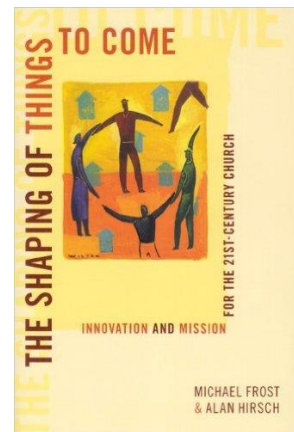


# Michael Frost & Alan Hirsch : The Shaping of Things to Come – innovation and mission for the 21<sup>st</sup>-century church

Hendrikson Publishers 2003  
Notes by Alison Morgan December 2005



Australia & New Zealand – both run seminaries / mission training networks.  
Brilliant book – visionary, provocative stuff on equipping the church for mission in the current culture. Well researched and solidly based on experience.

*We hope to reawaken the latent apostolic imagination at the heart of the biblical faith.. We are advocating a wholesale change in the way Christians are doing and being the church.. The challenging context in which we live in the West requires that we adopt a fully missional stance. While some established churches can be revitalized, success seems to be rare... We believe that the strategic focus must now shift from revitalization to mission, ie from a focus on the 'insiders' to the 'outsiders'... In our view, the church should be missional rather than institutional. The church should define itself in terms of its mission – to take the gospel to and incarnate the gospel within a specific cultural context. Xi*

## Part I : The Shape we're in

### 1. Evolution or revolution?

There's an annual festival in the Nevada desert called Burning Man – the ultimate postmodern festival, dedicated to art, environment, celebration, spirituality, with the burning of a human effigy as its climax. Thousands come. Why? A cry for belonging, spirituality, sensuality, empowerment, liberation. 'The advent of postmodernism has raised within the W many expectations for an experiential, activist form of religious, mystical experience'. The Church hasn't met them. DH Lawrence (1914): 'the adventure has gone out of the Christian venture'. The Church doesn't need more theories about how to grow itself without reforming its structures – it needs a revolutionary new approach.

Einstein: 'the kind of thinking that will solve the world's problems will be of a different order to the kind of thinking that created those problems in the first place', 7. Boxlike thinking cannot solve the problems of the box.

We must get over Christendom, in which Christianity moved from being a dynamic, revolutionary, social and spiritual movement to being a religious institution with its attendant structures, priesthood, and sacraments. The metanarrative has changed. And yet Constantine is still the emperor of our imaginations.

The Gospel and our Culture Network (GOCN) identifies 12 marks of a missional church:

1. Proclaims the gospel
2. Is a community where all members are involved in learning to become disciples of Jesus
3. The Bible is normative
4. The church understands itself as different from the world because of its participation in the life, death, resurrection of Jesus
5. It seeks to discern God's specific missional vocation for the entire community and its members
6. It is indicated by how Christians behave to one another
7. It is a community that practises reconciliation
8. Its members hold themselves accountable to one another in love
9. It practises hospitality
10. Worship is the central act by which it celebrates with joy God's presence and promised future
11. It has a vital public witness
12. It recognises itself to be an incomplete expression of the reign of God

Authors propose 3 overarching principles that give energy and direction to the above marks:

- The missional church is incarnational (not attractional) in its ecclesiology – it goes out, rather than invites in
- The missional church is messianic (not dualistic) in its spirituality – it sees the world and God's place in it as holistic, not divided into sacred and secular
- The missional church adopts an apostolic (not hierarchical) mode of leadership – following the 5fold model in Ephesians 4.

The missional genius of the church will be unleashed only when there are foundational changes made to its DNA. WE must abandon Christendom as a failed experiment, and accept that one of the reasons for our loss of influence has been our flirtation with modernity and the ideas of the Enlightenment. We are at an epoch-shifting period in the West; there will be a corresponding shift in the church as it rediscovers itself as an apostolic movement. The task is to engage culture without compromising the gospel.

### 2. The Missional Church

A missional church is the only hope in a post-Christendom era. Church planting hasn't really worked – the decline has continued; we've planted little copies of the failing Christendom-style church. Often we've just planted church services rather than churches, and certainly not missional communities. By duplicating a failing system, we are just digging the same hole deeper in our attempt to dig somewhere else. An emerging missional church abandons Christendom assumptions and sees itself as an underground, subversive, celebratory, passionate community. The DNA of church needs to change.

### Flaws of the Christendom church

1. It's **attractional** – it plants itself in a place and expects people to come to it. It thinks if it gets its internal features right, people will come. It assumes people want to be Christians but don't like the way we do things. It's unbiblical – Jesus, the disciples, Paul, the early church all had a Go-to-them model not a Come-to-us model.
2. It's **dualistic**. It separates sacred/profane, in/out, holy/unholy. We are in here, the world is out there. This model creates Christians who cannot relate their interior faith to their exterior practice.
3. It's **hierarchical**, with a top-down model of leadership. All denominations are hierarchical, just with different names for the levels. Paul rejected the traditional distinctions between priest and lay, holy people and ordinary people.

