

The Prophets Office

Article I – Definition of the Office

The term *prophet* derives from the Greek word *prophētēs*, meaning “one who speaks forth” or “interpreter.” Prophets are called by God to serve as His mouthpiece, bringing revelation, correction, encouragement, and direction to the Church. They edify the Body by declaring the counsel of God, equipping the saints, and confirming the purposes of Christ through the Word and the Spirit (Eph. 4:11; Acts 11:27–28; Acts 13:1; 1 Cor. 14:3–5).

Prophets strengthen the Church by exhorting, comforting, and aligning believers with God’s will. Prophecy must be exercised in love, tested against Scripture, and practiced for the strengthening, encouragement, and comfort of the Church (1 Cor. 14:3, 29–32).

Patterns in the prophetic office can be seen throughout Scripture: prophets declared God’s Word publicly, traveled to strengthen churches (Acts 11:27–28; Acts 15:32), warned of dangers (Acts 21:10–11), and trained apprentices (1 Sam. 19:20; 2 Kings 4:38). These patterns show prophets as both local and itinerant ministers, discipling others while keeping Christ as the focus of all prophecy (Rev. 19:10).

Article II – Qualifications of the Office

Biblical Qualifications

- Exhibit the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23).
- Speak truth in love with integrity (Eph. 4:15).
- Discern and test spirits (1 John 4:1).
- Demonstrate obedience to God’s Word (Jer. 1:7–9).
- Willing to suffer persecution for speaking truth (Matt. 5:11–12).
- Prophesy in alignment with the Word of God, not for personal gain or imagination (Jer. 23:16; 2 Pet. 1:20–21).
- Maintain sound doctrine and avoid confusion or contradiction (1 Cor. 14:33; 2 Tim. 4:2–5).

Lifestyle & Disposition

- Maintain a life of holiness and prayer (1 Thess. 5:16–18).
- Cultivate humility, not seeking self-glory (Jer. 9:23–24).
- Able to serve in teams (Acts 13:1–2).
- Prioritize unity in the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:3).
- Exercise patience, discernment, and carefulness in delivering prophetic words (Prov. 29:20; James 1:19).
- Live above reproach in character, marriage, family life, and financial dealings (1 Tim. 3:2).

Skills & Competencies

- Train prophetic apprentices and model proper use of the prophetic office (1 Kings 19:19–21).
- Accurately communicate God’s Word (1 Cor. 14:3).
- Encourage, strengthen, and comfort the Church (1 Cor. 14:3).
- Provide discernment and spiritual guidance (Acts 21:10–11).
- Prophesy in ways that build up and not tear down (1 Cor. 14:26).
- Equip others in hearing and discerning God’s voice (1 Cor. 14:31).
- Guard the Church against deception and false teaching (Jer. 23:16–22).
- Function in prayer, intercession, and fasting as part of ministry life (Dan. 9:3–4).
- Model sensitivity to the Spirit in worship and gatherings (Acts 13:2).

Article III – Responsibilities of the Office

Prophetic leaders bear responsibility to:

- Speak forth the counsel of God in alignment with Scripture.
- Call the Church to repentance, holiness, and obedience.
- Encourage and strengthen the Body with words of edification.
- Guard the community from deception and false prophecy.
- Train and equip believers in discernment and prophetic gifts.
- Minister in prayer and intercession for the Church.
- Ensure that prophecy is delivered in humility, tested by the Church, and practiced decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:29–33).
- Provide correction when believers or churches stray from truth, with grace and restoration in mind (Jer. 1:10; Gal. 6:1).
- Confront false teachings, idolatry, and sin in the community with courage (Ezek. 3:17–19).
- Strengthen perseverance and faith among believers during trials and persecution (Acts 15:32).
- Give prophetic warnings when the Church or its leaders are in danger of compromise (Acts 21:10–12).
- Interpret visions, dreams, and symbolic language biblically (Dan. 7:1–2; Acts 10:9–16).

Article IV – Apprenticeship of the Office

- **Calling** – A prophetic leader shall discern individuals sensing a call to the prophetic office, confirmed by character and local church references.
- **Agreement** – Candidates must read and understand the *Gardens in Exile Charter* and the *Leadership Office Bylaws* before entering an apprenticeship agreement.

