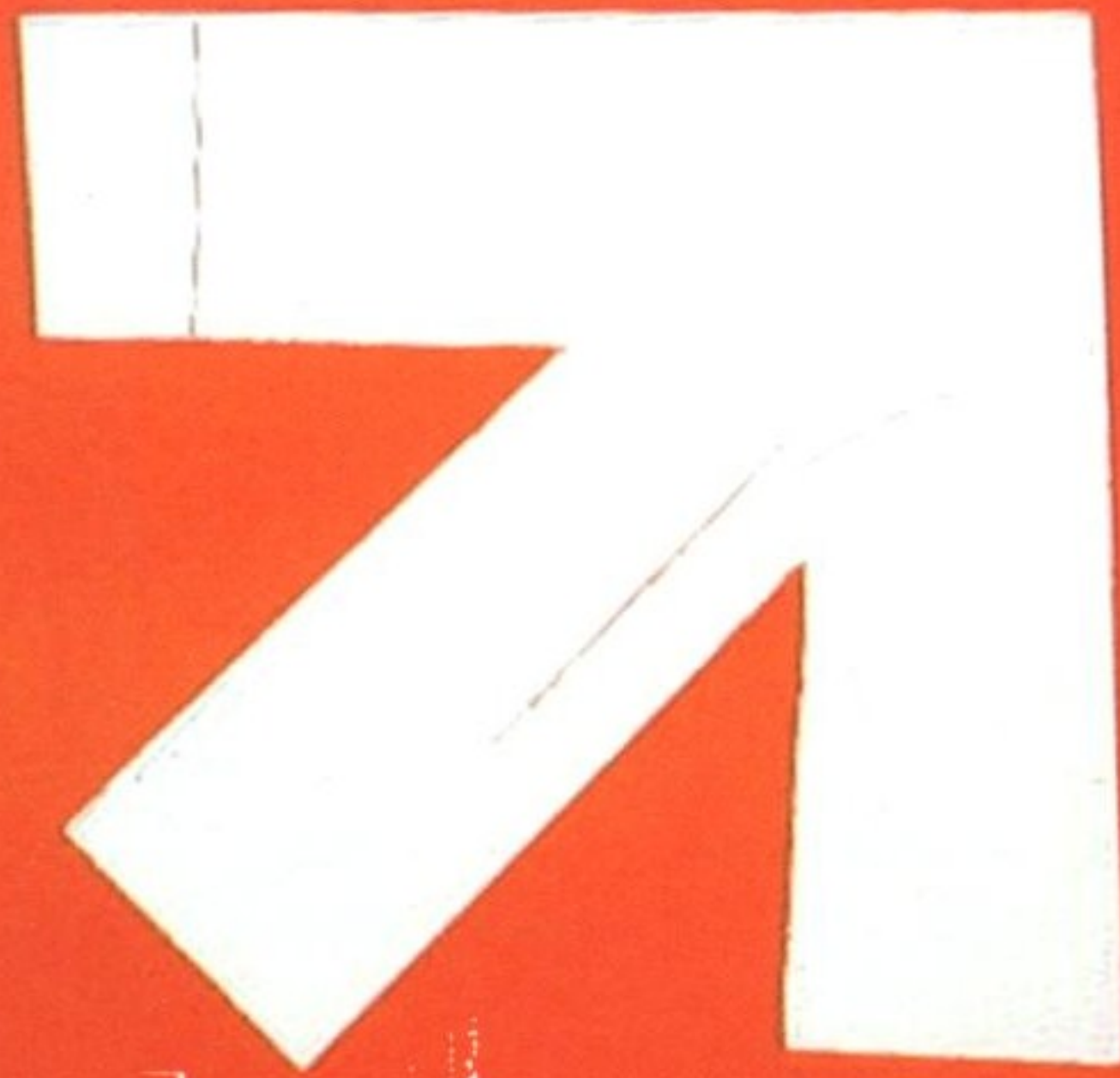
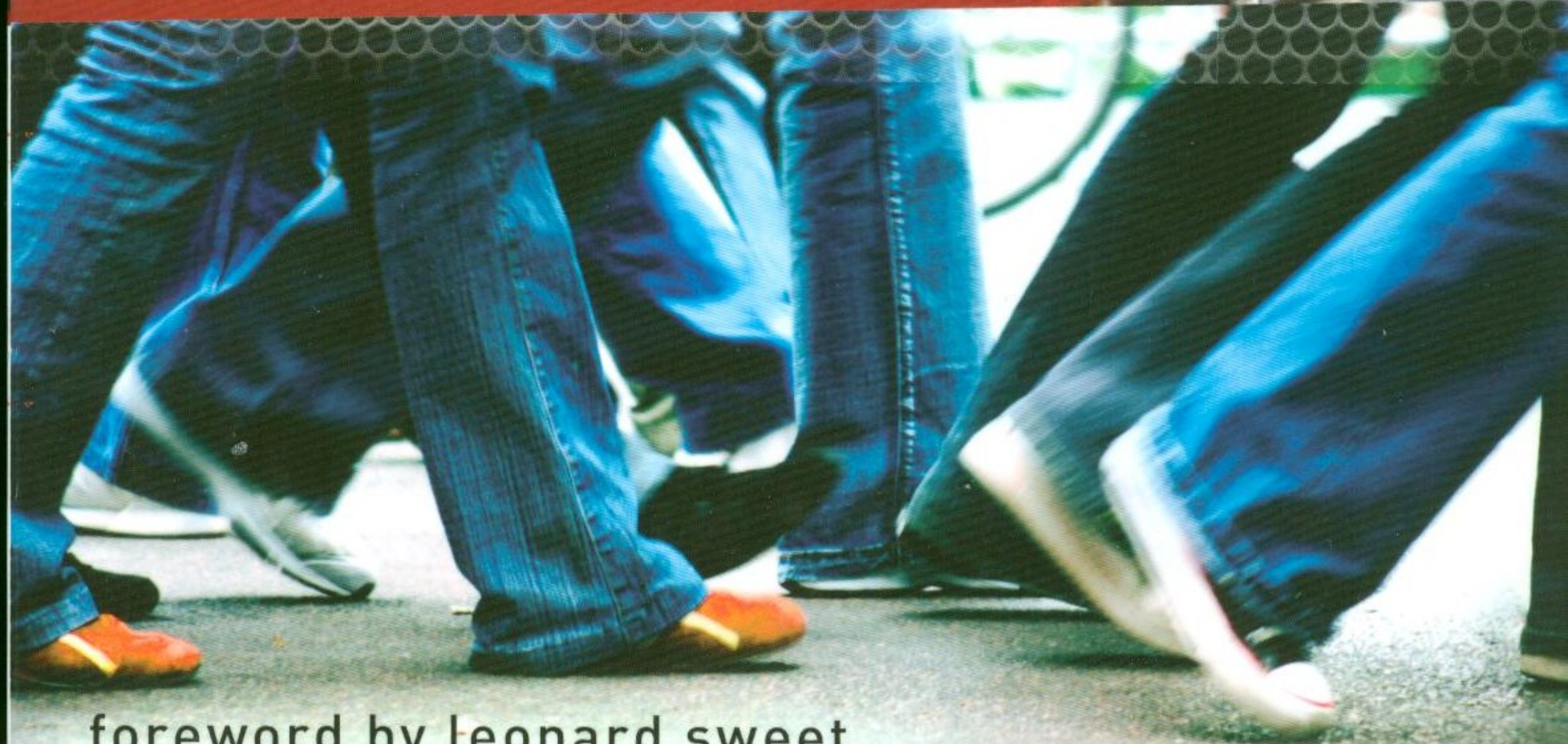


+reactivating the missional church



THE FORGOTTEN WAYS

ALAN HIRSCH



foreword by leonard sweet

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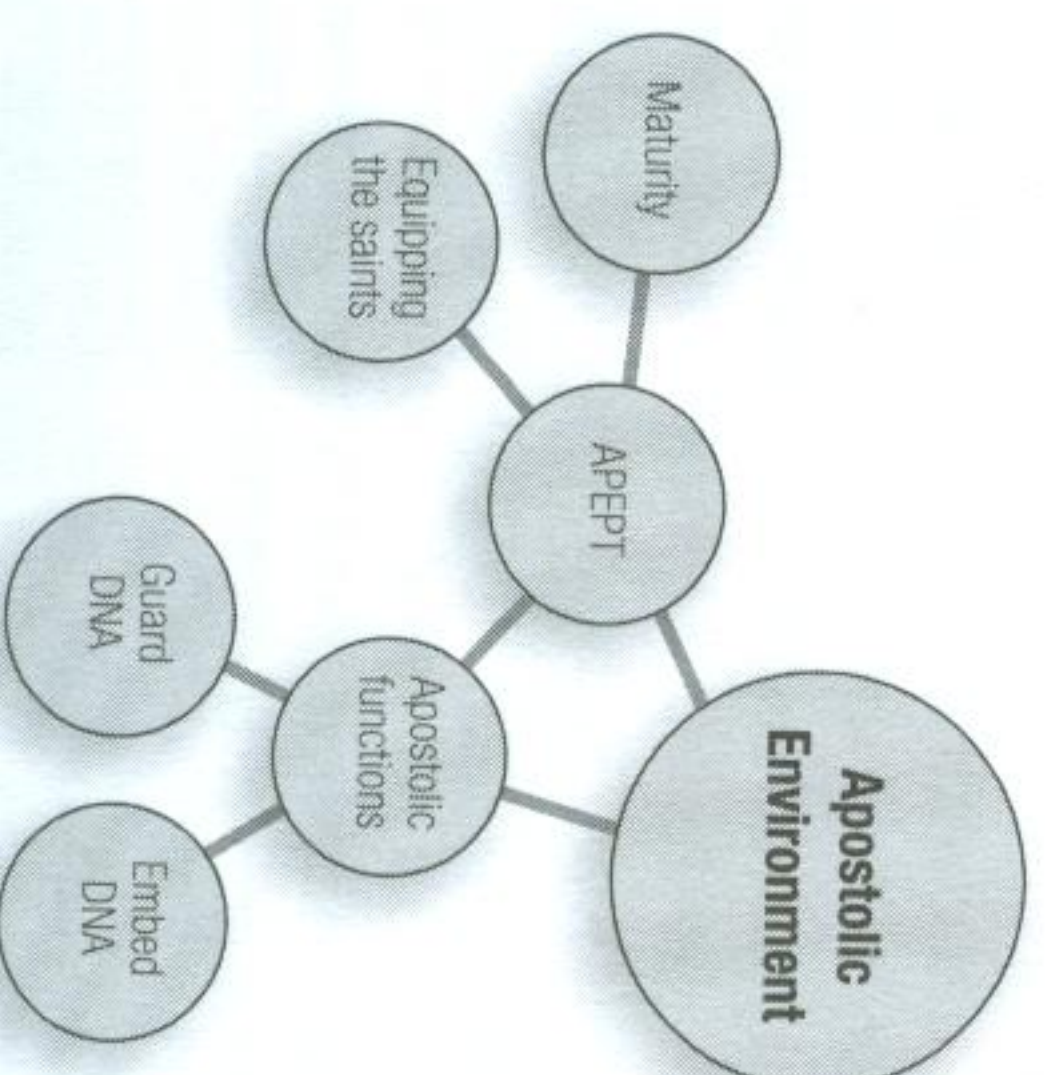
apostolic environment

Purpose and principle, clearly understood and articulated, and commonly shared, are the genetic code of any healthy organization. To the degree that you hold purpose and principles in common among you, you can dispense with command and control. People will know how to behave in accordance with them, and they'll do it in thousands of unimaginable, creative ways. The organization will become a vital, living set of beliefs.