The alternative? A church which places a high value on communal life, open leadership, the contribution of all. It will be radical, adventurous, playful, surprising. It will gather for sensual-experiential-participatory worship and be concerned for justice and mercy. Bishop John Gladwin identifies 4 features of the emerging church:

1. Focus on the journey of faith and the experience of God
2. Desire for less structure and more direct involvement by participants
3. Sense of flexibility in order and a non-hierarchical structure
4. Recognition that the experience of church is about the sustaining of discipleship

Example: The Subterranean Shoe Room, a shoe shop run by a Southern Baptist; listening to his clients. The Hope Community, Southampton – 3 nuns renting a high rise flat in an estate, being there and catalysing social changes.

### Characteristics of missional churches

- **Proximity spaces** – where Christians and non-Christians interact; eg of a café in Melbourne where Christians and non interact, building connections with the local art community
- **Shared projects** – joint projects with Christians and non-Christians involved, eg Sydney cooperatives clearing rivers and waterways, building relationships over period of time, San Francisco mural painting club
- **Commercial enterprise** – communities aren't usually crying out for more churches, but they are wanting a café, day-care centre, skills centre; eg the Furnivall in Sheffield, old pub turned into skills centre with training kitchen and café
- **Emerging indigenous Faith Communities** – these will emerge from this interaction with a host subculture. Missional church combines liberal concern for community development with evangelical concern for personal and community transformation.

The missional church will be an anti-clone of the Christendom church:

Attractional → incarnational  
Dualistic → messianic  
Hierarchical → apostolic

## Part II : Incarnational ecclesiology

### 3. The Incarnational approach

*Ivan Illich was once asked what is the most revolutionary way to change society. Is it violent revolution or gradual reform? He gave a careful answer. Neither. If you want to change society, then you must tell an alternative story, he concluded.*

Tinkering with the existing model of church won't do – it's not about seating, songs. If you think of the church as a car, we can't simply take it in for service.

### Coming to grips with being incarnational

God came not half way but the whole way, to where we are at. He did his work from inside the human condition, not from outside it. Implications:

- Identification – the medium is the message. Jesus takes on the whole package – Phil 2.2-8; Heb 5.7-8)
- Locality – if we want to make a thing real we must make it local – Jesus was changed by those he met

- Beyond-in-the-midst (2 Cor 5.19) – God came into personal contact with us
- Human image of God (Col. 1.15) – it's not just that Christ is like God, but God is like Christ

So. Incarnational mission means the gospel becomes part of a people group without damaging the cultural frameworks that provide them with meaning and history. It means we will identify with them in all ways possible. If you don't do mission incarnationally you fall into cultural imperialism. Incarnational mission implies a real and abiding presence among a people group; being an insider not an outsider. It implies a sending impulse not an extracting one. And it means people will experience Jesus on the *inside* of their culture and lives.

### Attractional vs incarnational

The attractional church implies God is really only present in official church activities; so mission is inviting people to attend them. In-drag replaces out-reach. An incarnational mode creates a church that is a dynamic set of relationships, and enhances the community's social fabric, meaning it can travel through it. The missional church begins with the understanding that God comes to the most unlikely people.

How would you reach a lost suburban tribe, eg of model-car racers? By inviting them to church? Or by joining the club? The attractional model sees the world divided into in and out zones; the missional one as a web.

If you ask Christians at conferences to stand in a circle, they stand facing inwards. Point this out and they reverse to face outwards. But what about slanted, one shoulder in and one out?

Moltmann defines how we do church as birds of a feather flocking together. The result is an us and them mentality. If we are a community of like-minded people, we will be impeded in our attempt to win the world for Christ. Maybe we need not walls but fences, circular, with Jesus in the middle, and people moving closer and becoming more like him, but with all belonging, whatever their lives are like at present. They call this a centred-set church rather than a bounded-set church. Churches should not be communities of like-minded people.

St Thomas Crookes has cells for reaching the rock-climbing community, the football community, the nightclubbers. By having cells, congregations (up to 5 cells, 100 people) – both meet weekly - and celebrations – held weekly, people come once/twice a month - it balances homogeneity and heterogeneity.

