told the leaders of the church in Ephesus, “I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). The apostles’ doctrine and the whole counsel of God are one and the same. Both terms describe the entirety of the teachings that Jesus entrusted to His apostles. In those early years of the New Testament church, everyone who was taught by Paul or one of the Twelve believed the same doctrine. This resulted in a genuine unity of the faith.

It did not take long, however, for false teachers to come along teaching doctrines that were not in harmony with the apostles’ doctrine. This began a gradual fracturing of the apostolic church into various factions, which eventually led to the huge divisions we see in Christendom today. As apostolic believers, we like to think we have unity of the faith, but the truth is, we are nearly as fractured as the denominational world. And whenever any elements of the apostles’ doctrine are ignored, minimized, watered down, or otherwise not set clearly before the people, the effect is to fail to declare the whole counsel of God and to not have the apostles’ doctrine at all, which makes the unity of the faith an impossible objective.

The following list describes twenty areas of doctrine where profound disagreement exists within the modern-day apostolic movement.

**1. Bible Versions:** While all apostolic people believe that the Bible is the infallible Word of God, there is disagreement as to which English versions are acceptable for use in teaching and study.

**2. The Oneness of God:** While all apostolic people would say that they believe in the Oneness of God, there is disagreement concerning the nature of the Son’s humanity and the precise relationship between the Father and the Son.

**3. Forgiveness of Sins:** While all apostolic people would say that they believe in the Acts 2:38 plan of salvation, there is disagreement as to what is necessary to obtain forgiveness of sins.

**4. Response to the Gospel:** While all apostolic people would say that they believe Acts 2:38 is the proper response to the gospel, there is disagreement as to how a person should be instructed to respond and the relative importance of water baptism.

**5. The Gift of the Holy Spirit:** While all apostolic people would say that the gift of the Holy Spirit is available to everyone, there is disagreement as to whether or not it is essential that a person speak in tongues.

**6. Walking in the Spirit:** While all apostolic people would say that believers are expected to walk according the Spirit (as described in Romans 8), there is disagreement as to what this means in comparison to walking according to the flesh.

**7. Tithing:** While all apostolic people would agree that believers should support the work of ministry with their financial giving, there is disagreement as to whether or not the New Testament requires that all believers tithe. There is also disagreement as to who has oversight concerning how tithes are used.

**8. The Timing of the Rapture:** While all apostolic people believe in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, there is disagreement as to when this event will happen in relationship to other prophetic events.

**9. Women in Ministry:** While all apostolic people agree that women can receive the Holy Spirit and be saved, there is disagreement as to what ministries a women should be allowed to function in.

**10. Spiritual Gifts:** While all apostolic people believe that the Holy Spirit imparts spiritual gifts to believers, there is disagreement as to what gifts are available today and who should be allowed to operate these gifts.

**11. Life After Death:** While all apostolic people believe that life does not end forever at death, there is disagreement as to what happens to believers and unbelievers after they die.

**12. Law-keeping:** While all apostolic people agree that Jesus came to fulfill the law and not to destroy it, there is disagreement as to precisely what this means to believers today.

**13. Music:** While all apostolic people believe that music is an integral part of worship, there is disagreement as to what kind of music is appropriate for believers.

**14. Hair:** While all apostolic people believe that women should have long hair and men should not, there is disagreement as to how “long hair” should be defined. There is also disagreement on the appropriateness of dying and perming hair, and on men having facial hair.

**15. Make-up and Jewelry:** While all apostolic people would agree that godly men and women should be moderate and modest in their appearance, there is disagreement as to precisely what this means concerning the use of make-up and the wearing of jewelry.

**16. Clothing:** While all apostolic people would agree that godly men and women should be moderate and modest in their appearance, there is disagreement as to precisely what this means concerning the length of skirts, dresses, and pants.

**17. Media, Entertainment, and Sports:** While all apostolic people would agree that believers should avoid carnality and worldliness, there is disagreement as to precisely what this means concerning various forms of entertainment.

**18. The Plan of Salvation:** While all apostolic people believe in the Acts 2:38 plan of salvation, there is disagreement as to whether is this the only way a person can obtain eternal life.

**19. Leadership Structure:** While all apostolic people would agree that spiritual leadership is part of God's plan for caring for His people, there is disagreement as to how leadership should be structured in a local assembly.

**20. Autonomy of the Local Assembly:** While all apostolic people would agree that each local assembly has wide-ranging autonomy, there is disagreement over the degree of authority an organization or individuals from outside the assembly should have over an assembly.

*May the Lord give us genuine apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, until we all come together unto the unity of the faith.*