Dee Hock, *The Birth of the Chaordic Age*

The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality.

Max DePree, in *Credibility*



Recently I was privileged to hear a remarkable leader, affectionately called "Uncle L,"¹ from the underground church in China. He was a small, bent, soft-spoken old man, who at that point was leading an underground house-church movement of three million Christians! He has no degrees but exhibits an amazing intellect imbued with a savvy, life-oriented wisdom. He has no "office" or associated titles and yet exercises a remarkable gift of leadership and calling. He has no central institution to help in the administration and control of the tens of thousands of house churches, and yet his influence and teaching are felt throughout his movement. I assume that he employed only a very few people, and yet he leads millions. He has been imprisoned and had suffered much for his faith and yet has continued in his old age to defy the state through his involvement in the underground movement. I had no doubt that in this inspiring old man I had encountered an authentic apostle. Philip Yancey reports a similar experience on a recent trip to China, where he met a bright and passionate forty-four-year-old leader called Brother Shi. As a teenager Shi headed up his province's Communist Youth League and later served as a Red Guard. When he became a Christian, he was kicked out of his home and was hunted down by the authorities. Yancey writes, "Shi must travel constantly, eluding police through narrow escapes. The house churches, recognizing his leadership skills, have promoted him so that he now supervises 260,000 Christians in his province!"² Yancey rightly says that in wonderment, given his own context in America, where megachurches are made up of 1,000 to 20,000 members but require sophisticated organizations to operate them. Peter Wenz, an apostolic leader from Stuttgart, Germany, leads a network of house churches that grew rapidly to around 250. Around 6,000 people have a weekly celebration in the city. He coaches about forty other networks as well.

The introduction of these remarkable apostolic leaders forms a good starting point for this chapter, because it takes us back to the same kind of questions that initially drove me to search for that "magical" something that seems to animate the phenomenal Jesus movements of history. The question that bugged me then, and continues to do so now, is "How did they do it?" One of the clear answers is that they didn't do it without significant leadership. But that just merely raised another question: "What kind of leadership?" We have all sorts of leadership and training resources today, yet we are in serious decline. So, what was/is the difference? It's a good question, and it deserves an equally good answer in response.

In every manifestation of Apostolic Genius there is a powerful form of catalytic influence that weaves its way through the seemingly chaotic network of churches and believers. There is no substantial word for this catalytic

social power other than, to reinvoke biblical language, *apostolic*.³ And this is not just the power of the gospel/apostolic doctrine (as powerful as that is in sustaining the faith) but also that of a certain category of leadership, namely, that of the apostolic person. I can find no situation where the church has significantly extended the mission of God, let alone where the church has achieved rapid metabolic growth, where apostolic leadership cannot be found in some form or another. In fact, the more significant the mission impact, the easier it is to discern this mode of leadership.

Apostolic leadership, as in all types of influence, is both identified and measured by the *effect* it has on the social environment in which it operates. And in these terms it is *always* present in periods of significant missional extension. Such people might not always call themselves "Apostles," but the apostolic nature and effect of their ministry and influence are undeniable.

If You Want Missional Church, Then . . .

It is worth noting again at this point that the church in the West is facing a massive adaptive challenge—positively in the form of compelling opportunity and negatively in the form of rapid, discontinuous change.⁴ These twin challenges constitute a considerable threat to Christianity, locked as it is into the prevailing Constantinian (Christendom) form of church, with all its associated institutional rigidity. Our situation is what Canadian missiologist Alan Roxburgh calls *liminality*. Liminality, in his view, is the transition from one fundamental form of the church to another, *necessitating* the apostolic role.⁵ Environments of discontinuous change require adaptive organizations and leadership.⁶ As the apostolic role is responsible and gifted for the extension of Christianity, so too the missionary situation requires a pioneering and innovative mode of leadership to help the church negotiate the new territory in which it finds itself. This is clear enough when we consider the emerging missional church, which relies heavily on an innovative pioneering spirit and is therefore fundamentally apostolic in nature. But it is equally true for established churches.

3. Opting for more technical (and descriptive) terminology rather than biblical, Garrison calls these "Strategy Coordinators." D. Garrison, *Church Planting Movements* (Midlothian, VA: WIGTake Resources, 2004), 17.

4. See appendix for development of the idea of adaptive challenge.

5. A. J. Roxburgh, *The Missionary Congregation, Leadership & Liminality* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 1997), 61.

6. This is no small task, and it requires a particular mode of leadership. An adaptive challenge requires an adaptive organization. In living systems, adaptivity is the capacity of an organism to change behavior in various environments. Applied to churches and organizations, it requires those who understand the essential mDNA of the church and gospel dynamic coupled with the know-how of how to reapply it in different contexts.

1. His name is being withheld because of the situation in China.

2. Philip Yancey, *Christianity Today*, July 2004, vol. 48, no. 7, 72.

The apostolic person's calling is essentially the extension of Christianity. As such, he or she calls the church to its essential calling and helps guide it into its destiny as a missionary people with a transformative message for the world. All other functions of the church must be qualified by its mission to extend the redemptive mission of God through its life and witness. The apostolic leader thus embodies, symbolizes, and *re-presents* the apostolic mission to the missional community. Furthermore, he or she calls forth and develops the gifts and callings of all of God's people. Without apostolic ministry the church either forgets its high calling or fails to implement it successfully. Sadly, in declining denominational systems, such people are commonly "frozen out" or exiled because they disturb the equilibrium of a system in stasis. This "loss" of the apostolic influencer accounts for one of the major reasons for mainstream denominational decline. If we really want missional church, then we must have a missional leadership system to drive it—it's that simple.

I am well aware of the various reactions that this subject can evoke. This is so partly because of the confusion between the unique role and calling of the original apostles and that of present-day *apostolic* ministry, that is, a ministry gifting that further extends and substantiates the original apostolic work but does not in any way alter it. But another reason for negative reaction has been that many who have claimed "apostleship" do it no justice and in the end discredit this vital role. Sadly, church history is littered with false apostles.⁷

The only conclusion from the research and study undergirding this book is that apostolic ministry is a distinct element of Apostolic Genius, and because of this we need to find a way to understand and re-embrace it if we want to become a genuinely missional church. Quite simply, a missional church needs missional leadership, and it is going to take more than the traditional pastor-teacher mode of leadership to pull this off.⁸ Leadership always pro-

7. If it helps us understand the issue more clearly, the New Testament apostles struggled with precisely the same problem. Much of their struggle in founding the initial Jesus movement was against the so-called false apostles of their day. But because of this, the original apostles found no reason to dismiss the apostolic function *holus bolus*. We don't see Paul renouncing his apostleship because there were false ones around. Quite the contrary, he seems to argue all the more for the validity and authority of his own apostleship over against the claims of the false ones. And by the providence of God, these Pauline texts have come to form the authoritative basis of testing the authenticity of all subsequent claims to apostolic ministries.

8. Roxburgh goes further in saying that in actual practice, a predominantly pastoral conception of the church and ministry now actually constitutes a major hindrance to the church reconceiving itself as a missional agency. He also says, in relation to the institutionalization and dominance of the pastoral function embodied in ordination, that "the guild of the ordained will have to be removed; this is one social function that will not move us through liminality." In A. J. Roxburgh, *The Missionary Congregation, Leadership, & Liminality* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 1997), 64–65.

vides a strategic point of leverage for missional change and renewal. If this is conceded, then the question of *what type of leadership* naturally follows. The natural answer is *missional* and therefore must include the idea of the *apostolic*. We simply have to get over our historical cringe in this matter if we are going to grow and mature as a missional movement (Eph. 4:11ff.). It is no mere coincidence that all the historical denominations that by and large have rejected apostolic leadership find themselves in long-term, systematic decline in every context in the West. This chapter will therefore focus on *why* apostolic ministry is needed and *why* it is an irreplaceable aspect of mDNA.

An Apostolic Job Description

Apostolic ministry is basically a function and not an office. *Office* as we normally conceive it, relates to a position in an established, centralized institution, and it gets its authority from being an "official" in an institutional structure. One simply cannot find this level of "institution" in the New Testament and in the postbiblical period. On the other hand, the New Testament church has all the hallmarks of an emergent people movement with little or no centralized structures, no "ordained" or professional ministry class, and no official "church" buildings. Besides, in the context of persecution, any latent institutional inclinations the church might have had were effectively removed by sheer external pressure beyond its control. Apostolic ministry, which was very much alive in the early church, was perceived as a gifting and a calling by God, was authenticated by a life lived consistent with the message, and was recognized by its effects on the movement and its context, namely, the extension of the mission of God and in the sustainability and health of the churches. And it was quite clearly crucial to the survival and growth of the movement. It is hard to see Christianity surviving at all without this form of influence and leadership.

Why this particular ministry is so vitally important and seemingly irreplaceable is best answered by describing the apostle as *the custodian of Apostolic Genius* and of the gospel itself. All subsequent apostolic ministry models itself on this archetypal ministry of the original, and authoritative, apostles. This is to say that he/she is the person who imparts and embeds mDNA.⁹ And once the mDNA is embedded in local communities, apostolic

9. First Corinthians 3:9–11 gives a clue to this aspect of apostolic ministry: "For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ." Apostolic ministry is about laying foundations, or, in the terminology

ministry works to ensure that the resultant churches remain true to it and that they do not mutate into something other than God intended them to be. As well as pioneering new churches, the apostolic ministry lays foundations in those that have none. The circuit riders of the American West were classic examples of this. They rode out to small towns and small population zones, preached the gospel, brought people to Christ, established churches, and then went on to the next town, only to return the following year on their circuit. The apostles of the Chinese church operated in precisely the same way.¹⁰

But the importance of apostolic ministry is not limited to new missionary movements. It has ongoing relevance for established denominations as well. In fact, it is crucial to the revitalization process. Steve Addison, consultant on mission and church growth notes that

The apostolic role within established churches and denominations requires the reinterpreting of the denomination's foundational values in the light of the demands of its mission today. The ultimate goal of these apostolic leaders is to call the denomination away from maintenance, back to mission. The apostolic denominational leader needs to be a visionary, who can outlast significant opposition from within the denominational structures and can build alliances with those who desire change. Furthermore, the strategy of the apostolic leader could involve casting vision and winning approval for a shift from maintenance to mission. In addition the leader has to encourage signs of life within the existing structures and raise up a new generation of leaders and churches from the old. The apostolic denominational leader needs to ensure the new generation is not "frozen out" by those who resist change. Finally, such a leader must restructure the denomination's institutions so that they serve mission purposes.¹¹