### A biblical approach

- Holiness. This doesn't mean the wonders of life in Christ should be boiled down to teetotalism...Christian teaching is attractive; it offers a kind, loving community. Titus 2.1-10.
- Prayer.
- Socialising – we must live in proximity to non-Christians or they won't see our kind, loving community.
- Supporting evangelists
- Talking about Jesus – everyone

## **4. The Shape of the missional church**

*The only statistic I can ever remember is that if all the people who go to sleep in church were laid end to end they would be a lot more comfortable – attrib to Queen Victoria*

*Chocolat* – the story of Vianne Rocher and her chocolate shop, bringing life and colour into the austere community. This is the vision of an incarnational church.

A subversive question to ask a church is, 'if you could start again from scratch, would you do it the same way?' They usually say no. Then ask, 'why then are you not changing it now?' What would we do differently? Maybe:

- Listen to the patients – think like missionaries, spend time listening to, eating with, playing with the subculture/neighbourhood we are trying to reach; ask, 'what is good news to these people?' and 'what would church look like for these people?'
- Find 'persons of peace', as in Lk 10. Don't start by advertising; find your key individual, the key to the community. This brings a rich and effective project in the long term
- Multiplication not addition. Bigger is not necessarily better – we have a myriad subculture even in suburbs. Megachurches belong to a monochrome culture of the past. Churches will be part of an organic rhythm of witness to different tribes, targeting specific communities.
- Leadership is vital – leaders should select a team for church planting on the basis of a clear, demonstrated commitment to stated philosophy and vision. Christian leadership will work best as a team (Eph 4) of all 5 leadership giftings
- Watch your use of buildings – walking in, does it look minister/audience in its layout? In the West we have an edifice complex – do we need a building? If we'd be lost without it, we have a problem. God doesn't live in church buildings; but often we behave as if he does.

P 72 chart summarising the difference between incarnational and attractional (or extractional) models.

### Objectives of incarnational mission

1. Real connection – achieved through presence, partnerships, inquiry groups – Jesus has the community’s best interests at heart
2. Real demonstration – Jesus is with the community; must have indigenous leadership developing, so that the community can develop its own theology, using language, symbols, longing with local flavour
3. Real encounter – the host community comes to understand that Jesus is ‘of’ their community.

## 5. The Contextualised church

Church is not without structure, and it involves commitment – to God, to one another, to the world. Acts 2 shows 6 features which inform these broad commitments:

- Communion – God’s word; Worship
- Community (in relation with one another) – learning; fellowship/friendship
- Commission (in relation with the world) serving/giving; gospel telling/sharing

That’s all you need; anything else is an extra. A helpful grid identifies 4 elements to think about:

1. Christ’s Commands – non-negotiable
2. Biblical Principles – essence unchanging, adapt only to maintain dynamic equivalent
3. Apostolic Patterns – interpret/contextualise to fit culture
4. Church Practices – fully adaptable and flexible for the culture

Colonial missionaries took clothing, culture, because these things were their adaptation of Christianity. Eg in Zimbabwe, quoting ‘stand at the door and knock’ – not knowing only thieves knock, to see if anyone’s at home. Eg Christian names like James, Charles; western (‘decent’) clothing.

*Contextualisation is when the gospel presented and the response called for, offends for the right reasons and not for the wrong ones –* Rene Padilla.

The one-size-fits-all approach to church and mission must go – and yet Western churches seem keener than ever to embrace formularised, ‘successful’ pre-packaged models of evangelism; fewer and fewer are developing evangelistic ministries specifically contextualised to their geographical area or subculture.

To contextualise is to understand the language, longings, lifestyle patterns, and worldview of the host community, and adjust our practices accordingly without compromising the gospel. If we don’t keep doing this, we end up in a billabong (oxbow lake) far from what was a flowing stream. Many second/third generation Christians remain in church with the motivation to get their own needs met, not to fulfil Christ’s mission.

Gospel and context are always linked; the creation of humankind in God’s image means there is no culture that lacks virtuous elements in terms of which the gospel can be expressed; and yet because of the Fall there is none either which is completely virtuous.

Method(Hiebert):

1. Engage with host culture
2. Engage with the Word of God
3. People evaluate their own past customs in the light of their new biblical understandings – they should be trusted to do this, not have it done for them as so often in the past. Criteria:
  - Keep that which is not unbiblical
  - Reject that which is unbecoming for Christians
  - Modify practices to give them Christian meaning
  - Reject unbiblical practices and replace them
  - Adopt Christian rites
  - Create new symbols and rituals.

P91 examples of different ways of expressing a church for Muslims (Parshall and Travis, 40 years working with Muslims in Asia). It’s not that different for western churches; we need to work towards something between C4 and C5.

