

5Q: Chapter 7

APEST Functions Defined

Having defined what a function is, we can now move on to developing a working description of each of the fivefold functions along with the associated callings:

Apostolic-Apostle

In writing the foreword to *The Permanent Revolution*, the preeminent theologian Darrell Guder notes: “Especially crucial for missional ecclesiology today is the recovery of the apostolic function in the church [*italics mine*].” He goes on to say that:

It is this ministry that ensures that the church is always centered on its calling to be the agent and instrument of God’s mission and that everything it is and does relates to and demonstrates that calling.

Seminal missiologist Hendrik Kraemer agrees:

The Church is, by its nature and calling, in the first and last instance an apostolic body ... By “apostolic body” we mean that the Church is “sent” into the world, has a specific mission: it has a message for the whole world that must be heralded.

He goes on to note that without a genuine understanding of this fact there can be no real understanding of the Christian church.⁸ Perhaps Emil Brunner nails the apostolic dimension of the church in his famous aphorism, “The Church exists by mission [viz. apostolicity... being sent] as fire exists by burning.”⁹ Apostolic organization, as far as it relates to the church itself, will likely embody the practices that Ralph Winter calls the sodalic functions.¹⁰

The Apostolic Functions/Purposes of the Church

All these theologians highlight the defining aspect of the apostolic: to maintain and develop the sentness of the church. And given that mission is clearly a central aspect of the church’s purpose, the function is absolutely indispensable if the church is to remain true to her calling.

“Apostolicity,” therefore is the inbuilt, culturally embedded drive to ensure that the church is faithful to its missionary calling.¹¹

The apostolic function exists to:

- **extend Christianity.** The driving logic of apostolicity is the extension of the Jesus movement in and through the lives of the adherents, as well as establishing the church onto new ground. The apostolic function will therefore highlight those aspects of the

church's purpose that develop its missional capacities and prioritize the church's sentness to the nations.

- **maintain movement.** Because of the dynamic and advancing nature of the ecclesia, the key apostolic metaphor for the church is that of a dynamic, adaptive, advancing, integrated movement that can extend itself over time and across geographical regions. This is no static understanding of the church. In other words, apostolic ecclesiology is distinctly movemental.
- **maintain focus on broadest purpose/mission.** The very term “apostolic” (sent/purposed) hints at one of its own core purposes, namely to constantly highlight the ultimate purpose(s) of the organization—the mission of the church in the world.
- **design scalable organization.** Because organization is essential to all forms of community and dynamic movements, the apostolic needs to develop the necessary organizational bias, as well as cultivate the necessary culture, around the extension of the movement as a whole. Therefore, we can say that the distinctly apostolic perspective of the forms, functions, and purposes of the church will be dynamic, adaptive, innovative, reproducible, and scalable.
- **maintain compliance around core DNA (meta-ideas).** Another irreplaceable apostolic function involves the constant elucidation of the meta-ideas that in turn sustain the core identity and message of the organization. To change the metaphor to genetics, the apostolic function involves guarding the very DNA of the movement which is always subject to various misunderstanding, dilution, or hindrances. DNA is critical to movemental health, extension, and integrity. Taking the apostolic function seriously requires that the movement ensures ongoing compliance with the core ideas that, if weakened, will damage the capacity of the movement to hold together over time and distance.
- **maintain paradigm and vision.** In many ways, the apostolic vision of the church is the most comprehensive one, in that it sees the whole system and not just the parts. As such, it defines reality in the broadest possible terms. It is what the New Testament calls “foundational” because it is the one that is able to meaningfully include all the others. This “big picture” vision, because it articulates the systems story at the heart of the church, will make sense of all the other functions.
- **plant the gospel.** Planting the gospel is the surest litmus test of apostolicity. We are never commanded to plant churches, but we are to plant the Jesus story in ways that create the basis for Christian community—the church (1 Corinthians 3:6). Churches grow out of the encounter with Jesus through the gospel. Associated with this is:
 - development of new congregations. Planting the gospel will generate new communities founded on Jesus, his gospel, and his lordship. If any church is not planting new congregations, or never has, it is a sure-fire sign that it is deficient in

the apostolic function. Therefore, almost all aspects involved in generating new congregations and nurturing their growth are primarily associated with the apostolic function.¹²