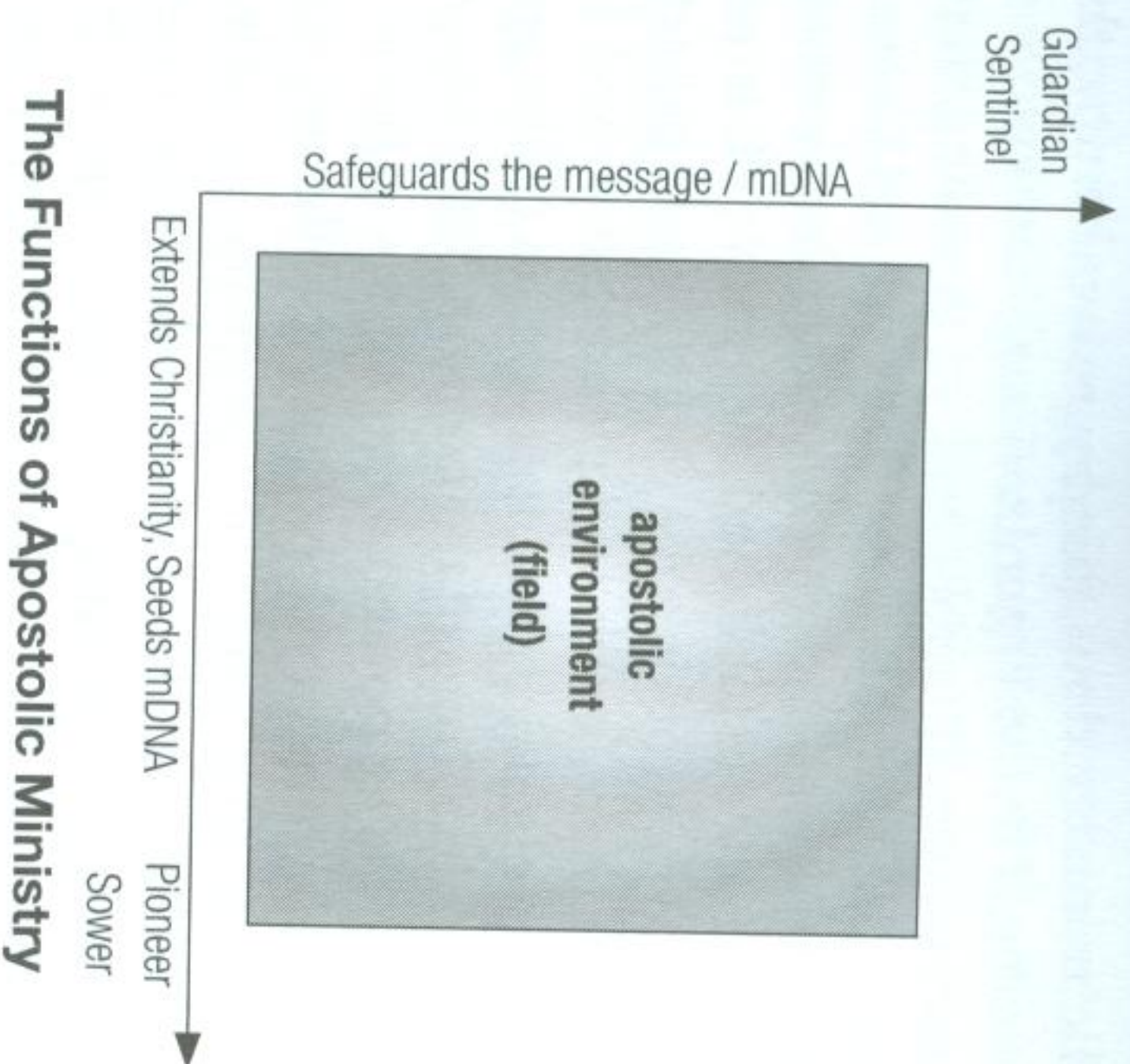
At core, the apostolic task is about the expansion of Christianity both *physically* in the form of pioneering missionary effort and church planting, as well as *theologically* through integration of apostolic doctrine into the life of the individual Christians and the communities they are part of. But more than that, as custodian of Apostolic Genius, he or she is the person who provides the personal reference point as well as the spiritual context for the other ministries of God's people.

So I want to suggest that there are three primary functions of apostolic ministry, illustrated as follows:

of this book, embedding the mDNA of the church and the gospel. The reader should also note the indissoluble link between Christology and the church.

10. Research notes by Curtis Sergeant, acknowledged as a leading expert on the Chinese phenomenon.

11. Stephen Addison, "A Basis for the Continuing Ministry of the Apostle in the Church's Mission," D.Min. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1995, 190.



The Functions of Apostolic Ministry

1. To embed mDNA through pioneering new ground for the gospel and church

As custodian (steward) of the DNA of Jesus's people, the apostle is both the messenger and the carrier of the mDNA of Christianity. As "the one who is sent,"¹² he or she advances the gospel into new missional contexts and embeds the DNA of God's people into the new churches that emerge in those places. At heart, the apostle is a pioneer, and it is this pioneering, innovative spirit that marks it as unique in relation to the other ministries. "It is of special significance that those entrusted with translocal, apostolic, leadership are pioneers. The church is called to be a dynamic movement rather than a static institution. For that reason, its leadership is to be drawn from those on the front line of the expansion of the church."¹³

2. To guard mDNA through the application and integration of apostolic theology

But for the custodian of the DNA of Christ's people, the responsibility of apostolic ministry does not end with pioneering missionary work. He or she is also mandated with the task of ensuring that the churches remain true to the gospel and its ethos. This aspect of apostolic ministry can be described as creating and maintaining the *web of meaning* that holds the movement

12. The name *apostle* means "one who is sent."

13. Addison, "Basis for the Continuing," 80.

together. Apostolic ministry does this by reawakening the people to the gospel and embedding it in the organizational framework in ways that are meaningful. It is out of this apostolic web of meaning that the movement maintains itself over the long haul. And it's critical to translocal mission. Watch what the biblical apostles do; they engage in missionary work, establish new churches, and once established they move off to new frontiers. But they also see as essential networking the churches and exhorting the disciples by traversing between them, cultivating leadership, and issuing guidance to ensure a correct apprehension and integration of the gospel message in the common and individual lives of the hearers. They are quick to weed out heresy and error—removing potential mutations in the mDNA.

All authentic apostolic ministry does this. Apostles are not just hot-headed entrepreneurs; they are also working theologians—or at least ought to be if genuinely apostolic. This impulse to ensure doctrinal integrity is therefore another key characteristic of apostolic ministry, and without it we would not be here today, as it forms the basis of the Christian faith. While acknowledging that the unique teaching authority of “the twelve” was foundational and authoritative and constitutes the base theology of the church, apostolic ministry throughout the ages has both these elements in it. Witness the ministry of Patrick, John Wesley, Ignatius of Loyola, John Wimber, William Booth, William Carey, and the countless unnamed apostles of the Chinese underground church, for example, and you will see this dual element of pioneer missionary and working theologian.

In light of these comments, we can see how Bishop John Shelby Spong,¹⁴ and his particular brand of DIY/designer Christianity, is somewhat of a danger to us today. I am not just trying to be needlessly provocative here—this is a real live issue for us. Designer Christianity is a form of diluted, consumerist, and syncretized faith that, in my opinion, has in the context of postmodern pluralism and relativism become a genuine threat to the church in the West *precisely* because it distances us from the real vigor of our original and primary message.¹⁵ In many ways it has always been one of the major functions

14. For those unaware of Spong and his teaching, essentially he is the best-known heretic of our day. Not only is he a syncretistic universalist in the extreme, but he proposes that we abandon any notion of a theistic, interventionist God. The net effect is to use the language of Christianity but to bleach it of its content. He is very popular in the Western media. See *his Here I Stand* (San Francisco: Harper/San Francisco, 2000) and *A New Christianity for a New World: Why Traditional Faith Is Dying and How a New Faith Is Being Born* (San Francisco: Harper/San Francisco, 2001).

15. In fact this theological temptation poses one of the most potent threats to the EMC, hence my vehemence. As a late-twentieth-century, early-twenty-first-century phenomenon, the EMC is very susceptible to the postmodern blend of religious pluralism and philosophical relativism. This makes it very hard to stand for issues of truth in the public sphere. Claims of truth are thus pushed into the sphere of private opinion. This creates massive pressure to deny the uniqueness of Christ and his work in our behalf. I have seen many emerging churches suc-

of apostolic ministry to keep the gospel uncontaminated and so preserve its saving God-power for future generations (Rom. 1:16). This is just one of the reasons why such ministry is so vital today. There is no doubt in my mind as to how Paul would handle “Spongianism”; he would see it as a direct assault on the DNA of the gospel and therefore the church.

3. To create the environment in which the other ministries emerge

Ever wondered why, in all the lists of ministries, that of apostle is always explicitly listed first? And why it is considered the most important of the ministries (1 Cor. 12:28 ff.; Eph. 4:11)? Or why in Ephesians 2:20 Paul says that the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets?¹⁶ Not because of some hierarchical organizational conception of leadership, because such ideas of leadership did not exist in the New Testament movement (see below). Rather, it is because apostolic ministry is the foundational gift that provides both the *environment* and the *reference point* for the other ministries mentioned in scripture.

New Covenant Ministries International is a mission operating in Western contexts that bases its ministry squarely on this teaching about the foundational nature of apostolic ministry.¹⁷ They claim that they are not a denomination or grouping of churches; they see themselves simply as a group of people committed to advancing the kingdom of God through mission and networking. They view themselves as a translocal apostolic-prophetic team held together by a common purpose and friendships. But in the process of their ministry, they have planted hundreds of churches, networked with hundreds more, and are currently working in over sixty different countries. And they began only in the early eighties.

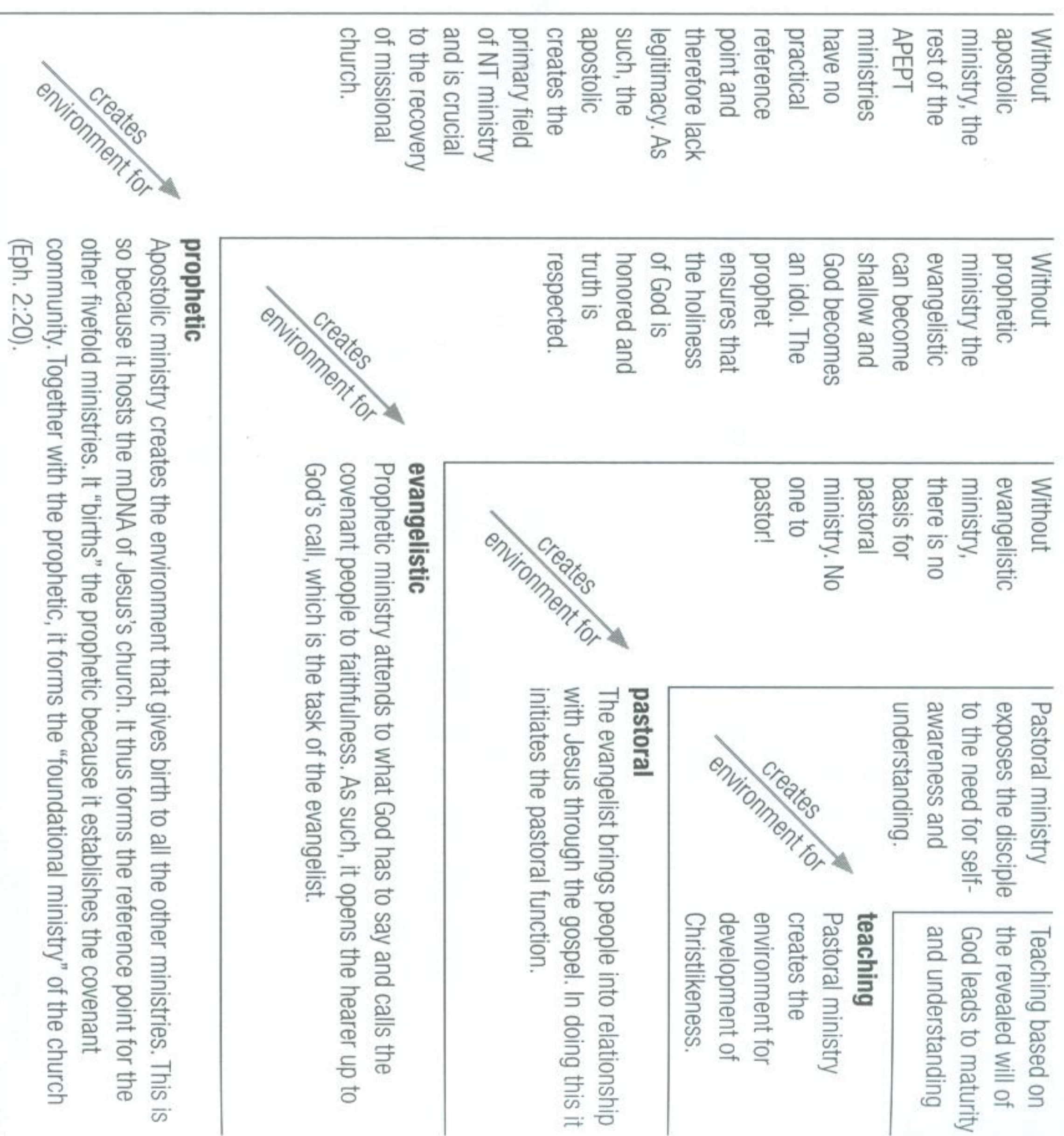
Roxburgh rightly says that apostolic ministry is “. . . foundational to all the other functions.”¹⁸ That is, it initiates the other ones—it constitutes their cumb to theological liberalism a la Spong and then die off. The adaptive challenge must drive us closer to our original message, not further away from it. This, I believe, is critical.