- C1 – traditional church using outsider language – it’s English, and differs sharply from the community
- C2 – traditional church using insider language – same, using local language
- C3 – contextualised Christ-centred communities using insider language and religiously neutral insider cultural forms – including music, dress, art
- C4 - contextualised Christ-centred communities using insider language and biblically permissible cultural and Islamic forms – eg praying with raised hands, keeping fast, avoiding pork etc. Believers call selves ‘followers of Isa the Messiah’ or similar
- C5 – Christ-centred communities of ‘messianic Muslims’ – they maintain their full legal and social status within the Islamic community; may result in Messianic mosques. Believers are viewed as Muslims.
- C6 – Small Christ-centred communities of secret/underground believers – Muslims who worship Christ in secret.

P94 – how to avoid syncretism (7 checks).

## 6. Whispering to the soul

People don't want propositions about God, they want an experience of God. They're most open to it in the context of pain, struggle, doubt and the unknown. Off the shelf answers won't do at such times.

Story of Monty Roberts, a Montana rancher, who learnt that the easiest way to tame wild horses is not weeks of 'breaking' techniques but offering quiet companionship in the training enclosure, avoiding eye contact, staying as far away as possible, waiting for the horse's natural yearning for company to bring it close – it's tamed within an hour. Likewise with us: the traditional way of reaching not-yet Christians has been to bludgeon them, crush their spirit, remind them of their brokenness; instead we should be speaking to their deepest longings. How?

- Listen – most people come to faith slowly
- Excite curiosity through storytelling – Jesus taught in such a way not as to give answers but to encourage people to seek them; it was deliberately cryptic. Drane suggests we can tell God's story (tell them about a film which revealed God's grace), Bible stories, and personal stories (1 Pe 3.15, an answer for the hope that you have)
- Provoke a sense of wonder and awe – we are made for it (Rom 1.20), but in W cities the capacity to stop and wonder is rare – we are in too much of a rush. Whisper wonder into their souls – point out the dawn, the stars. We need to recover beauty as an attribute of God – through dance, video, music. God is creative; so art is the region between heaven and earth that connects us. The use of ancient buildings, interplay between light and dark, visual imagery, Celtic symbols and practices is producing an exciting new movement in worship, which helps post moderns to tap into their desire for the mysterious, the Other. Postmodern worship should be experiential, participatory, image-driven, communal.
- Be extraordinarily loving
- Explore how God is working – what's going on in their imaginations?
- Focus on Jesus – who was he? Story about the artist Murillo as a young boy turning a family picture of a serious Jesus as shepherd boy into a figure grinning with life with a troublesome puppy and tousled hair – parents furious, but a local artist offered to take him on. Jesus' approach to life was Hebraic, relational and not philosophical. He was action-oriented, he found God in the world, not apart from it. Do we identify with Jesus as a person we aspire to become like? Story of theologian Harvey Cox asking a room full of healers who in the story of Jairus' daughter they related to – only 6 out of 600 identified with Jesus, the rest with the bleeding woman, anxious Jairus, the sick daughter, the astonished disciples.

## Part III : Messianic spirituality

### 7. The God of Israel and the renewal of Christianity

Spirituality has become associated with a type of mysticism that seeks God apart from a real engagement with the world. But Jesus didn't live or teach like that. We've obscured the fact that Jesus was a historic person who represents the principal model for mission, ministry and discipleship. We need Paul as an indispensable guide; but we should read him, and all the writers of the Bible, through the perspective of the gospels. *If ever there was a time to rediscover Jesus the Messiah, it is now.* He always comes out high in opinion polls. Christianity is not a doctrine but a person. And yet so much reflection on Jesus portrays a man who is serious, intense, deep, wrung his hands a lot, had a penchant for suffering. There's another way to read him. His spirituality didn't repulse normal 'sinners'; he hung out with the wrong types, in the wrong places, at the wrong times. *We need his model of holy laughter, of his sheer love of life, of his infectious holiness, of his common people's religion, for our day. We want to say that being Christlike is not only hard work, it is also a load of fun.* 114. We partner with him in the redemption of the world.

It is essential to a revolutionary new approach to church that there be a fundamental shift in our collective thinking. We need to recover the missional genius of the early church, which was modelled on Jesus. We need a fresh look at him; we need to recover a messianic spirituality. Our Hellenistic-Roman heritage has been too concerned with metaphysics, not enough with this man Jesus. We need to recover our Jewish heritage. We need to understand the differences between Jerusalem and Athens.