- innovation of new forms. When churches are planted in new cultures (cross-cultural and/or subcultural) they will need to be able to generate new forms to suit the different cultures. A genuinely apostolic church needs to somehow support the innovation of new forms in multiple contexts.
- **cultivate entrepreneurship.** Because of the missionary function of taking the gospel on to entirely new ground, entrepreneurial aspects of the organization will also likely be associated with the apostolic function.¹³ Entrepreneurialism requires a culture of permission-giving, and the encouragement to take risks, fail, and learn from failure.
- **maintain healthy translocal network.** Because the distinctly apostolic metaphor of the church is that of an expansive movement across entire regions, they require the organizational structure of a translocal network. Just like a flight control center, everything is moving at the same time, so keeping the lines of communication open is absolutely critical. Likewise, to maintain healthy burgeoning regional networks, meaningful relationships across the system become crucially important. The apostolic function therefore nurtures rich communication between the various players, outposts, and agencies throughout the network.
- **maintain movement-wide unity while cultivating diversity.** There is a lot of diversity of people, race, status, and cultures in expanding movements—just look at the New Testament church. The apostolic function is the one most responsible for the essential unity of the church as it grows and matures (e.g., Ephesians 4:1–16). The apostolic is therefore quick to respond to elements in the movement that threaten its common life and create systemic dysfunction.
- **maintain systemic health.** Furthermore, apostolic understandings of the church will also be systems-aware and have a view to the big picture. The apostolic function will therefore involve maintaining overall system health and keeping the various members of the living body as connected and functional as possible.
- **mobilize effort.** The apostolic function also involves mobilizing all the agents in the system. In other words, the church's apostolicity requires that all disciples be "in the game" and appropriately equipped and empowered to be God's representative people in the world. This involves recognizing the agency of all believers and is clearly related to leadership development and deployment.

The Calling/Role of the Apostolic Person

The apostolic person is therefore the person who most corresponds to the functions described above. As in all the APEST callings, no single apostolic individual would likely express all the

functions above, but I believe a mature expression of the apostolic will embody many in an exemplary way.

In the power of the Holy Spirit, the apostolic person is imbued with an innate sense of the big-picture purpose of the organization. In its mature, idealized, leadership form, the apostle (sent one) is the person most responsible for the overall vigor, as well as extension, of Christianity as a whole, primarily through direct mission and church planting.

Not surprisingly, apostolic types tend to favor the entrepreneurial edges of the church and have a natural capacity for adventure; they tend to be less risk-averse than those who fall under other forms of ministry and leadership. Following this pioneering instinct, they are the ones most likely to engage at the edges of the organization, to innovate, and to extend the faith into new ground. They therefore provide the “catalytic, adaptive, movemental, translocal, pioneering, entrepreneurial leadership needed to spark, mobilize, and sustain movement(s).”¹⁴

Apostles have an irreplaceable purpose in maintaining ongoing missional capacities, generating new forms of ecclesia, and working for the continual renewal of the church/organization.

The mature apostle will tend to have a more developed sense of the church/organization as a living system comprised of essential parts, or subsystems. This involves being the developer and custodian of the meta-ideas (DNA) that determine the health of the system. Because of this they can play a vital role in the design and the leadership and health of organizations.

Prophetic-Prophet

The church is called to be a prophetic community by its very life and witness. We can say that the prophetic calling and function is absolutely crucial to the unique purpose of God’s people in the world. As his people, we are to be the one place where God, and everything he stands for, is revered, cherished, and obeyed.

The Prophetic Functions/Purposes of the Church

I have spent many years pondering the nature of the prophetic function, and from what I can see throughout the Bible, the prophetic function has two primary dimensions or orientations—what I call the vertical and the horizontal.

The vertical prophetic relates to those functions and instincts concerned with maintaining constant attentiveness to God—of guarding the covenant relationship God has with his people. It is the preeminently God-oriented function. It is sensitive to situations where this life-giving, irreplaceable relationship is damaged or broken.

The vertical prophetic function exists to:

- **maintain God-orientation.** The vertical prophetic will tend to cultivate a culture of God-centeredness through worship; it will also highlight the need for listening prayer and for responsible and responsive obedience to God.
- **engage with Pathos.** God feels things deeply. He is passionate, and his holy passion involves complex dynamics between his unshakable love, his compassion for his creation, his jealous protectiveness, as well as his profound wrath against sin and injustice in society and unfaithfulness in the church. Engaging God's pathos means feeling what God feels. It therefore inevitably involves experiencing grief, pain, joy, rejoicing, anger, love, compassion, mercy, judgment, and the like. In spite of the pain and holy discomfort that it brings, the church is called to remain open and malleable toward God.
- **encounter God.** Some of the key bodily metaphors used in the Bible itself to describe the prophetic might help us categorize the type. For example:
 - Ear. The prophet is described as, or experiences himself as, an "ear," the primary organ of human receptivity, attentiveness, and obedience. The Word of God is heard, but it is only rightly understood when it is obeyed.
 - Eye. The "eye" highlights the prophetic capacity for spiritual insight, as well as its opposite—blindness. Instead of simply trying to see God, the prophetic is an attempt to see as God sees. As such, this deals with the church's receptivity to a holy vision and imagination.
 - Mouth. The prophet as "mouth/mouthpiece" highlights the prophetic call to forthtell the Word: to proclaim, to speak on God's behalf, and to be willing to suffer the same painful rejection that the Word of God itself does. Because of the immediate association with God, prophetic speech and action will tend to be passionate, motivational, ethical, and often corrective.
 - Heart. A particularly important function of prophecy involves being willing to feel what God feels—to experience things from God's perspective. The prophet is not afraid to experience what we might call "the heart of God." The appeal of the prophet is primarily to the heart—the source of the all-important capacity for imagination, trust, values, and volition. If things go wrong at the level of the heart, they go wrong everywhere. The prophetic therefore guards the collective heart of God's people.