16. Again, I don't wish to deny the unique role of the original apostles in the founding of the apostolic church. However, I do think that this “founding” aspect can be extended, in a less binding and reflective form, to all genuine apostolic and prophetic ministries.

17. <http://www.ncmi.net/>

18. Roxburgh, *Missionary Congregation*, 62. Even the office of the bishop, the institutional replacement of the prior apostolic role, serves as a custodian of apostolicity (viewed here as inherent in the church and in the New Testament scriptures) and is viewed as “having in himself all the other ministries,” which are in turn conferred to others via ordination. See John McQuarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology* (London: SCM, 1966), 391. In instituting the bishop, Christendom took the pioneer aspect out of the equation, institutionalized apostolicity in church and office, and reshaped it in a distinctly pastoral image to suit the diocesan context, but it did keep *some* authentic aspects of the apostolic role that were useful to it. This *founding* role is one of them, and in it a true function of the apostolic can still be discerned.

foundation. From apostolic ministry, the mDNA is embedded and distributed among the various other ministries that form the fivefold ministry of Ephesians 4—what I will call APEPT (apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral, and teaching/didactic). The founding and developing of APEPT is therefore a natural extension of the custodial nature of apostolic ministry. Drawing this out, one could say that the apostolic creates the environment for the prophetic, the prophetic creates the environment for the evangelistic, and so on. Using the most comprehensive statement of ministry structure, that of Ephesians 4:7-11, it would look something like this:



If this is correct, and this is the only way we can explain why *apostle* is always listed first as the primary calling, it once again highlights why "apostolic environment" is one of the five key elements of mDNA that make up Apostolic Genius. All the five ministries are needed to engender, call forth, and sustain a full ministry in the Jesus movement. In fact, all five

ministries in dynamic relation to one another are absolutely essential to vigorous discipleship, healthy churches, and growing movements, as we shall see below.¹⁹ As such, APEPT ministries are delegated ministries born out of the apostolic task as custodian of the mDNA—the apostolic being the foundational one. And it needs to be emphasized: the leadership dynamic is that of a servant-inspirer model and not that of one who "lords it over others."

Field of Dreams

Having defined the functions/roles of the apostolic person, we can now look at how apostolic ministry exerts its influence. Part of the resistance to the reception of apostolic ministry in our churches has been that at times people who claim to be apostles have assumed that it involved a dictatorial approach to the leadership of the church. All too often, this has resulted in a disempowering of God's people, who, instead of maturing and growing in the faith, remain basically childlike and powerless, dependent on the autocratic and overwhelming paternal power of the "apostle." This is both a distortion and a misrepresentation of authentic apostolic ministry. Apostolic ministry is authenticated by suffering and empowerment, not by claims of positional leadership, with its institutional levers.²⁰

19. The health and maturity of the church are directly related to the fivefold ministry of Ephesians 4. In fact, this is exactly what Paul means when, following directly on from describing the need for APEPT ministries, he says, "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" (Eph. 4:11-16). In *The Shaping of Things to Come*, we call a fully functioning APEPT the "maturity mechanism" of the church, because without it we can't mature.

20. "No examination of Paul's missionary career can ignore the reality that his whole life was marked by suffering. On the Damascus road, his apostolic call to take the gospel to the Gentiles and to Israel, was at the same time a call to suffering. Luke records how 'the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name"' (Acts 9:15-16). Paul was both a chosen instrument and one whom the Lord would show how much he must suffer for his name. The last stage of his mission was marked by a revelation from the Spirit, that prison and hardship awaited him in every city (Acts 20:23). Suffering was so much a part of his experience that he regarded it as the badge of his apostolic authenticity." Addison devotes a whole section to the exploration of this aspect of apostolicity in his thesis, "A Basis for the Continuing Ministry of the Apostle in the Church's Mission."

In our day I believe that the predominant, top-down, CEO concept of leadership has co-opted the apostolic, so that many who claim apostolic title actually function like CEOs. In the scriptures the Suffering Servant/Jesus image—not that of the chief executive officer—informs and qualifies the apostolic role. Apostolic ministry draws its authority and power primarily from the idea of service and calling, and from moral, or spiritual, authority, and not from positional authority. Perhaps a useful way of exploring the nature of apostolic authority is to identify the distinctive form of leadership involved and see how this creates authority.

In a relationship based on “inspirational” or “moral” leadership, both leaders and followers raise each other to higher levels of motivation and morality by engaging each other on the basis of shared values, calling, and identity. They are in a relationship in which each influences the other to pursue common objectives, with the aim of inspiring followers to become leaders in their own right. In other words, influence runs both ways. Inspirational leadership ultimately becomes genuinely moral when it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leaders and led, thus having a transformational effect on both. In this view, followers are persuaded to take action without being threatened or offered material incentives, but rather by an appeal to their values. This can be clearly seen in the way Jesus develops his disciples as well as in Paul’s relationship with Timothy, Titus, and the other members of his apostolic team. It is forms the basis of his letters to the churches.²¹

Perhaps we can best call this type of influence “greatness.” To be a great leader in this sense is to inspire, to evoke, and to nurture something corresponding great out of those who follow. Through an integrated life, great leaders remind their followers of what they can become if they too base their lives on a compassionate notion of humanity framed by a higher moral vision of the world in which we live. We seldom call a leader with significant technical or managerial ability “great.” We don’t build statues to commemorate great bureaucrats, do we? And it is with understanding in mind that we can identify spiritual “greatness” as the basic substance that provides a genuine apostolic form of leadership with its authority. It is the strongest form of leadership available, because it awakens the

21. For the sake of comparison, inspirational leadership can be distinguished from what has been called “transactional leadership,” which is built largely on the direct offer of an exchange of value, which most commonly takes the form of money for work. This understanding of leadership generally infuses most non-Christian forms of leadership and necessitates a top-down management approach to staff and resources. This is by far the most common form of leadership in organizations, including most churches and denominations, whether it be the relationship between the board and the senior minister, or the senior minister and his or her ministry staff. There is a real authority established in this relationship, but it is substantially different in its basis of authority from that of the more biblical form of leadership embodied in the inspirational leader.

human spirit, focuses it, and holds it together by managing the shared meaning. As with Uncle L and Brother Shi, it has the power to hold vast movements together without much external structure. It’s the kind of leadership mythically reflected in the William Wallace character in the movie *Braveheart*: a man whom the people willingly followed, not because they ought, or because he had some official position (he didn’t), but because he reminded them of their right to freedom and would help them obtain it if it cost him his life.

This idea of “greatness” squares with Weber’s explorations on leadership: the “charismatic” leader, in Weber’s thought, is the person who usually leads in times of mission, crisis, or development and always radically challenges the established practices by going to “the roots of the matter.” People follow such a leader because they are carried away by the belief in the manifestation that authenticates him or her, and in so doing they turn away from established ways of doing things and submit to the unprecedented order that the leader proclaims. This type of leadership involves, therefore, a degree of commitment on the part of the disciples that has no parallel in the other types of established leadership.²² Once again, Jesus is our best example. The following he calls for is so absolute that it is called discipleship—the process of becoming like him.

Consistent with the people movement that it serves, apostolic ministry, based as it is on inspirational-spiritual leadership, involves an organic, relational style of leadership influence that evokes purpose, movement, and response from those who come into its orbit. This is done on the basis of the apostolic person’s discernible calling, spiritual gifting, and spiritual authority. And like all great leadership, it creates a *field of influence* wherein certain behaviors take place.

The universe in which we live is filled with fields of influence. While invisible, fields nonetheless assert a definite influence on objects within their orbit. There are gravitational fields, electromagnetic fields, quantum fields, and so forth that form part of the very structure of reality. These unseen influences affect the behavior of atoms, objects, and people. But fields don’t just exist in nature and physics; they exist in social systems as well. For example, think about the power of ideas in human affairs—a powerful idea has no substance, but one cannot doubt its influence.

In the last few decades, organizational behaviorists have begun to see that organizations themselves are laced with invisible fields, composed of culture, values, vision, and ethics. “Each of these concepts describes a quality of organizational life that can be observed in behavior yet doesn’t

22. R. Bendix, *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), ch. 10.

exist anywhere independent of those behaviors.²³ They are invisible forces that affect behavior for good or for ill. We can feel the vibe of an organization, can't we? Sometimes in a group of people, we feel obliged to behave in certain ways, even though no one has told us explicitly how to behave. To learn the impact of such fields, just look at what people are doing. They have picked up the messages, discerned what is truly valued, and shaped their behavior accordingly. So when the organizational field is filled with divergent messages, when contradictions inform the organizational culture, then invisible incongruities become visible through troubling behaviors.

What is remarkable is the entrance of true leadership into such a situation. With inspirational leadership the whole "vibe" changes: things begin to become clearer, competitiveness is diminished, and people feel freer and more empowered to do their tasks; as a result the organization gains focus and energy, becomes healthy. The converse is true and obvious: leadership of a poor quality creates unhealthy organizations. We have only to reach into our own experiences to know the truth of this. Such is the power of people who embody vision and values—they bring inspiration, coherence, and a sense of direction and purpose to the people in their orbit. Leadership is influence. It is a *field* that shapes behaviors. It is the basis of authentic spiritual power and authority. Nelson Mandela is a great leader not because he was president of South Africa, but because long before he was president, he was a deeply moral person who embodied his personal code of freedom in his own life. It is the greatness of his life that gives his leadership substance and impact.

To conceptualize leadership as influence, think of a magnet and its effect on iron filings scattered on a sheet of paper. When the filings come into the orbit of influence of the magnet, they form a certain pattern that we all recognize from our school days. Leadership does exactly the same thing—it creates a *field*, which in turn influences people in a certain way, just like the magnet's influence on the iron filings. The presence of a great leader in a group of people changes the patterning of that group. For instance, Nelson Mandela's appearance among a group of people will impact them in a significant way. His physical presence will be unmistakable and will change the social climate of the room. *Apostolic* leadership qualifies the mood of this influence, but the dynamics of influence operate in the same way.