<u>Jerusalem</u>	<u>Athens</u>	<u>Effects</u>
concrete thinking	speculative thinking	creeds are conceptual emphasis shifted to right thinking from right doing theological training is propositional not practical
rooted in time – history, people	rooted in eternity	dualistic spirituality – rejection of world
life affirming	life-denying	rejection of pleasure; need to rediscover pleasure as a missional asset cp Chocolat, Babette's feast (it's unredeemed pleasure that's bad)
earth and heaven connected	earth and heaven separate	lack of connection between faith/life

(cp law, moving from approach to  
God in temple to what you do if  
donkey falls in pit)  
hallowing the everyday

faith is about trust

faith is about belief

*Kavanagh* – concept in Judaism, means to direct the mind and heart in order to maximise action. It's shifting from the deed to its meaning, directing self to God and thus redirecting one's whole person. It means participation of heart and soul, not only will and mind. Direction and redemption are linked. Passion drives us in the direction of God, and is good; if it drives us away, it is bad. It's not bad in itself.

In Hebraic understanding there are 2 realities: holy and not yet holy. The missional task of God's people is to make the latter into the former – as Jesus did – and not to avoid it.

## 8. Action as sacrament

The new global culture holds to a worldview that is holistic in its outlook, looking for a greater integration between spirit and matter. We are certain we can whisper into people's souls in order to activate a search for God; but we don't believe we can do it primarily through sermons and services, but rather through sharing our own story and being loving. This is messianic spirituality; it is incarnational and active, it has a redemptive approach to all of life, it makes everything into worship. Works will not save us but they are fundamental to our mission. God is interested not just in right thinking but also in right living.

- Story of little Johnny, mum makes him sit down and eat his dinner; eventually he does sit down but he declares 'I may be sitting down on the outside, but I'm standing up on the inside!'

le we need inner as well as outer obedience. We are talking and writing about mission, but not doing it yet. Saying: *The best way to predict the future is to invent it.* Our goal is truth as deed. Cp James 1.27 – a holy life is looking after orphans/widows and keeping oneself from being polluted by the world.

- President Woodrow Wilson on freedom: *what is liberty? We say of a boat skimming the water with light foot, 'how free she runs,' when we mean, how perfectly she is adjusted to the force of the wind, how perfectly she obeys the great breath out of the heavens that fills her sails. Throw her head into the wind and see how she will halt and stagger, how every sheet will shiver and her whole frame will be shaken, how instantly she is 'in irons', in the expressive phrase of the sea. She is free only when you have let her fall off again and have recovered once more her nice adjustments to the forces she must obey and cannot defy.* 143.

We have to develop momentum under the power of the HS. Our deed is sacrament. We must be willing to reconceive ourselves as incarnational communities gathered for the purpose of changing the world.

## 9. The medium really is the message

Film *Chicken Run* – Ginger is the prophet/visionary chicken who leads an escape – the others have no concept of freedom, despite living under a system which marks insufficiently productive hens for elimination; they just think it's their lot to lay eggs and die. This is what's needed for missional leaders, who know that the urgency of the day requires a big shift from the predominant image of 'church'; most people cannot see beyond the Christendom mode, either believe this is the way it's always been done, or ask you to stop rocking the boat. The greatest silencing can come from leaders of large churches, who have the illusion all is well – false sense of security. The solution – to awaken a Christian spirituality that can nurture and envision an alternative reality of communal life together. At its core is an understanding that God changes us by changing our identify, our sense of self-definition. *If we are changed, then we will..* – this the structure of Paul's letters, which move from the indicative (defining us) to the imperative (calling us to live the definition out in daily life).

'The medium is the message' – phrase invented by Marshall McLuhan to convey the concept that first we shape our tools, and then they shape us. Our tools and technologies have a reciprocal effect on us – eg internet, television. Challenge – try doing without your computer; or without a trained minister! Sermons no longer, except for exceptional ones, have impact. Buildings – does it look as if it's designed for the presentation of a show of some sort? Mega churches often do; and yet church is meant to be community. What does such a building say to the not-yet-Christian about the community? Missional buildings create proximity spaces between God's people and the surrounding communities; they are buildings that people flow organically towards. Seminaries – what's their implicit message? Chairs facing the front? Learning by lecture?

We are our messages – Kierkegaard talked about existence-communication – our lives are our messages. He despised Hegel, who held that all truth could be grasped objectively. What is the message of my life? Is it Christian or is it middleclass? (based on assumptions about security, prestige, power, money, competition, family etc)

Kierkegaard: *the truth consists not in knowing the truth intellectually but in being the truth.. Knowing the truth is something which follows as a matter of course from being the truth, and not conversely.* 155 Jesus did his work by living a certain way; not from out of a teaching but toward a teaching. He lived in such a way that his life acted as a teaching not yet translated into words.

Christendom believes you go world→church→God. Except on Sundays, you live in a spiritually dangerous place. Missional church believes the three areas overlap thus:



God wants partnership – riddle in Talmud asks, if God intended man to live on bread, why didn't he create a bread tree? Answer- he wanted us to be partners with him in creation. He could solve our every need; but he invites us into partnership. It's the same with mission. We tell people about God; but we need to realise God is there before us, working in their life – they will have had God moments, epiphanies.

