

TEN

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The Genius of APEPT

*There is one thing stronger than all the armies
in the world: and that is an idea whose time has come.*

—Victor Hugo

A New Kind of Leadership

In this chapter we want to explore perhaps one of the most significant aspects needed for the transition from Christendom mode to a missional mode of church; a shift to apostolic leadership. In fact, without this the missional church is unlikely to rise at all, and if it does manage to survive birth, it will not last long because it will lack the leadership structure to sustain it over the long distance. If anything, a new *type* of leadership must precede any meaningful transition to missional church. And so, in this section, we want to properly introduce the final part of our four key characteristics of the new emerging church, namely, *missional*, *incarnational*, *messianic*, and now *apostolic*. When combined with the first three in various ways, *apostolic* leadership provides an essential element for the new emerging church.

A renewed focus on leadership is absolutely essential to the renewal and growth of the church. But that begs the question, “What *kind* of leadership?” The church has got plenty of “leaders” now, but they’re not effectively impacting our culture. So it follows that we must be speaking about a very different type of leadership. This issue of the development of a new kind of leadership is possibly the single most important question of strategy in this decade, and whether the church responds correctly or not will determine to some extent its survival as a viable expression of the gospel in the years to come.¹

¹ It was with this in mind that we developed FORGE. The idea was to train and develop a distinctly new breed of leader in the *pioneering, missional* mode. Refer to chapter 12 on structure for a more comprehensive philosophy of missional-apostolic training and development.

To answer the question about what new kind of leadership is required, we turn again to the Apostle Paul and his directions in Ephesians 4:1–16:

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. . . . It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will *no longer be infants*, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will *in all things grow up* into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

We will examine some of the implications of this text by seeing it from two perspectives: theological and sociological. Before we begin to explore the text theologically, it will be helpful if we introduce our use of various terms (we direct you to the glossary at the rear of this book for further clarification). We will refer at times to the “ministry matrix” and “leadership matrix” as two dimensions of what has traditionally been called the fivefold ministry pattern found in the Ephesian text. And in order to avoid the cumbersome term “fivefold ministry,” we have substituted it with the term APEPT. APEPT simply describes the five functions in this text: *A*postle, *P*rophet, *E*vangelist, *P*astor, and *T*eacher. As the above text progresses, we perceive a shift in focus from organic and theological unity to APEPT ministry and leadership, or to what we call the mechanism of maturity. It is our intention to make a case for the rediscovery of an APEPT type of ministry and leadership in our churches.

The Theology of APEPT

When we turn our attention to Paul's words above, we begin with the assumption that the book of Ephesians is one of the *General Epistles* and that, like most of these general letters, it was circulated among the house churches in the region of Ephesus. This is important to note at this point because it means that this letter provides insights into Paul's general teaching and practice in all the

churches, not just one. This has implications for all churches everywhere, and we would add, at all times.²

Furthermore, this teaching is found in Ephesians, which is Paul’s primary tract on the nature of the church itself and the nature of the ministry of the church. Ephesians and its teaching forms part of Paul’s fundamental ecclesiology, and as such, ought to be read as a fundamental description, even a prescription, of the church in all ages.

The flow of the passage seems clear enough as the diagram below illustrates:

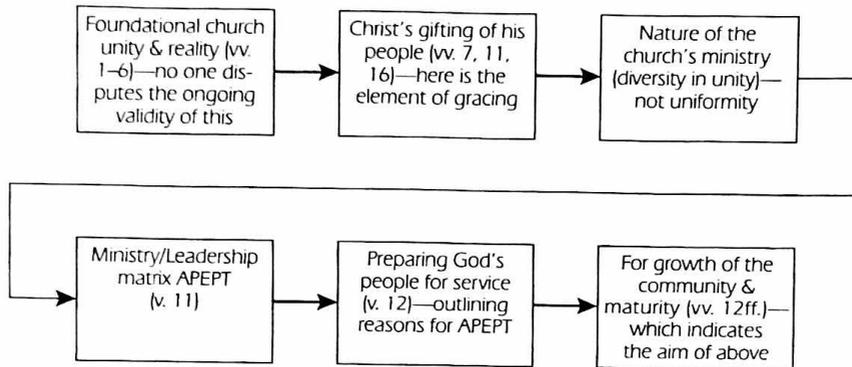


Figure 8

It begins with that timeless call to strive to maintain the essential unity of the church in spite of its complex diversities and contexts. This makes even more sense when you consider that Paul was about to commend an egalitarian community of leaders, all offering different types of leadership to the body of Christ.³ With the acceptance of diversity comes a heightened call for unity, a unity based in one Spirit, one faith, one baptism, one Lord, one God and Father of all (vv. 1–6).