It is precisely this field, this matrix of *apostolicity* that is critical to the emergence of authentic missional church, because it is the task of apostolic ministry to create environments wherein the apostolic imagination of God's

23. M. Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1999), 54.

people can be evoked, the spiritual gifts and ministries developed, and the love and hope inspired by the gospel be made known.²⁴ For instance, John Wimber would have exerted just this sort of influence. Within two decades, Wimber altered the shape of evangelicalism and underscored the role of the Holy Spirit in mission and ministry in a way that has changed us forever. We still feel the influence of John Wesley, even though none of us ever met him. Every Nation Churches and Ministries, a missional movement based in the United States, has a vision to plant hundreds of churches in the West. It explicitly uses both the language and the structures of apostolic ministry. One of the stated objectives is to become an apostolic church. Listen to how they describe the effect that this has on associated churches:

As the [apostolic] focus of reaching out permeates a congregation amazing things happen. God begins to bring in those who have been searching for a way to get involved in his purposes. Families begin to be energized with a sense of excitement because they realize that they can make a difference in history. The youth find a reason to not just "hang on" and try to stay true, but they begin to see the vision that keeps them from perishing.

This is the kind of atmosphere that produces miracles. The local church becomes the doorway to endless possibilities for every Believer. It also takes its place as the primary means through which the world will be reached for Christ.²⁵

Here is a description of apostolic influence on a local congregation. In their words, it creates an "atmosphere" of expectation and movement.

It is this more bottom-up, highly relational quality of leadership that characterizes true apostolic influence. We have been so captivated by hierarchical, top-down conceptions of leadership, be it that of bishops, superintendents, pastors, and CEO-type leaders, that we have inadvertently blocked the power latent in the people of God. In Australia we have an amazingly large, spreading tree called the Morton Bay fig. It is a beautiful, very imposing tree. The problem is that nothing grows underneath it, because it casts such a wide shadow. A top-down, more autocratic leadership style can be likened to the Morton Bay fig. It can be magnificent, but it casts such a shadow that no other leadership develops in its shade.

The problem with CEO-type leadership is that it tends to disempower others, and when, for various reasons, that leader should leave the group,

24. In living systems theory, this task can be defined as unleashing distributed intelligence. It assumes that the organization has latent intelligence and can, given the right conditions, respond, learn, and develop higher levels of organization and effectiveness.

25. From a strategic vision document, "The 2010 Initiative," available at http://ministries.everynation.org/web_files/The 2010 Initiative.pdf.

the organization tends to be weak and underdeveloped. This is the very thing that apostolic influence is at pains not to do—rather, apostolic ministry calls forth and develops the gifts and callings of all of God's people. It does not create reliance but develops the capacities of the whole people of God based on the dynamics of the gospel. In a word it involves *empowerment*. Jim Collins, in his study of outstanding organizations, actually says that dominant, charismatic leaders are one of the greatest hindrances to an organization moving from being good to becoming great.²⁶

Paul doesn't seem to be a charismatic leader in Collins's sense at all. He does not dominate; he is perhaps more parental (he uses images of both father and mother) in the way he works (1 Thess. 2:7ff.; Gal. 4:19). In fact, in 2 Corinthians 10:1²⁷ and elsewhere, it seems that he actually lacks charismatic "presence" and that he constantly has to affirm his leadership by other means.²⁸ In their observations about leadership dynamics, Pascale et al. also note that the impact of adaptive catalytic leadership seems to have little to do with personality, charisma, or style. They point to some leaders in large organizations who could hardly have been called charismatic but who managed to move the organization into higher levels of learning and effectiveness in terms of the stated mission. Rather, they suggest that the adaptive leader works with an organization's latent appetites, which are already present in the organization but await articulation. The leader senses the dormant energy and then catalyzes it—like seeding clouds with iodine crystals. An adaptive shift comes into existence, and not because the leader has all the answers and subsequently rolls them out through the organization. Rather, movement and adaptation take place because of the interplay of sympathetic chords in the environment, the issues of the times, the organization's members, and "a leader who can express the challenge in a way that invites others into a dance that is being choreographed as it is performed."²⁹ It might be useful to recall the impact that John Wesley had on his followers, the church, and the

26. See Jim Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap, and Others Don't* (New York: HarperBusiness, 2001).

27. Second Corinthians 10:1: "By the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am 'timid' when face to face with you, but 'bold' when away!"

28. Some at Corinth regarded Paul's trials and apparent weakness as reason to doubt his credentials as an apostle. They were more impressed with those who displayed signs of spiritual power, both through their eloquence and through the miraculous. Paul could match these wonder workers with his own share of signs, wonders, and miracles (2 Cor. 12:11–12), but he regarded his apostolic sufferings as even more important in establishing his credentials. He devotes more space to describing his sufferings than to any other sign of apostleship.

29. R. T. Pascale, M. Millmann, and L. Gioja, *Surfing the Edge of Chaos* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2000), 75. They go on to summarize, stating that the strange attractor of adaptive leadership is co-generated; strange attractors "arise through the convergence of many factors within the organization and its environment; they materialize when what is already present is expressed in a way that provides shape and substance; they flourish in an environment of adaptive challenge and tend to atrophy when subjugated under the heavy load of operational

broader society around him. He was a classic adaptive leader. Things just seemed to happen, because he awakened dreams and impulses that were already latent in the people he led and impacted.

Likewise, all the elements of Apostolic Genius are already there, latent in the very mDNA coding of the church; all that leadership needs to do is awaken it under the power of the Holy Spirit. The apostolic leader calls this forth; he or she does not create it. Don't get me wrong, there is *real* power and leadership in this, but it is of a different sort than that which the kings of the earth lord over others (Matt. 20:25–28).³⁰

In passing, it is worth noting that one important reason why we should be suspicious of the hierarchical top-down notion of leadership is that we know from history and from human nature that institutional systems confer social power and concentrate it at the top. It is precisely because of human nature that we should be very wary of such power in human hands. It almost always corrupts and damages the relational fabric that constitutes the church. Very few people can handle it and not be altered by it—perhaps only the great. History is quite clear about that. At least we should learn this from the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, where the ring of power exercises a powerfully alluring and corruptive power on those who wield it. Besides, the servant/slave image of leadership (dis)qualifies all forms of top-down leadership and establishes the bottom-up servant approach (Rom. 1:1; Titus 1:1; etc.). Jesus could not be more explicit when he says to his disciples, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves" (Luke 22:25–27). Howard Snyder is right when he says that "the New Testament does not teach hierarchy as the principle of either authority or organization in the church" and that "Jesus seems to be opposed to both the abuse of power and the hierarchical structure on which (such) power was based."³¹

But there are powerful metaphors that help us to avoid the alluring notions of top-down coercive power, ones that aid us in understanding our tasks and expectations and, they foster breakthroughs and outcomes that are unforeseen and unimaginable."

30. "Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'"

31. H. A. Snyder, *Decoding the Church: Mapping the DNA of Christ's Body* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002).

task of creating environments where missional church can arise. At Forge Mission Training Network, we like to think of ourselves as *midwives to a new dream*. Our stated mission is to “help birth and nurture the missional church in Australia and beyond.” And while this describes its own particular calling, the idea of being midwives is both a very biblical and a humane image of leadership, and I recommend it to you here as describing the actual mode of leadership that informs all authentic apostolic influence. A midwife aids and assists in the birth of a child. All that he or she makes sure of is that all the conditions are right for a healthy birth—the birth is the result of things beyond the midwife’s influence. It is interesting that Socrates called himself a midwife and that he saw his role as helping others discover the truth for themselves. This he did by the constant use of questions that drove the learner to his own insights and observations. Jesus is very “midwifery” through his use of questions, stories, and parables.

But perhaps one more image of this quality of leadership is needed to pin this concept down in our minds, and this is the image of a farmer. A good farmer creates the conditions for the growth of healthy crops by tilling the soil, replenishing it with nutrients, removing weeds, scattering the seeds, and watering the field. He or she is wide open to natural rhythms of nature, which are out of his or her control, and so the farmer is reliant on God for the sun and rain. The seed itself, if given the right conditions, will flourish in this type of environment and produce good crops. All that the farmer does is to create the right environment for this mysterious process of life to take place.

Apostolic ministry works in precisely the same way. Paul even alludes to similar organic processes in 1 Corinthians 3:5–9 when he says

What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field.

In fact, the Bible is laced with organic images that engender an “ecological view” of church and leadership (seeds, ground, yeast, body, flock, trees, etc.). If we remodeled our leadership and churches with these organic metaphors in mind, we would develop a more fertile communal life. An organic view of church is much richer because it is truer to, and more consistent with, the inner structure of life and cosmology itself.³²

32. See Fritjof Capra, *The Hidden Connections: A Science for Sustainable Living* (London: Harper-Collins, 2002), and M. Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1999), for this approach.

Creating Webs of Meaning

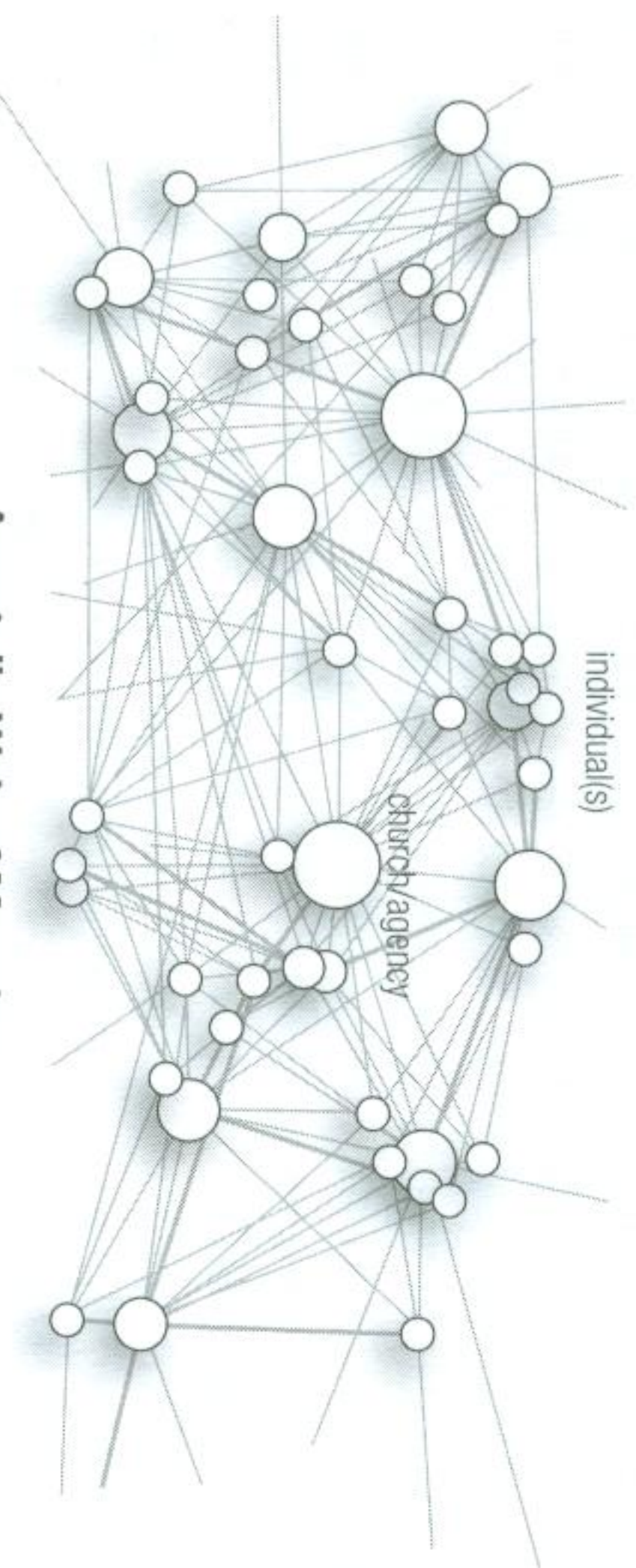
Encountering apostolic ministry of the sort found in Uncle L is actually quite a disturbing experience because it raises a disquieting question: if he didn’t have any centralized organization and the ordinary management resources we seem to need to run organizations, how did he lead a movement of 3 million people? The only conclusion we can come to is that the kind of leadership he embodied is something conferred through the strange combination of personal inspiration, spiritual power, gifting, calling, and character and through the willing love and respect of the various people and organizations within his movement. But a crucial element is that Uncle L is in a real sense the father/initiator of the movement. In other words, leadership and followership were based on a common and shared meaning and purpose held together by spiritual and personal ties, the fabric of which can extend to millions of people.