## Part IV : Apostolic leadership

### 10. 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.

We need to shift to an apostolic leadership. The church needs to become missional, incarnational, messianic, apostolic. A renewed focus on leadership is essential to the renewal and growth of the church. The model is in Ephesians : Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers. The church is gathered around these five elements; this is the fundamental ministry of the church, and all its members. In this text can be read in 2 dimensions – as a description of the leadership system, and as a description of the whole church's ministry. Everyone fits into this model, but some are given as leaders to the rest.

- **Apostolic function** : pioneers new missional works and oversees their developments → ie sends
- **Prophetic function**: discerns the spiritual realities and communicates them in a timely and appropriate way to further the mission of God's people → ie knows
- **Evangelistic function**: communicates the gospel in such a way that people respond in faith and discipleship → ie recruits
- **Pastoral function**: shepherds the people of God by leading, nurturing, protecting and caring for them → ie cares
- **Teaching function**: communicates the revealed wisdom of God so that the people of God learn how to obey all that Christ has commanded them → ie explains

The functions are not mutually exclusive – you can do more than one! What matters is that each person identifies their calling and ministers; we must break clericalism. Eg St John's Sheffield, which has built a pathway of leadership training round each gifting.

This plan of Paul's is affirmed by the best practice in leadership and management theory. Most leadership systems acknowledge there may be one/more of these leadership styles:

- **Entrepreneur** : the ground breaker and strategist who initiates an organisation's mission
- **Questioner** : disturbs the status quo and challenges an organisation to move in new directions
- **Communicator/recruiter** : takes the organisation's message to those outside and sells it to them
- **Humaniser** : provides the organisational glue by caring for the individuals inside it
- **Systematiser** : organises the various parts into a working unit and articulates that structure to the other members

'Imagine a leadership system where the entrepreneurial group 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 – the carer, the social cement – and with the systematiser 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.' 174

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

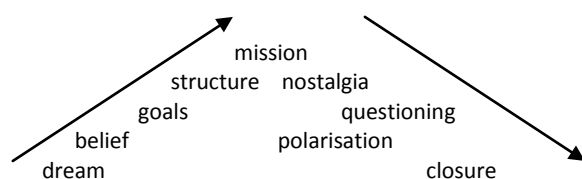
We need them all.

There are 3 primary principles for organic organizational development: to create organic, reproducible and self-sustaining systems in whatever we do. These principles are found in systems theories of organizational development – but also in this ancient text of Paul. An APEPT church is

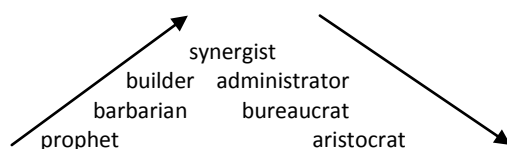
1. Organic – lots of images in the Eph text of body, ligaments, unity/diversity
2. Reproducible – this ministry matrix will work in all settings
3. Self-sustaining – this kind of church will grow

This model allows what's called in management terms 'fit and split' (unity and diversity) and 'contend and transcend' (permission to disagree, debate, dialogue round core tasks, whilst agreeing to overcome disagreement and find new answers).

All organisations go through a life cycle from birth to death. The life cycle of a church can be seen thus:



Different roles/leadership styles predominate at different stages, with the later stages being more stable but less dynamic:



The problem in the church is that the pastoral and teaching types have ejected the other types from the system, forcing them to express their innate gifting in parachurch/mission contexts instead. Many offer selves for ordination and are rejected. Our current decline is directly linked to this loss of missional-apostolic leadership. The W church doesn't have enough of the apostolic, prophetic and evangelistic leadership types to get the job of mission done. Kierkegaard's goose story – see separate sheet.

## 11. Imagination and the leadership task

*We are the people of the parenthesis – at the end of one era but not quite at the beginning of the next one. Maps no longer fit the new territories. In order to make sense of it all, we must cultivate a vision : Jean Houston*

Authors travelled to US, UK, Italy, France, Israel, N Zealand and S Africa – and found the church looking dull and predictable in all of them; as if there were some kind of template for evangelical churches, regardless of language and culture. It represents the triumph of technique over substance, and the death of the art of ministry and mission. It is a failure of leadership when imagination is not valued as a vital resource for ministry and mission. Mission, ministry and worship should be art forms; losing it means dullness.

Winston Churchill once said 'the empires of the future will be the empires of the imagination' – 183. Pastor-teacher types tend to be maintainers of the status quo rather than visionaries. We live in an age where creativity and diversity are at a premium, and the church has yet to adjust to this shift. This is a time for Christianity to activate its dormant right brain. Imagination is more important than knowledge. Einstein: *'I am enough of an artist to draw freely upon my imagination. Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world'*. 185.