Paul then goes on to speak of Christ’s act of gifting or gracing of his people for ministry.

But to each one of us [read literally as “to all Christians!”] grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. . . . It was he who gave (i.e., he distributed them in this way) some

²There is no New Testament hermeneutic principle, other than the ones based on purely ideological assumptions, that would limit the scope of this text to just the early church period.

³We prefer not use the term *egalitarian*, because it is such an Enlightenment idea that is so historically loaded. We don’t believe the New Testament posits any leadership in a simply democratic sense. It seems much more subtle than that, being more about gifting, character, and especially, calling. However, we cannot come up with a better term.

to be apostles, *some* to be prophets, *some* to be evangelists, and *some* to be pastors and teachers. (vv. 7, 11)

These verses seem to underscore the fact that the church's ministry is *fundamentally* charismatic by nature.⁴ This is important to recognize because it allows us to move away from the notion of APEPT ministry as *office* to that of *function*. Jesus' gracing of his church cannot be institutionalized into office.⁵

What we are arguing for here is a rediscovery of the fullness of Pauline teaching about Christian ministry. In effect, this will mean for many traditional-Christendom churches a full inclusion (as opposed to the historic exclusion) of the invigorating roles of apostle and prophet and evangelist in the church today. The Pauline logic that asserts the church is gathered around *one Lord/faith/baptism* is the same logic that says God has specifically and deliberately (and with purpose) placed this pattern of ministry/gifting in his church. We therefore claim that this text is grammatically, theologically, and thematically indivisible. There simply can be no other conclusion. One cannot break the text into compartments without destroying its total meaning and force. It seems that the doctrine of the church's unity and faith is therefore inextricably linked with a comprehensive understanding of the function of APEPT in the life of the church. The church and its fundamental ministry are one. In fact the mission is here *directly* related to its ministry structure.

More than this, if we read the passage as a unit, the church's inherent capacity to mature is inextricably interwoven with its capacity to foster a full-fledged APEPT-style ministry and leadership system. The connection between this APEPT and the church's maturity and mission is direct and undeniable. Listen again to Paul in verses 12 to 16:

To *prepare* God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ *may be built up* until we all *reach unity in the faith* and in the knowledge of the Son of God *and become mature, attaining to the whole measure* of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. *Instead*, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things *grow up into him* who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, *as each part* [namely, APEPT] *does its work*.

⁴Not necessarily charismatic in terms defined by the sociological phenomenon called the "charismatic movement," but mainly in terms of its theological implications; i.e., of God's enabling/empowering grace for ministry. At core, charis lies at the root of all charisma and therefore at the heart of ministry.

⁵If this is recognized, then we can avoid the unhelpful historic controversy about the unique historical function of the original twelve apostles in relation to the ongoing validity of apostolic service and ministry. Clearly, any further apostolic ministry cannot replace the fundamental eyewitness role of the original twelve. In asserting an apostolic dimension to ministry, in no way do we suggest a reinstatement of the apostolic office of the original apostles.

As we interpret this, Paul actually sees APEPT ministry as *the* very mechanism for achieving mission and ministry effectiveness and Christian maturity. He seems to be saying that without a fivefold ministry pattern we *cannot* mature. If this is true, it is impossible to estimate what terrible damage the church has done through the loss, even active suppression, of this crucial dimension of New Testament ministry and leadership. But if we take these verses at face value, then it is our contention that the impact has been significant indeed. Perhaps the fact that APEPT has not been intentionally nurtured and practiced might have something to do with the immaturity we find in the Western church that inhibits fulfillment of its mission. Verse 14 could well be a description of church history in the West—we have been tossed about, immature, infantile.

We think it is to the detriment of the mission of the church that the role of evangelist has been marginalized and made itinerant rather than localized. And we see it as even more concerning that the functions of prophet and apostle have been ignored by mainstream churches altogether. But we reiterate our belief that only when all five are operating in unity or harmony can we see effective missional engagement begin to occur. Pastors and teachers have had more than their share of responsibility in church leadership. It's time for the recovery of some sense of balance.

For clarification, we offer the following definitions of the five foundational leadership functions as mentioned in Ephesians 4. In doing so, we are not ascribing them to *any* office.