Similar influence is exercised by apostolic leaders in the West like Mike Breen. As rector and team leader of St. Thomas’s church in Sheffield, Mike led this Anglican and Baptist church as it grew to the largest church in the north of England, with more than 2,000 members, 80 percent of whom are under age forty. Mike, with his family, subsequently moved from Sheffield to Phoenix in 2004 to become the superior of The Order of Mission (TOM), founded as a worldwide covenant community of missionary leaders.³³ Established in April, TOM grew out of an understanding that “institutional forms of Christianity are hollow, boring, irrelevant and have little bearing on the real issues in the lives of most unchurched people.” Breen focused on the desire among people in their twenties and thirties to belong and to find meaning, value, and purpose. Drawing on the historic English/Roman Minster model and the Celtic pattern of mobile evangelists, Breen birthed what he describes as a global missionary order. Those desiring to join must adopt the rule of TOM, which reinterprets traditional monastic concepts of poverty, chastity, and obedience as devotion to a life of simplicity, purity, and accountability. Full vows are taken after three years and are binding for life. The structure of TOM is built squarely on the fivefold gifting of Ephesians 4, with each ministry represented by a “guardian.” Members of TOM meet in clusters and form communities of faith in cafés, pubs, schools, university campuses, and homes, wherever they settle. TOM has become a worldwide movement spanning the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe, and Australasia. What is interesting, though, is that, throughout, membership in the order remains a purely voluntary affair, and Breen himself rejects all notions of top-down leadership. He leads from a position of inspirational influence, with voluntary adherence from all the members.

33. <http://www.sttoms.net/modules/wfsection/index.php?category=45>

Another great example of apostolic movement is found in Northwood Church in Texas. Northwood is a large 2000+ member church that has birthed almost ninety churches. From the beginning, Northwood has been outwardly focused, with a clear mission to impact the world both locally and globally. As a result, more than 800 church-planting leaders have been trained, coached, or mentored through Northwood's Church Multiplication Center. There are clusters of the churches that Northwood has started in nineteen cities throughout the United States. Sixty-two new churches have been planted in the network in 2005. Bob Roberts is the exceptional leader of this movement and has written up the model in his book *Transformation*. Real apostolic stuff!³⁴

Perhaps another way of looking at how apostolic ministry exercises extensive influence without reliance on centralized forms of organization is to see it in terms of the management of meaning. If Apostolic Genius usually manifests in the form of a movement composed of networks of agencies, churches, and individuals (as we shall see in the mDNA of organic systems), it holds together through a web of meaning created by apostolic influence and environment. Apostolic leadership does this by focusing the network of relations on the meaning and implications of the gospel and on the relationships that are established through it. Each individual, church, or agency relates to the apostolic leader only *because it is meaningful for them to do so*, and not because they have to. It is because the gospel is implanted, and the Holy Spirit is present in every Christian community, that apostolic ministry and leadership are able to hold the network together. So it might look something like this:



based on discipling relationships, gospel meaning, and sharing information

Apostolic Web of Meaning

Considerable time has been spent on the dynamics of this form of leadership because of the need to emphasize that it is this aspect of leadership that informs true apostolic influence. And it is this type of leadership that creates the context for missional church to arise.

34. <http://www.northwoodchurch.org/v2/index.htm> and <http://www.glocal.net/>. See Bob Roberts, *Transformation: How Global Churches Transform Lives and the World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006).

A Stroke of (Apostolic) Genius

Missional church requires a missional ministry and leadership system. For the most part, the Christendom church obscured the need for a full-fledged missional leadership system, because the self-understanding of the church became fundamentally nonmissional. Because all citizens were deemed to be Christians, all that was really needed were the pastoral and teaching ministries to care for and teach the congregation. These were eventually instituted as offices in the church and became the principal metaphors for church leadership. The net effect is that the whole system weighted itself in favor of maintenance and pastoral care and that these became hegemonic in practice,³⁵ and therefore both fragmented and distorted the total mission and ministry of the church in favor of only part of its calling.

A direct consequence of this was that the apostolic, the prophetic, and the evangelistic ministries and leadership styles were marginalized and effectively "exiled" from the church's official ministry and leadership. This is not to say that these ministries have totally disappeared. Far from it: many within current and historical church life have exercised these ministries without specifically being tagged "apostles" or "prophets," but by and large these lacked formal legitimacy and recognition, and they have tended to be exercised outside of the context of the local church, denominational systems, and seminaries.³⁶ This "exiling" in part gave rise to the development of parachurch agencies and missional orders, each with a somewhat atomized ministry focus. For example, the Navigators arose out of a calling to evangelize and disciple people outside the church structures because the church was not effective (or interested?) in doing so. The Sojourners emerged to represent the social justice concerns that the church by and large ignores. World Vision as an aid and development agency is yet another example. But in these were generally initiated and maintained the apostolic/prophetic/evangelistic (APE)-type leadership styles. This divorce of APE from the pastoral/teaching/didactic (PTD) has been disastrous for the local church and has damaged the cause of Christ and his mission.³⁷

35. A hegemony is a form of monopolizing leadership or dominance, especially by one state, ideology, or social group over others.

36. As Addison says, "If the thesis of this paper is correct, the gift of apostle has functioned in every age of the church, at times without recognition. The gift is given by the risen Lord, regardless of the titles we use for our church leaders and regardless of denominational polity and structures. Church history is full of examples of those who have exercised an apostolic ministry without ever receiving the title or acknowledgement. Our challenge is not to reinvent apostolic ministry; it is to recognize and release those who are already functioning as apostles." The same is certainly true for all APEPT ministries. S. Addison, *A Basis for the Continuing Ministry*, 198.

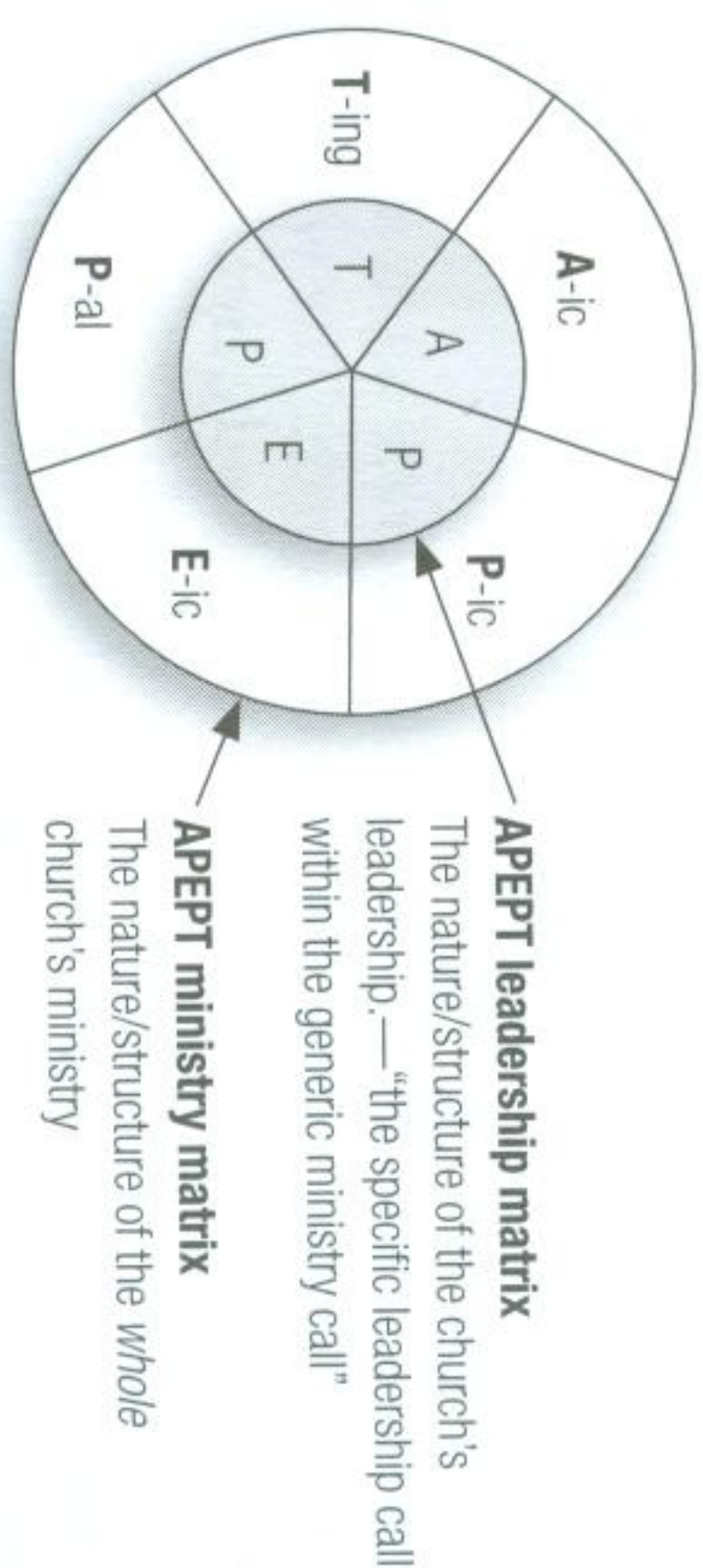
37. In chapter 10 of *The Shaping of Things to Come*, we argued the case for the recognition of these vital ministries from both a biblical-theological and a sociological-organizational perspective. I refer the reader to that book for a more thorough exploration of this topic.

To understand the different nature of each of these ministries, we need to briefly explore the core tasks/functions of each, the effect when one monopolizes and dominates in isolation from the others, and the effect when it is integrated with the other ministries. The easiest way to do this is within a comparative table.

Some Qualifications about APEPT

First, in *The Shaping of Things to Come*, we articulated that it is important to keep in mind that ministry is different from leadership by matter of degree and function.³⁸ Ephesians 4:7, 11–12 assigns the APEPT ministries to the entire church, not just to leadership (“to each one of us grace has been given,” v. 7; “It was he who gave some to be . . .,” v. 11). All are therefore to be found somewhere in APEPT (apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral, teaching/didactic). I would strongly argue that APEPT is in actual fact part of the DNA of all God’s people—in the very fabric of what it means to be “church.” In other words, it is *latent*. Recognizing this is critical to unlocking the real power of the Pauline teaching and is as such an extension of the New Testament teaching of the priesthood and ministry of all God’s people. So much for the generic ministry embodied in Paul’s ecclesiology. What of leadership?