Creativity is the resource for 21<sup>st</sup> century companies. Innovation is the main training need. Aesthetics and design have become central aspects in product development. We need it too. We need church-by-design.

Art is the struggle between inner meaning and outer expression – it's what will help us cross the gap between the average church and its 'market'. Covey – you have to imagine it before you can do it. This means you must begin with the end in mind; and the end can only be accessed by the imagination.

One of the best definitions of poverty is not lack of money but lack of a dream, a vision, hope – we have to help people begin to dream again. It's disastrous to think the solo leader is the visionary, and everyone else has to fall in behind.. all that a great visionary leader does is awaken and harness the dreams and visions of the members of a given community and give them deeper coherence by means of a grand vision that ties together all the 'little visions' of the group. No one will die for my sense of purpose – only for their own. All genuine apostolic leadership articulates a preferred future based on a common moral vision that allows people to dream again. Every church should have a Research & Development dept – ie a forum for dreaming.

Einstein again: *'the kind of thinking that will solve the world's problems will be of a different order to the kind of thinking that created them in the first place'*. 189. It will often be opposed – people invest their sense of self in the existing paradigm, and so receive their legitimacy from it. Organisations/denominations don't permit a questioning of their core organising beliefs. Cp Copernicus. Machiavelli noted that innovators are always persecuted and their innovations resisted.

How to prepare paradigm shifts:

- Encourage holy dissatisfaction
- Embrace subversive questioning (ministers are expected to be answer people rather than the more Christlike question people) – eg is a can opener a can opener if it can't open cans? If you could start again, would you do it



the same way? What would your experience of church be like if you no longer had a building? If you could no longer meet on Sundays? If you had no pastor or leadership team?

- Become a beginner – learn to think like a beginner rather than an expert
- Take more risks – without risk there can be no growth/progress
- Create a climate of change: ask a fool (role of the jester); break out (eat ice cream for breakfast); learn from your mistakes; try a different approach; get out of your box (look for fashion in a hardware store); combine different ideas; dig deeper (lots of ideas better than one); realise good enough won't do; experiment and keep what works; be challenged; adopt a genius from history; brainstorm; carry a notebook; open a dictionary and formulate ideas using a random word; define your problem.

Edward De Bono suggests an exercise using 6 thinking hats:

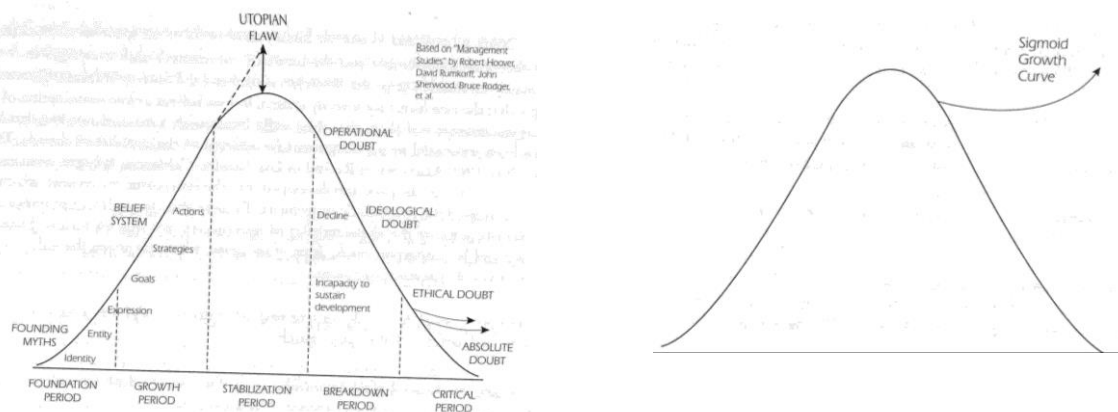
1. white – white paper, this is to do with data and info – what info do we have/need?
2. red – fire, to do with feelings, intuition, hunches
3. black – judge; this is the caution hat
4. yellow – sunshine; the optimism hat, looking for benefits
5. green – growth; hat for new ideas, creative effort
6. blue hat – sky; for process control, agenda, chairing, summarising

## 12. Organizing the revolution

### The Church as a missional movement

All social groupings that have impact on either a local, national or international level always begin with a movement. A movement is a group of people organised for, ideologically motivated by, and committed to a purpose that implements some form of personal or social change; who are actively engaged in the recruitment of others; and whose influence is spreading in opposition to the established order within which it originated. This definition fits the NT people of God.