- *Apostolic function*, usually conducted translocally, pioneers new missional works and oversees their development.
- *Prophetic function* discerns the spiritual realities in a given situation and communicates them in a timely and appropriate way to further the mission of God's people.
- *Evangelistic function* communicates the gospel in such a way that people respond in faith and discipleship.
- *Pastoral function* shepherds the people of God by leading, nurturing, protecting, and caring for them.
- *Teaching function* communicates the revealed wisdom of God so that the people of God learn how to obey all that Christ has commanded them.

These functions are primary areas of ministry but are not mutually exclusive. For example, a person who teaches may lead a person to Christ; one who operates apostolically in establishing a new missional work may also function in pastoring and teaching; one who communicates the gospel may establish a new missional work or may teach the new disciple; and one who is used of God prophetically may also be used evangelistically. The point is that these are descriptions of the primary functions of people called to these spheres of mission.



All these working together result in the equipping of the saints to do the work of ministry and in the maturity of the body. The whole framework of the letter to the Ephesians expects mutual recognition of these callings and a mutual accountability for their operation.⁶ The following table is a helpful summary. It looks at each of the five ministry and leadership functions and explores each one's focus, myopia, and impact:⁷

Role	Definition	Focus	Myopia	Impact
APOSTLE	One who is sent	Urgency of tomorrow	Demands of today	EXTENSION
PROPHET	One who knows	Demands of today in the light of tomorrow	Demands of today	INTEGRATION
EVANGELIST	One who recruits	Urgency of today	Demands of today	EXPANSION
PASTOR	One who cares	Demands of today	Urgency of tomorrow	NURTURE
TEACHER	One who explains	Integration	Time	UNDERSTANDING

As you can see, we are defining some of these functions more broadly than some (particularly Pentecostal) leaders have drawn them. We would see an apostle as being someone who is moving the church into extension, church planting, crossing frontiers, and embracing significant movement beyond itself. We would see a prophet as one who knows the mind of God on issues affecting the church and who speaks into the community eliciting transformation and growth. And let us emphasize that for maximum, missional impact, APEPT functions must not merely be limited to the leadership community within the church, but must be exercised by the whole church. In other words, we want to suggest a two-dimensional reading of APEPT—one dimension that describes the *leadership system* (the leadership matrix) and the other that describes the *whole church's ministry* (the ministry matrix). Some will be called as apostles, but the whole community is to be apostolic. Some will be called to be evangelists, but the whole community is to be evangelistic. This can be diagrammatically represented as here:⁸

⁶We are thankful to our colleagues on the International Missional Team (IMT) of Churches of Christ in the following three nations: Australia, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand, for hammering out these working definitions. The IMT is an example of a strategic body that is taking APEPT seriously enough to try and work it right through the denominational system.

⁷Used with permission of Dwight Smith.

⁸For being introduced to this two dimensional reading of the text we are very thankful to the leadership team of St. John's Church in Sheffield, England, who spent significant time with a group of Aussies looking around the U.K. for manifestations of the missional church.

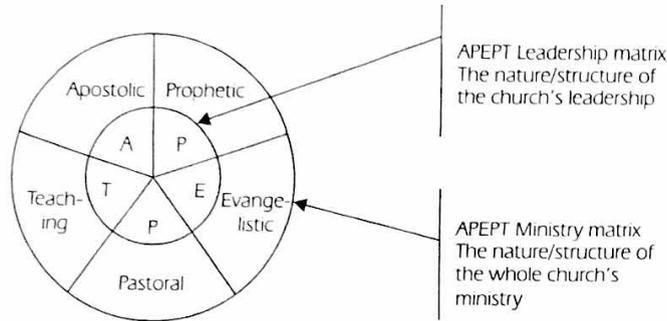


Figure 9

Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:7, “But to *each one of us* grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. . . .” And in verse 11, “It was *he who gave some* to be apostles, *some* to be prophets, *some* to be evangelists and *some* to be pastors and teachers.” And here comes the revolutionary paradigm: What we have called the ministry matrix suggests that the fivefold ministry belongs to, and describes in some way, the whole church. If we take the phrase “to *each one of us*” together with the repeated distribution formula “*he . . . gave some to be*” quite naturally, this implies that all Christians are included in some part of the fivefold APEPT structure.

Paul was not primarily describing, as is so often quoted, the official leadership of the church in this text, but rather the church itself, which we agree with. Paul didn't labor under any misconceptions of ordained ministry that is so much a part of Christendom's assumptions of “the ministry.” There are no clergy and no laity in the New Testament—all are ministers (we know we keep saying this, but it needs to continually be reinforced in the light of 1,700 years of Christendom). And so here Paul described everyone in the church in some way. In other words, if we had some way to analyze the gift-typing of the entire church, all would in some way fit somewhere into APEPT, into the fivefold nature of the church's ministry. This signifies a fresh perspective on the gifting structure implicit in the whole church. This aspect alone, if accepted and practiced, would unleash significant renewal in church life as people connect with the primary giftings.