- **Apprenticeship** – Apprentices will be trained through teaching, lifestyle shadowing, and practical ministry experience by co-labouring. The goal is to prepare them to meet the qualifications of a prophet. Further details will be outlined in the Apprenticeship Guidelines.

Article V – Appointment of the Office

Apprenticeship Route

- Only prophets may appoint prophets.
- The mentoring prophet ensures completion of apprenticeship training.
- Candidates must agree to the Charter and Leadership Bylaws.
- The mentoring prophet ensures the apprentice has a strong theological foundation, tested by oral or written examinations in line with outcomes set by the Apostolic Council.
- The mentoring prophet submits a report to the Apostolic Council for testimony and record.
- The apprentice is appointed into the office of prophet through prayer and the laying on of hands.

Recognition Route (Existing Prophets)

- The recognizing prophet requests character references from family and church leaders regarding the candidate's suitability.
- The recognizing prophet requests ministry references regarding the candidate's experience and grace for the office, and discerns whether they meet the qualifications or should first enter an apprenticeship.
- Candidates must read, understand, and agree to the Charter and Leadership Bylaws.
- The recognizing prophet ensures the candidate has a strong theological foundation, tested by oral or written examination in line with outcomes set by the Apostolic Council.
- If approved, the recognizing prophet submits a report to the Apostolic Council for testimony and record.
- The candidate is publicly appointed through prayer and the laying on of hands.

Article VI – Finance for the Office

1. Sources of Support

Appointed prophets may receive financial support from:

- Individual supporters who partner in their ministry.
- Local churches they have planted, served, or are currently serving.

Prophets shall not charge fees or sell ministry services. Their ministry must remain fully donation-based, freely offered as an act of stewardship and obedience to Christ (Matt. 10:8).

Support must come through voluntary gifts and donations, never through commercialization of the Gospel.

2. Annual Reporting & Accountability

Prophets who raise financial support must provide an annual report to supporters and contributing churches. Reports must include:

- Donors – individuals or churches who gave financial support that year (one-time or ongoing).
- Living Salary – modest personal support.
- Ministry Expenses – travel, training, discipleship, materials, gatherings, etc.
- Retirement Savings – 10% of raised funds, in addition to salary, set aside for retirement.
- Administrative Costs – banking fees, online giving platform fees, etc.

Failure to report honestly or misrepresentation of funds will result in discipline and restoration under Apostolic oversight.

3. Bi-Vocational Expectation

Prophets must remain willing to be bi-vocational, following the biblical model of Paul (Acts 18:3; 1 Thess. 2:9). Their ministry shall not depend solely on external fundraising but be rooted in stewardship, prayer, and faithfulness to God's provision.

4. Tax Obligations

Prophets must honor the civil laws of the nations where they minister by paying taxes as required (Rom. 13:6–7; Matt. 22:21). They must not conceal or misrepresent income but act with honesty and integrity before God and man.

Article VII – Legal Matters for Prophets

Each prophet may operate as self-employed in compliance with civil law.

Article VIII – Restoration & Removal of Prophets

1. Accountability

Every prophet shall be accountable to other prophetic leaders and to the apostolic leaders who appointed them or under whose oversight they serve.

2. Restoration

Prophets may be corrected for misconduct, sexual immorality, financial dishonesty, abuse of authority, false teaching, or any action contrary to the Word of God and the *Gardens in Exile Charter and Bylaws*.

Correction shall be redemptive in nature, seeking repentance, healing, and restoration rather than condemnation (Gal. 6:1; Heb. 12:11).

Steps:

- First, prophetic leaders correct one another in love privately.
- If unresolved, the matter is brought before their apostolic overseer.

The goal is always reconciliation, spiritual health, and the honor of Christ's name. Restoration may include repentance, accountability, mentoring, or suspension from ministry.

3. Removal from Office

- No prophet may be removed solely by another prophet.
- If removal is deemed necessary, the matter must be brought before the Apostolic Overseer, who holds final authority.
- Removal must be prayerful, based on evidence and spiritual discernment, not personal grievance.
- Ministries led by a removed prophet shall be informed and reassigned to another prophetic leader.

Article IX – Amendments

- Amendments to these Bylaws may only be made by the Apostolic Council.