Most movements follow a bell curve:



Need to know where you are and keep evaluating/asking questions, so that you move to the new growth on the right. What kind of leadership do you have/need in the stage you are in?

Snyder, *Signs of the Spirit*, identifies the following as distinctive of renewal movements:

- a thirst for renewal
- a new stress on the work of the Spirit
- an institutional/charismatic tension
- a concern for being a counter-cultural community
- non-traditional / non-ordained leadership
- ministry to the poor
- energy and dynamism

Gerlach and Hine, 2 sociologists who research movements, identify the following characteristics of movements:

- a segmented, cellular organisation
- face to face recruitment by committed individuals using their own pre-existing, significant relationships
- personal commitment
- an ideology of articulated values and goals
- real/perceived opposition from society or that segment of the established order in which the movement has arisen

in order to recover the mission vitality of the early church, we need to reawaken a movement ethos in the organisations we inhabit.

### Jesus at the centre

We can see ourselves as a circle with Jesus at the centre. In social set theory this can take 3 forms:

1. Bounded sets – soft at the centre, hard at the edges, with clear insider-outsider ethos, and no strong ideological centre. Walled.
2. Fuzzy sets – soft at centre and edges; people hanging out together, no purpose/commitment; can be the beginning or the end of a movement
3. Centred sets – hard at the centre (strong ideology) but soft at the edges. Access open. More like a fence than a wall.

Developing this, we can see ourselves like an **outback ranch**, sinking wells, sustaining our connection with the water source and making sure others can get to it; allowing people to come to Jesus from any distance and any direction. This model sees Christ as the source (at the centre) and our peripheral decisions about specific forms and functions of church are the edge. Our Christology informs our missiology, and that determines our ecclesiology – not the other way round. If we allow our notions of the church to qualify our sense of purpose and mission, we can never be an authentic missional church – or disciples of Jesus.

Postmoderns are like cats. You can't herd them – unless you are clever about it; put down food and they will come. Or horses. You can lead them to water but not make them drink – unless you offer salt... We need to provide the right kind of food, and to cultivate hunger.

### Eco-leadership

Pioneered organisations should always be organic, reproducible, sustainable.

1. **Organic** – the church must remain true to its essential nature as a dynamic, living organism as opposed to a mechanistic-style structure. This means we don't know how it will form and organise itself, and we will listen to context:
  - Observe the social rhythms of the target community
  - Watch for the social patterning
  - Ask where the social centres are ('ant trails', and where they lead)
  - Ask 'what is church for this group of people?'
  - Do not import an alien model of church
  - Keep asking 'what is good news for this community?'
2. **Reproducible** – we must multiply congregations rather than add members. If you put a grain of rice on the first square of a chess board, 2 on the second, 4 on the third, you end up needing 153 billion tons of it on the last (more than the world can harvest for the next 1000 years). How do you get going? Through becoming contagious, not through reaching individual targets (however many) through advertising. Godin, a marketing guru: *'Marketing by interrupting people isn't cost-effective anymore. You can't afford to seek out people and send them unwanted marketing messages, in large groups, and hope that some will send you money. The future belongs to marketers who establish a foundation and process where interested people can market each other. Ignite consumer networks then get out of the way and let them talk'*. Hotmail was never advertised; it was an 'ideavirus' – it just caught on. An idea is a manifesto trying to make its point; the medium is the substance the idea lives in. You need to find the right medium – word of mouth/internet/organic church planting etc. [www.ideavirus.com]. It's like an apple tree – it produces fruit, and each fruit contains seeds, everything needed to produce future trees. What we've seen in recent years in the church is the taking on of churchplanting as a strategy for growth and mission, but without the DNA to sustain it; it's often failed to take root and reproduce itself, because done in an artificial way.
3. **Sustainable** – essential to keep thinking about how the organisation can grow, take root, flourish over the long term. Business is good at this because otherwise it goes under. How is the leadership supported? Tent making ensures freedom from financial targets; missional support likewise; centralised funding is hardest to sustain. A mix might work well.

### The Last say

Kierkegaard on **geese** again – wild geese screech as they migrate. Tame barnyard geese below become restless and run up and down as the wild ones fly over. The screeching seems to evoke some memory of wilderness in them. The task of missionary leadership involves the same – to call people to do wild things, to remind them what they are made for. The disciple of Jesus has to take the journey of risk, to fly over the heads of people in our culture and call them back to the dangerous but marvellously instinctive journey to God through Jesus Christ. The twist in the story- while wild geese have become tame, the reverse rarely occurs. We need to beware of the anaesthetizing and stultifying effects of Christendom, the tame, non-missional, middle-class church.

Paul Coelho – *the ship is safest when it's in port. But that's not what ships were made for.*

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