While this might seem like a fresh reading of the text, we don't think it's so difficult to see God working its implication out in local churches. The fact is you only have to look for it. Take any average person in your church and try to place him or her into one of the five segments of the pie chart above. We know many people who are classic pioneering types, and while they are not in “the ministry,” their gifting can be seen as being clearly apostolic. Others we know are great teachers of the Bible. They seem to have an innate grasp of its ideas and the ability to communicate even though they might not have had any significant training. Some have two or more primary gifts in APEPT ministry, but might not be part of the leadership structure of the church.

This is not to say that we are disregarding Paul's instructions for elders (or leaders) within the church. We see the leadership matrix as the community within the community, made up of certain people who are called to exemplify and embody these ministries in such a way as to be an APEPT leader to the rest of the APEPT body. In other words, some leaders are classic pastoral leaders. Some are prophetic types, some apostolic types, and so on. They already had the gifting by being part of Jesus' gracing act, but then they are called beyond that to actually lead in the mode they were already gifted in. This can be seen as a "calling within the calling."⁹

As we have mentioned several times already, all Christians are ministers, but we want to emphasize that there will be no significant mission or ministry until we take that fact very seriously.¹⁰ It is important for us to recognize the brute fact that not all existing ordained ministers are necessarily leaders. Leadership is a different thing altogether from APEPT giftings. The equation that ministry capacity equals leadership capability does not compute in reality. Frankly, one can be a good minister and a terrible leader. Most people can identify someone in this category. Being a prophet might mean a person can speak from the heart of God, but put into a leadership role, such a person might well prove organizationally clumsy, even destructive. But there are some seriously prophetic leaders. Leadership is that added something that enables one to influence and get others to follow. In short, leadership must be viewed as conceptually distinct from gifting and ministry. In some people they do overlap, but not in all.¹¹

Another comment about the implications of the text is that the APEPT matrix (either leadership or ministry) does not function in isolation, but is always a functioning unity (a body) played out in multiplicity. Each role's legitimacy comes from the total system. We bemoan the current preference in churches for pastors and teachers at the exclusion of apostles, prophets, and evangelists. In fact, such a bias is a perversion of the Pauline idea—as would be true for a ministry comprised of only apostles or evangelists. This commits the missional-apostolic church to a corporate understanding of church, ministry, and leadership. The missional-apostolic church

⁹Thanks to Mike Breen of St. John's Sheffield for this phrase.

¹⁰It is worth noting here that part of the revolution of missional church, like all revolutions, will have to bring down the dominant ideological system that imposes the old system. We simply have to break the power of clericalism if we are going to see new movements start and flourish. Why? Because clericalism (the dominance of the ordained clergy class) serves to enshrine the old system and has too much to lose in the new—it will resist the change that disturbs the system that legitimizes it. Again we refer the reader to a study of movements in general. The dominant official leadership has always persecuted new movements. Witness the New Testament examples in Jesus and Paul. Witness the great missional movements and leaders in the church, the early monastics, Francis, Luther, Wesley, Booth, Martin Luther King Jr., the Pentecostals, etc. But as Jesus revolutionaries we do well to heed Jesus' old warning to his original disciples in not too different a situation than ours: "Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves."

¹¹Nouns and adjectives: Perhaps it would be more helpful to describe the APEPT nature of church in adjectival form rather than noun form. Hence *apostolic* rather than apostle, *prophetic* rather than prophet, and so on.

must operate as a body at all levels and perhaps especially at the *leadership* level because it is leaders who model ministry to others. There is no room for the loner or the one-man band in the New Testament model. We repudiate the classic hierarchical, triangular model with so-called senior pastors at the top. Biblically, it must be APEPT.

At South Melbourne Restoration Community, under the leadership and direction of team leader Debra Hirsch, the church has adopted a most invigorating restructure of the church around the two-dimensional understanding of APEPT. No longer is the church run by pastors alone but by a developing APEPT leadership team whose aim is to help all the other ministers (everyone) to find their parts in the whole and to pursue them. Much further down this path is the amazing St. John's in Sheffield. Under the leadership of Mike Breen and Paddy Mallon, the church has actually developed a way to help people discover what their APEPT gifting really is; and then they have developed a whole pathway of discipleship training and leadership development built around each gifting. The church is exploding in wonderful mission and ministry all over the place.