Snyder rightly remarks that the central task of leadership is to build an apostolic, charismatically empowered, ministering community based on Ephesians 4:11–12.³⁹ Leadership in the light of APEPT can be conceived as a “calling within a calling”; it is a distinct task that entails leading and influencing the body of Christ, and not just ministering. Not all ministers are leaders—that much is obvious. As such, leadership embodies a particular APEPT ministry that is given to the believer but extends and reorients it to fit the distinct calling and tasks of leadership.



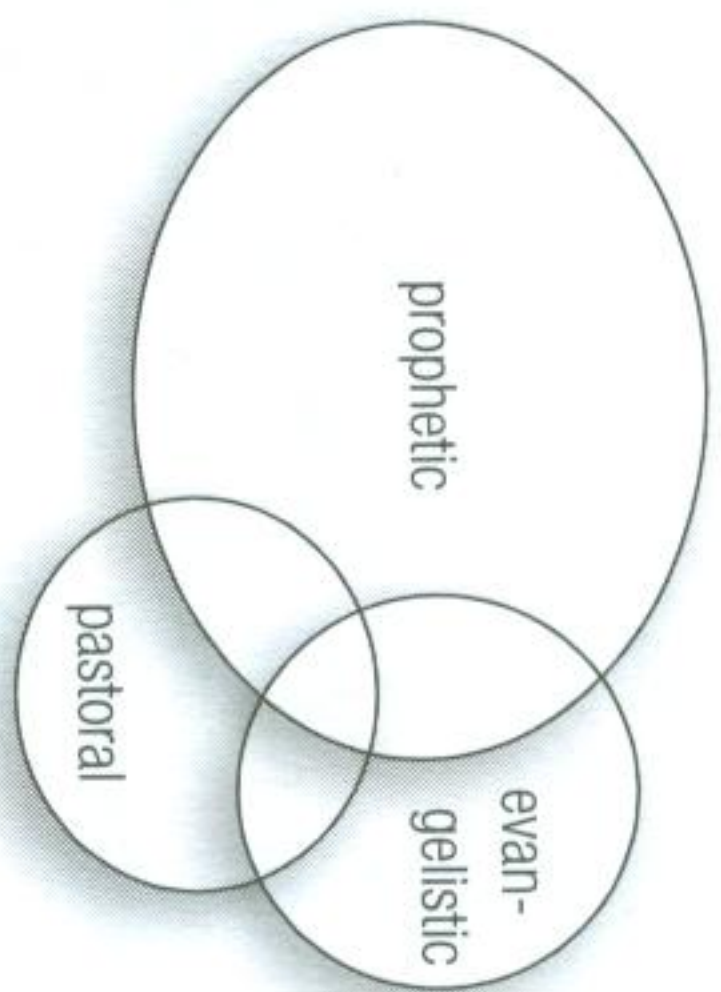
Second, in my experience, it is rare that a person has only one of these ministries in operation. Rather, our ministry callings seem to be expressed

38. Ibid., 170–73.

39. Snyder, *Decoding the Church*, 91.

	Definition	Focus/Core Tasks	Impact When in Sync with Other Ministries	Impact When Monopolizing
Apostolic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> essentially the steward of the DNA of the church as the “sent ones” apostolic ministry and leadership ensures that Christianity is faithfully transmitted from one context to another context and from one era to another era 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> extending Christianity guarding and embedding DNA of the church both theologically and missionally establishing the church in new contexts “founding” the other ministries (A→PEPT) development of leaders and leadership systems strategic missional perspective translocal networking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> healthy manifestation of Apostolic Genius extension of the faith authentic Christianity missional mode of church is fostered healthy translocal networking growth of church and movement pioneering mission experimentation with new forms of (incarnational) church manifestations of APEPT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tendency to autocratic styles of leadership lots of wounded people in the organization due to task and future orientation of the apostle lots of challenge and change, not enough healthy transition—this requires the pastoral and teaching function
Prophetic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> essentially the person who has an ear toward God, acts as the mouth of God, and therefore speaks for God—often in tension with dominant consciousness truth-teller to the believer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> discerning and communicating God’s will ensuring the obedience of the covenant community questioning the status quo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> expansion of the faith through a response to God’s personal call organic numerical growth of the people of God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> loss of overarching vision and communal health narrow perspectives on faith, limited to “simple gospel”
Evangelistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> essentially the recruiter, the carrier, and the communicator of the gospel message truth-teller to the unbeliever calls for personal response to God’s redemption in Jesus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cultivating a loving and spiritually mature network of relationships and community making disciples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> nurture into the faith and the community loving relationships growth in discipleship sense of connectedness worship and prayer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> closed, nonmissional community co-dependency between church & pastor (messiah complex) don’t rock the boat approach to organization if too “feminine” in expression, males can be alienated from the church
Pastoral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> essentially the pastor cares for and develops the people of God by leading, nurturing, protecting, and discipling them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> discernment guidance helping the faith community to explore and seek to understand the mind of God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understanding of God and the faith truth guides behavior self-awareness devotion to learning and integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> theological dogmatism Christian gnosticism (“saved” by knowledge of Bible and theology—Bible replaces Holy Spirit) intellectualism control through ideas: pharisaism (“is it lawful?”)
Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> essentially the ministry that clarifies the revealed mind/will of God so that the people of God gain wisdom and understanding 			

more as complex of ministries, though we operate primarily out of one of these, depending on our context. So we can view it this way: we can have primary, secondary, and possibly tertiary ministries all acting in a dynamic way. Each informs and qualifies the primary ministry type. These go to form a certain ministry complex, not dissimilar to personality typing (go to www.theforgottenways.org to do a personal profile of your ministry). For example, a person might be primarily prophetic but have evangelistic and pastoral dimensions as well. That can be diagrammatically represented as follows.



Third, many have asked if the Ephesians text is the definitive and final list of ministries. My answer is that it is definitive but not necessarily final. There could well be others, but these only add to the basic listing found in Ephesians 4 and must not subtract from them.⁴⁰ Perhaps the best way to say it is that the nature of the New Testament ministry is *at least fivefold*.

Fourth, how do the spiritual gifts relate to these ministries? My belief is that the ministries draw upon all the various spiritual gifts as needed and as God graces. Clearly, particular ministries draw upon a particular group of spiritual gifts. For instance, the teaching ministry clearly relies on the gift of teaching, wisdom, and other forms of revelatory gifts. The prophetic draws upon a different compound of gifts, but all are available if the situation requires them and the Spirit wills it.

Finally, APEPT is meant to be, and to operate as, a system: a system within the living system that makes up the church. The whole Ephesians 4 text is rich in organic images and perspectives (body, ligaments, head, etc.). Christian ministry is never meant to be onefold or twofold, but *fivefold*, and each leadership style is strengthened and informed by the particular contributions of the others. Let's look at this a little more closely.

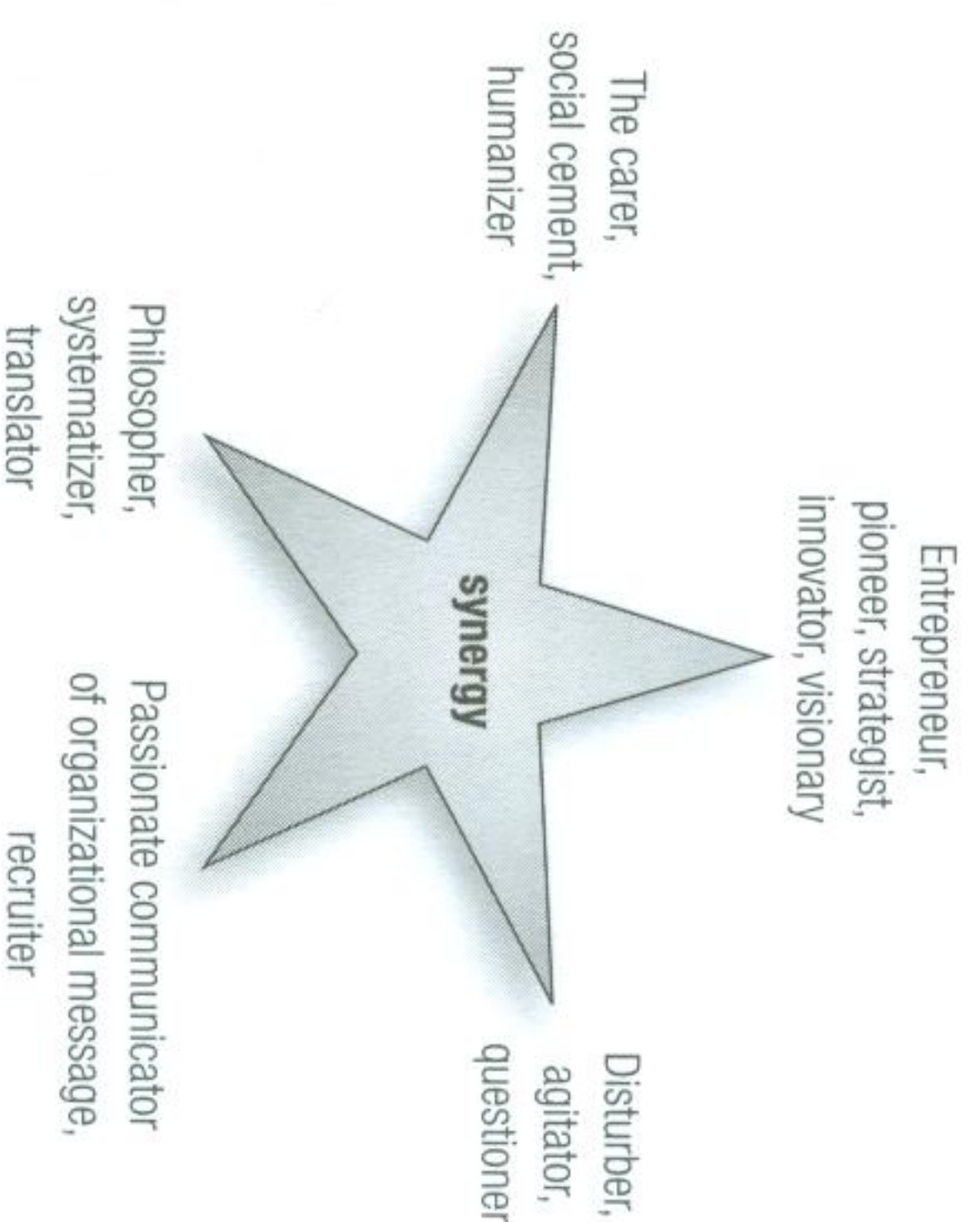
40. Clearly, there are other lists, but these are not located in passages that describe the fundamental nature and structure of the church's ministry. Also, I distinguish between spiritual gifts and ministries. The gifts as I understand them are given as the situation demands; the ministries tend to be more stable and relate to vocation and calling. However, ministries draw upon the gifts to fulfill their functions.

One Plus One Equals Three or More

Moving away from the more theological perspectives, let us take a quick look at the church as a social system to explore further the impact of differing leadership styles. When we do this, we discover that Paul's radical plan for the Christian movement is affirmed by current best practice in leadership and management theory and practice.