So much then for the clearly theological implications of Ephesians 4. We now turn to some of the sociological dimensions of the text, especially in terms of organizational theory and the implications for leadership.

The Sociology of APEPT

If we look at the church as any set of human beings and explore the impact of differing leadership styles, we discover that Paul's radical plan for the Christian movement is affirmed by the current best practice in leadership and management theory and practice. In fact, given that the theological or biblical terms employed by Paul are so historically loaded, it might help to step out of the text for a minute and look at the issue from the viewpoint of contemporary sociology. We do this, bearing in mind that historically the church has been squeamish about the roles of apostle, prophet, and evangelist.¹²

Most human leadership systems acknowledge that there may be one or more of the following leadership styles:

- The *entrepreneur* is the groundbreaker and strategist who initiates an organization's mission.
- The *questioner* disturbs the status quo and challenges an organization to move in new directions.

¹² Again, it is rather interesting to us that the argument has waged around the terms and roles of apostle, prophet, and evangelist, and not at all with the functions pastor and teacher. This is curious, isn't it? What does this say about the prevailing consciousness of the established leadership style and order? Why do they seem so frightened by these roles? Is it because such roles by nature challenge the status quo and the static institutional security of the Christendom mode?



- The *communicator/recruiter* takes the organization's message to those outside and sells it to them.
- The *humanizer* provides the organizational glue by caring for the individuals inside it.
- The *systematizer* organizes the various parts into a working unit and articulates that structure to the other members.

Various social scientists use different terms for the above categories. In most leadership management theory it is assumed that the conflicting agendas and motivations of the above leaders pull them in different directions. However, imagine a leadership system in any setting (corporate, government, political, or other) where the entrepreneurial groundbreaker and strategist dynamically interacts with the disturber of the status quo (the questioner). Imagine that both these are in active dialogue and relation with the passionate communicator/recruiter, the person who carries the message beyond organizational borders and sells the idea/s or product/s. These in turn are in constant engagement with the humanizer—the carer, the social cement—and with the systematizer and articulator of the whole. The synergy in this system would be significant in any context. Clearly the effective combination of these different leadership styles is greater than the mere sum of its parts.

This is the model proposed by Paul in Ephesians—a dynamic synergy of different giftings and motivations pulling *together* in harmony and unity for the building up of the whole. A possible sociodynamic view of the APEPT matrix can be represented as follows:

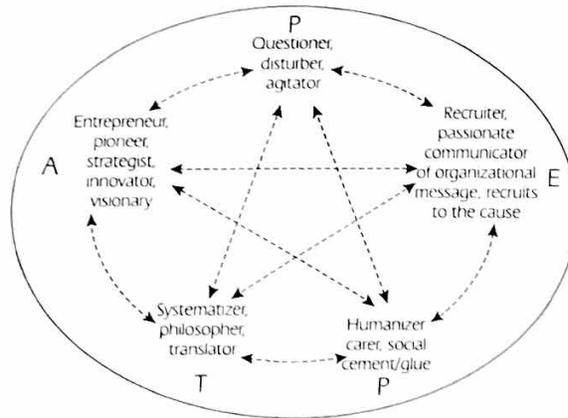


Figure 10

It is a useful exercise to take one leadership mode out of the equation (say the entrepreneur) and then ask the question “What is lost by that removal?” Write down

the possible answers. After you've done this for each type of leadership ask the question, "Is any style or leadership factor missing? Does any factor need to be added?" These exercises should highlight something of the apostolic genius and synergy of the whole APEPT system. We would see the above sociological terms correlating with Paul's model in the following way:

- The entrepreneur = the apostle
- The questioner = the prophet
- The recruiter = the evangelist
- The humanizer = the pastor
- The systematizer = the teacher

While the terminology is different, the concepts are the same. Current secular leadership theory yearns for the synergistic, creative, dynamic, interactive community proposed by Paul. Organizations are the poorer for majoring on only one or two styles of leadership. And so is the church.

The Ecology of Missional Growth

We wish to state briefly now and explore further later three primary principles for organic organizational development. They are to always create *organic, implicitly reproducible and self-sustaining* systems in whatever we do. Organic, reproducible, self-sustaining: This constitutes something of the best practices in systems theory of organizational development. But here it is locked into this ancient text long before systems theory ever "discovered" it. When we look at the APEPT system, we find that it fulfills the criteria of organic development in a remarkable way.

It is organic: In fact the Ephesians text itself is imbued with organic images (the body, ligaments, unity-diversity balance). There is a definite "ecology" at work here—an ecology and a balance we have messed with to our detriment by our excluding of the apostolic, prophetic, and evangelistic types of ministry and leadership. Another organic metaphor we can apply is DNA. A body has many different organs and systems (e.g., digestive, nervous, cardio-vascular, etc.). These systems are held together by the unique distributions laid out in the DNA. We believe that APEPT is part of the DNA of the church and ought not to be tampered with.

It is reproducible: An APEPT-led church is reproducible both in the local and regional setting (vv. 7, 11–12). The ministry matrix is inherent in the nature of the church itself and a healthy church will always be able to find people with these ministries.

It is self-sustaining and self invigorating/regenerative: When the church operates in APEPT mode, it will grow itself. In fact the text directly states that the APEPT matrix is the very cause for growth and the built-in mechanism for maturity (vv. 14–16).

But there are even more factors that make for organizational health that are built into the model. The APEPT system allows for great diversity within a context of an even deeper, underlying unity. This is the “secret formula” of all profound and creative organizational development. The deeper the theological-existential unity based “in Christ,” the greater the opportunity for a wide diversity in terms of personality, spirituality, leadership style, *and* gifting. Any missional church that embraces the APEPT model will find itself more equipped to embrace the classic ecclesiological dilemma of maintaining unity in diversity.

This Pauline model allows for what is termed in organizational structuring as “fit and split” and “contend and transcend.”¹³ The term “fit” refers to that which binds an organization together (unity). It is the group’s common ethos and purpose. “Split” is the inclination of the organizational culture to intentionally develop great diversity of expression (plurality) in relation to the fit. “Contend” is the permission, even encouragement, given by leadership to disagree, debate, and dialogue around core tasks (duality). “Transcend” is the corporate agreement everyone makes to overcome disagreement and find new answers (vitality). APEPT, well directed, can operate in a similarly invigorating way. It should rightly foster a church culture that fits and splits, that contends and transcends. This is a healthy organizational structure. Unfortunately the Christendom-era church, with its preference for hierarchical structures, favors a chain-of-command approach. Such a culture doesn’t fit and split. Decisions are made at the top end of the structure and filter down to the grass roots. There’s no interaction, no broad participation. As can be seen in many denominational structures as well as many local churches, the membership at the so-called bottom of the system often feel silenced and resentful. An APEPT model allows for the church to contend and transcend by welcoming a variety of giftings and equally recognizing all segments of the church.

It creates a learning system: The dynamic nature of the whole matrix built as it is with APEPT leadership structures will ensure that an open learning system results. The more outward-looking members (in this case A, P, & E) will ensure incoming information from outside the system and guarantee a dynamic engagement and growth with the organization’s environment.

There is a wonderful ecology at work in the APEPT system. It is a remarkably organic understanding of leadership and organization, especially for ones that wish to be missional. In fact it would be hard not to be missional if one were to intentionally develop this into the life of God’s people. It is worth noting here that Alan has been involved in a similar organizational reconstruction around

¹³Richard Tannee Pascale, *Managing on the Edge: How Successful Companies use Conflict to Stay Ahead* (London: Viking, 1990).

the APEPT idea for his denomination both at state and international levels in the form of a nonformal, very talented, trinational body called the International Missional Team (IMT). The IMT has been responsible for significant stimulation of the missional cause in his denomination in the U.K., Australia, and New Zealand, as these ideas have been employed at a strategic level. We say this to assure the reader that these ideas have been tested in practice at local, regional, and international levels; and while the full impact has not yet had time to be assessed, they are working.

APEPT and the Movements of God

Believing that the emerging missional church will likely see itself as a movement rather than as an institution, we want to make reference to the direct connection between movements, organizational life cycles, and APEPT ministry and leadership systems.¹⁴

All organizations go through what theorists call a life cycle from birth to death. And insofar as the Christian community is an organization in its strictly human dimension, it, too, goes through life cycles. This should not be surprising as it is part of the organic nature of God's people. The life cycle of a local church or denomination can be viewed as follows:



Figure 11

¹⁴We wish to acknowledge the thinking of Steve Addison, the Australian director of Christian Resource Ministries (CRM), for this material on organizational life cycles.