In most human leadership systems it is acknowledged that there may be one or more of the following leadership styles:

- The entrepreneur, innovator, and ground breaker who initiates a new product, or service, or type of organization
- The questioner or inquirer who probes awareness and fosters questioning of current programming leading to organizational learning (*agent provocateur*)
- The communicator and recruiter to the organizational cause who markets the idea or product and gains loyalty and allegiance to a brand
- The humanizer or people-oriented motivator who fosters a healthy relational system through the management of meaning
- The systematizer and philosopher who is able to clearly articulate the organizational purpose and goals in such a way as to advance corporate understanding.⁴¹



In *The Shaping of Things to Come*, Michael Frost and I comment that the

various social scientists use different terms for the above categories but recognize that these represent vital contributions that different types of leaders

41. Frost and Hirsch, *Shaping of Things to Come*, 173–74.

bring to an organization. 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, etc.) where the entrepreneurial ground breaker 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 (HR), the carer, the social cement and the systematizer and articulator of the whole. The synergy in this system would be significant in any context. Clearly the combination of these different leadership styles is greater than the sum of its parts.⁴²

Just as the various systems in the human body (e.g., the circulatory, nervous, digestive systems) work together to sustain and enhance life, so too in all living systems the various elements in the system interrelate and serve to augment each other. Dysfunction is the result of a breakdown between various components or agents within the system. When each component operates at peak and harmonizes with the other components, the whole system is enhanced and benefits from synergy—that is, where the result is greater than the sum of the individual parts. So it is with APEPT. When all are present and interrelated in an effective way, the body of Christ will operate at peak. To use Paul's terms in Ephesians 4, it "grows," "matures," "builds itself up," and "reaches unity in the faith."

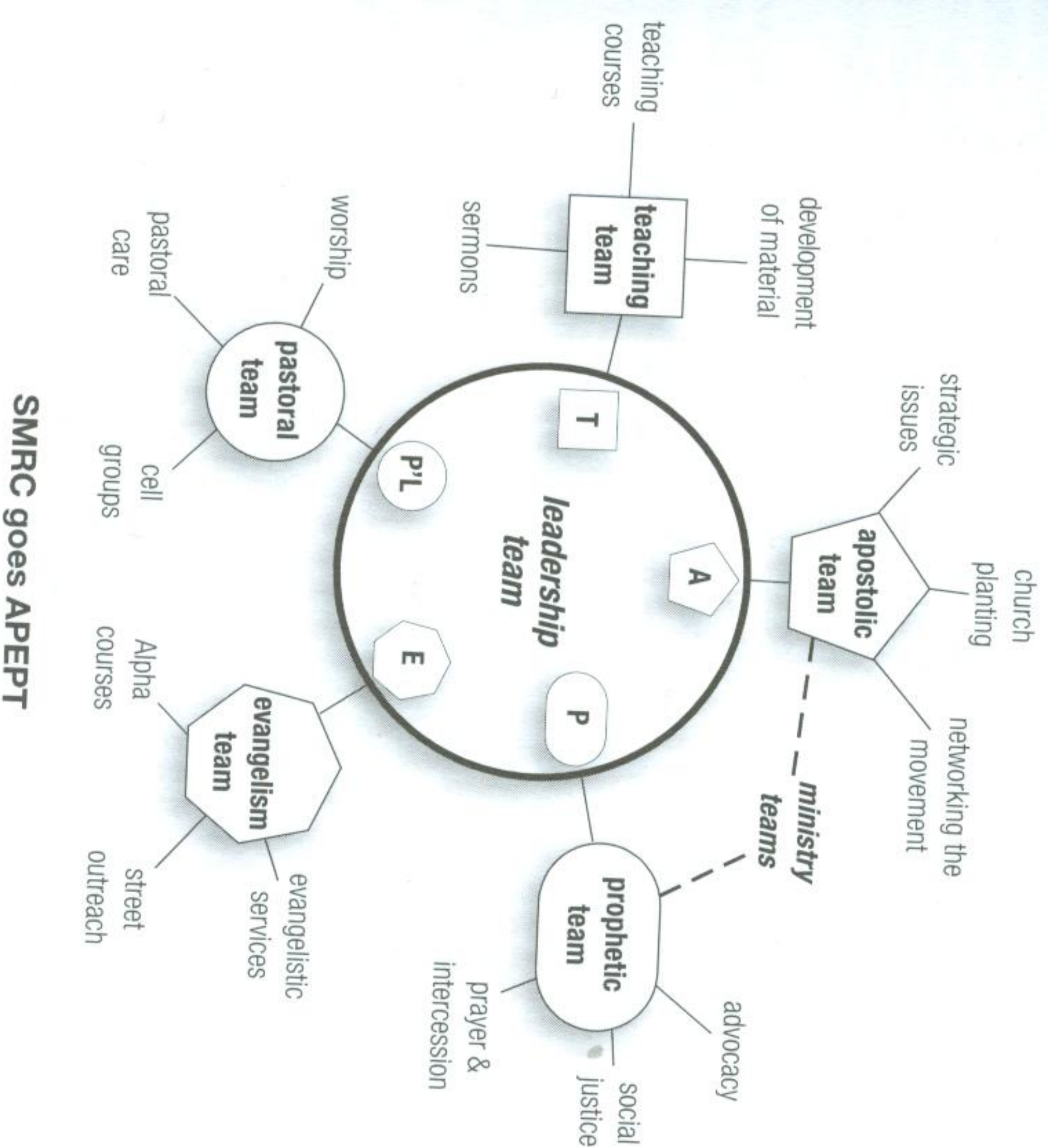
Furthermore, in living systems theory, moving an organization into adaptive organic mode requires that we (1) develop and enhance relationships, (2) cross-pollinate ideas from different specialties and departments, (3) disturb equilibrium by moving to the edge of chaos, and (4) focus information according to organizational mission. Developing a fully functioning APEPT system in a local church, mission agency, or denomination will go a long way toward achieving these ends.

Around 2000 at South Melbourne Restoration Community, we restructured our leadership team on this principle, and it led to significant movement toward being a missional church. We restructured leadership so that we could ensure that all five ministries were represented on the team, each in turn heading up a team related to the respective APEPT ministries. So we had an apostolic team that focused on the translocal, missional, strategic, and experimental issues facing the church. We had a prophetic team that focused on listening to God and discerning his will for us, paying attention to social justice issues, and questioning the status quo of an increasingly middle-class church. We had an evangelistic team whose task it was to oversee and develop evangelism and outreach. The pastoral team's task was to develop community,

42. Ibid., 174.

cell groups, worship, and counseling, and to enhance the love capacity of the church. The teaching team's task was to create contexts of learning and to develop the love of wisdom and understanding through Bible study, theological and philosophical discussion groups, etc. All were represented by a key leader on the leadership team. While at times it created significant debate on what the key issues facing the church were, it was thoroughly stimulating.

At leadership-team level, we operated this model on the idea of open learning system, which allows the team to "fit and split" and to "contend and transcend."⁴³ The term *fit* refers to that which binds an organization together (unity). It is the group's common ethos and purpose. *Split* happens when we intentionally allow for a great diversity of expression in the team (diversity). *Contend* refers to leadership permitting, even encouraging, disagreement, debate, and dialogue around core tasks (duality). *Transcend* means that all collectively agree to overcome disagreement in order to find new solutions (vitality, "reaching unity in the faith").



43. See Richard T. Pascale, *Managing on the Edge: How Successful Companies Use Conflict to Stay Ahead* (London: Viking, 1990).

So on just about any ministry issue, the leadership team would be pre-committed to the common mission of the group. We were covenanted to do “whatever it takes” to see our mission fulfilled. And given healthy relationships within the team, this meant that we allowed for the divergent opinions of each member without being offended. We had lived together, struggled together, faced issues together, and our bond to Jesus and this particular expression of his people was strong. It was this sense of fit that gave permission for each member to operate out of their own ministry biases and represent their perspectives on the issue at hand. The apostolic person would present or critique in light of the need to galvanize the community around mission. The prophetic types would challenge just about everything and ask irritating questions about how God fit into our grand schemes. The evangelist would always be trying to emphasize the need to bring people to faith and how what we suggested would achieve that. The pastoral type expressed concerns about how the community could healthily engage the issue sustainably, and the theologian would try discerning its validity from scripture and history. The split therefore allowed for significant divergence of interests, and there were many debates, even arguments. But we would not try to resolve debate and disagreement too quickly (this drove the pastoral types nuts). We would sit with the problem until we had assessed all options and had, through dialogue and debate, arrived at the best solution—an outcome that was likely to be more true to calling, more faithful to God, sensitive to the needs of the not-yet-believers, sustainable and mature, and theologically well grounded.⁴⁴

APEPT, if well led and directed, can operate in a very invigorating way indeed. Most churches seem to prefer more hierarchical structures with a chain-of-command approach and are most often led by people gifted as pastors and teachers. Such ministry types can tend to avoid conflict or focus primarily on ideas and not action. The resultant organizational culture struggles to find fit and split, contend and transcend. In the operational model, decisions are made at the top and filter down to the grass roots. There’s little room for any real interaction and participation around central tasks and ideas. As a result, in many denominational structures and churches the members at the “bottom” of the system can tend to feel silenced and resentful.

A bottom-up approach to APEPT creates a healthy learning system: the dynamic nature of the whole matrix ensures that an open learning system results from an organization built with such leadership structures. The

44. Let me encourage the reader to try to identify his or her own ministry by creating the online profile provided at the website related to this book (www.theforgottenways.org). This can be done either through filling out the simple personal questionnaire or, preferably, by doing the 360° test. Our ministries are not always defined in the same way we see them, but they are discerned through the impact that we have on others around us—hence the need for feedback from colleagues and friends. I encourage the reader to undertake the online 360° APEPT profiling test to help identify the dynamics of his or her own ministry.

more outward-looking, non-status quo types (in this case A, P, and E) will ensure incoming information from outside the system and guarantee a dynamic engagement and growth with the organization’s environment. The more sustaining ministries (like P and T) will ensure that the church is not overextended beyond its capacities. All in all it makes for a good balance of church health and missional fitness.

There seems to be a wonderful “ecology” for healthy ministry at work in a fully functioning APEPT system. It provides us with a theologically rich and organically consistent understanding to help leaders and organizations become more missional and agile. In fact it would be hard *not* to be missional if one intentionally develops this into the life of God’s people at the local and/or regional levels. I have been involved in a similar organizational reconstruction around the APEPT idea for my denomination, both at the national and at the international level in the form of an informal, very talented, tri-national body called the International Missional Team (IMT). The IMT has been responsible for significant stimulation of the missional cause in my denomination in the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand, as these ideas have been employed at a strategic level. I say this to assure the reader that these ideas are actually being tested in practice at local, regional, and international levels, and while the full impact has not yet had time to be assessed, there is no doubt that they are creating significant movement in the denominational culture.

The Final Word

This chapter has tried to articulate why the apostolic environment, with all that it means, is a key component of Apostolic Genius. Quite frankly, it is hard to conceive of metabolic, organic, missional movements existing, let alone lasting, without apostolic influence in its varying forms. This is because apostolic ministry is entrusted with the mDNA of Jesus’s church, and without this mDNA manifesting itself in its true form, Apostolic Genius cannot fully manifest. Apostolic influence awakens the church to its true calling and identity and as such is irreplaceable. At best, movements and churches without apostolic influence can only pick up aspects of mDNA; they cannot connect them in that cohesive, synergistic whole that constitutes true Apostolic Genius. This is partly the reason for calling the elemental force of the church “Apostolic Genius.” There is something essential and irreplaceable in the ministry of the apostle that is critical to the emergence of missional movements like that of the biblical and postbiblical periods and of the underground phenomenon of the Chinese church.