A classic life cycle starts with a dream and ends with closure. Along the way a group has embraced certain beliefs and developed compatible goals and structures. At the peak of the cycle the organization is involved in fulfilling its mission as first conceived by the initial dream. It isn't difficult to think of examples of churches or other organizations you've been part of in which this bell curve is or has been reality. Think of a group that had a dream to plant a church in a new suburban area of a large growing city. At the peak of the curve, they will be a dynamic, growing suburban church, full of young families and children, and offering a variety of ministries and activities. But as the demographic of the suburb shifts and teenagers move out and young families cannot afford to buy in, the curve begins to fall. Before long, churches become nostalgic about "the good old days." This is followed by questioning about "what we're doing wrong," which often leads to polarization and eventual closure. It is not an unusual scenario.

However, looking at this life cycle in terms of leadership dynamics can be quite revealing. In short, different types of leaders play different roles at the various stages of the life cycle. For example, starting an organization from scratch requires the vision of an entrepreneurial, risk-taking type of leader such as the apostle. As an organization grows, on the other hand, it needs to change; and the apostolic type, if this person exercises too great an influence, can actually hinder the organization's growth. At this stage in the organization's life, a prophet or perhaps a teacher might be better equipped to redirect the original vision or restructure the organization for maximum effectiveness. The details will differ from organization to organization, but we must recognize that certain styles of leadership tend to predominate in certain critical periods of an organization's life cycle.

Of course, a properly conceived APEPT approach is always taken as something of a fivefold *whole*. That is, such a system does not have one leadership type at a time in a kind of sequence but has all types operating all the time, both in leadership and in ministry. Keeping this in mind, it is possible to place the APEPT model on the life-cycle curve as a way of identifying which types of leaders exercise the greatest influence during various stages of an organization's life. What we see is that during the early phases of the church plant or movement, the apostolic, prophetic, and evangelistic modes of leadership will tend to predominate over the pastoral and teacher types. That is, before the church reaches the top of the bell curve and moves into a maintenance phase, the apostolic, prophetic, and evangelistic leadership types need to come to the fore. This does not mean that pastors and teachers should be absent, but they will take less of a lead than the other three. On the other hand, later in the life cycle the situation might well be reversed, as pastors and teachers take the lead in order to help the church deal with its declining numbers. The symbiotic relationship between these two groups can be diagrammatically represented as seen in the diagram on the next page.

During the initial stages of an organization's life, the culture or feel of the group might be a bit feisty and somewhat hard edged. The group's belief systems are likely to be more narrowly defined, seen in black-and-white terms, and passionately held. The softer, more humanizing edge is underplayed while the triumphalist



Figure 12

aspect is highlighted because of the typology of leadership and ministry. While this does not make for the softest landing in terms of organizational culture, it does create growth. The group is highly motivated by the organization's vision, mission, and directive purpose.

On the other hand, during the latter stages of an organization's life, the group will become more stable, though at the expense of a dynamic commitment to mission. In fact, using our APEPT model to interpret much of our current malaise, we would have to say that this is the case in the vast majority of Christian churches and agencies and in fact much of Christendom in the West.

In APEPT terms, the pastoral and teaching types of leaders have predominated over the apostolic, prophetic, and evangelistic types. We can say this with some assurance because history allows us to test this. Even the theological debate that has always raged around the issue of apostles and prophets directly indicates that the pastoral and teaching types have ejected the other types from the system. These are forced to express their innate gifting in contexts other than the established local church or denomination. They have ended up in parachurch agencies, government, business, overseas mission, and the like. We know numerous highly talented (APE type) people who felt a call to ministry and were told that they had no future in ordained, local church ministry. This again highlights the sheer tragedy for the church in the loss of an APEPT system. We need to reiterate our belief that our current decline and malaise is directly linked to this loss of missional-apostolic leadership.

¹⁵This diagram is adapted from L. M. Miller, *Barbarians to Bureaucrats: Corporate Life Cycle Strategies* (New York: C. N. Potter, 1989).

The fact is that we need the whole system. Whenever a nation's early pioneers set out to conquer and subdue the wilderness, they faced significant odds. The establishment of rural societies across the American Midwest is a case in point. It took a strong pioneering spirit to do it. But once the land had been opened up, it needed settlers to come along and build towns and establish the infrastructure. Pioneers find new ground, and settlers build on it. Without the pioneers there would be no place to settle, and without the settlers the pioneers would never see their work bear fruit.

The APEPT system can also be likened to a motor vehicle. There are at least two pedals on the floor of the vehicle—an accelerator and brakes. You need both to drive effectively. Just so, healthy leadership needs both accelerator- and brake-type people. Not to put too fine a point on it, APE-leadership types tend to be accelerators or pioneers and PT types are brakes or settlers. We need all operating effectively for a more missional and holistic model of leadership to emerge.

Just Like the Geese

We began this chapter by indicating that a missional-apostolic church will only flourish under ADEPT leadership. And again we have to emphasize that we believe it will take the emergence of the pioneering-missional type of leader to accomplish this. Sadly, the Western church simply does not have enough of the apostolic, prophetic, and evangelistic leadership types at present to get the job of mission done.

As we keep saying, what the church needs is a deep-seated restructuring in order to make a place for the genuinely missional types of leaders in our churches. There are of course exceptions, but by far the majority of seminaries that we know basically produce pastoral and teacher types of people who are then sent to maintain established churches. This is not a time for more maintenance! In the West at least, maintenance is tantamount to decline, and we have effectively been in long-term decline since the Enlightenment. It *is* within our power to make a difference in this area if we will exercise strategic focus and discipline in recruiting, training, and mobilizing a full-fledged leadership and ministry matrix for our times. But such a focus will require significant will to realign our resources strategically. It will also mean a major paradigm shift in terms of organizational/denominational culture. Giving space for those disturbers of the status quo will require massive permission-giving from all levels of the established denominations, who currently give little indication that they are really willing to let that happen.

We do wholeheartedly believe that the future hope of Christianity in our respective countries is directly linked to our ability or inability to become a dynamic mission movement in our day. The church, however, cannot become a movement without the rediscovery and implementation of the ministry and leadership matrix precisely because we will lack the mechanism to grow and mature. Stated simply: The renewal of the church and its mission has a direct relation to our ability to strategically develop and nurture a full-fledged ministry and leadership matrix. We have come to the conclusion that if we fail to make significant place for APE-type leader-

ship in our time, it is unlikely that the emerging missional church will get footholds into the various Western contexts in which we are called to be faithful.

We finish this section with a re-telling of one of Søren Kierkegaard's famous geese parables and allow it to speak for itself.

Imagine what it would be like if geese could talk—then they surely would have ordered their affairs so that they too had their divine service, their worship of God. They would gather every Sunday and listen to the gander's sermon. The gander would dwell on the high destiny of geese, the high goal for which the Creator had destined them—and each time His name was mentioned the lady-geese would curtsy and the ganders would bow their heads. Their wings would carry them away to distant regions, blissful regions, where they truly belonged, for on earth they were like strangers in a foreign land.

Thus every Sunday. When the service was over the congregation would rise and the geese waddle home. And again next Sunday they would attend divine service—and go home—and that would be that. They would thrive and grow fat, become plump and tasty, and eventually they would be eaten on St. Martin's Eve—and that would be that. Yes, that would be that. For while listening to resounding sermons on Sundays, on Mondays the geese would have a lot to tell each other, among other things what happened to a goose who tried in earnest to use the wings the Creator had given it, destined for the high goal set before it; yes, what happened to it, the horrors it had to endure. The geese, among themselves, knew all about it. But of course it did not behoove them to speak of it on Sundays, for, as they said, then it would become obvious that our worship actually is a mockery of God and of ourselves.

There were also among the geese a few who began to look peaked and were losing weight. Of those the other geese said, "Well, now we certainly see where it leads, this wanting to fly in earnest. For because they constantly have this idea of flying on their minds they lose weight, don't thrive, don't enjoy God's grace like ourselves, which is why we grow plump, fat, and tasty—for God's grace makes one plump, fat, and tasty."

And again next Sunday they would go to church, and the older gander would preach about the high goal for which the Creator (here the lady-geese curtsied and the ganders bowed their heads) had destined them, the goal for which they had been given their wings.

Thus it is with the worship of God in Christianity. Man too has wings; he has imagination. It is meant to help him really to soar—but all we do is play, we let imagination entertain us in a quiet hour, in a Sunday reverie, and for the rest we stay as we were; and then on Monday we regard it as God's grace that we grow plump, fat, tasty and put on an extra layer of yellow fat, save money, acquire prestige in the world, beget many children and are successful—all this we regard as proof of God's grace. But all those who really get involved with God and who therefore—it cannot be otherwise and according to the New Testament it isn't—suffer and look worried, have trouble, toil and affliction—of those we say, "There, it is quite obvious that they don't enjoy the grace of God."

Then when someone reads this he will say, "How fine, how very fine." And that is that—then he waddles home and strives with all his might to become plump, tasty, and fat—but on Sunday the parson delivers a sermon and he listens to it—just like the geese.

THE SHAPING OF THINGS TO COME

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