The horizontal prophetic, on the other hand, as the metaphor suggests, are those aspects that highlight our relationships with others and the world as part of our obligations to God. The covenanting God requires that we be a holy, just, and righteous people as he is holy, just, and righteous. The horizontal prophetic function exists to:

- **highlight covenant obligations.** A covenant is a two-way relationship and is not morally or spiritually neutral. The church is the one and only agency on earth which submits to the Triune God and exists to obey him. The prophetic function therefore

always highlights the unrelentingly existential, moral, and ethical nature of that responsibility that arises from any authentic encounter with the living God.¹⁵

- **serve as a reminder of covenant love.** Prophetic functions are not just about demand and obligation; prophetic ministry is also a constant reminder of God's abiding love (hesed-agape) and of his covenant grace that saves.
- **call to repentance.** If, as Bonhoeffer says, to know God is to change, then it is the prophetic function that embeds in the ecclesia a constant willingness to learn, unlearn, and relearn. In a rebellious world, this inevitably includes a focus on ongoing repentance. The prophetic is also unrelenting in its call to repentance because it understands the importance of maintaining a relationship with a holy God—as well as the rebellious and sinful nature of the fallen human heart.
- **speak truth to power.** One of the key functions of the prophetic is to constantly expose the pretensions of human power and its abuses. This is particularly true of political, economic, and religious institutions. The prophetic is particularly harsh on false religion and hypocrisy.
- **maintain sensitivity to spiritual warfare.** The prophets in the Bible were the ones most attuned to the power of the spiritual in daily life—witness the book of Ezekiel or the Revelation of John for an example. Because of this, the prophetic function involves an acute sensitivity to spiritual warfare.
- **distinguish true and false worship (idolatry).** People tend to worship things, people, and ideas as replacements for God—this is what the Bible terms idolatry. The prophetic function is therefore strongly iconoclastic in relation to all distorted values and false forms of worship. In fact, there is a very likely correlation between the loss of the prophetic voice in history and the rise of toxic and ritualistic religion. The prophet makes sure that the relationship with God remains very personal and direct.
- **champion justice.** One cannot worship vertically if one is living unjustly (see, e.g., Isaiah 58; Amos 5:1–27). Issues of justice, such as concern for the poor, the marginalized, and the downtrodden, are derived primarily via the prophetic function given to the church. The prophetic prioritizes consistent ethical action and deeds of goodness. God's people are to love righteousness, to do justice, and to walk humbly before God.
- **call to holiness.** The covenantal relationship requires a requisite holiness in God's people: "Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy" (Leviticus 19:2). The call to righteousness (meaning right relationship with God and others) and to an ethic of holiness remains a central prophetic concern.
- **communicate urgency.** The sure sign of prophetic ministry is that it creates a sense of urgency around core ideas. Urgency is a very important aspect of a healthy organization.

- **demonstrate prefigurative community.** The prophetic form of community is what we can call prefigurative in that it lives into an ideal in a radical way that provides a compelling picture of what can be. It lives out God's justice, holiness, covenant loyalty, faithfulness, and so on.
- **develop learning through questioning.** The prophetic function creates the conditions of holy discontent, which leads to a pursuit of methods and practices that are more consistent with who God is. Most prophetic activities will be either vertical or horizontal, or when genuinely integrated and mature, will express both. And so we can see that the prophetic function itself codes prophetic sensibilities into the church. It becomes a community wired to "listen to" and "hear" (i.e., obey) God's Word.

I also believe this twofold distinction helps highlight the limitations of reducing the prophetic gift into either the mystical-charismatic dimension or the social justice activist types. In the Scriptures these ought to belong together, less we end up in mumbo jumbo or dry activism. The passivist (wait on God) and the activist (act for God) tendencies are the two sides of the covenant/kingdom coin. This is also true of the Wesleyan emphasis on social as well as personal holiness; in a mature biblical expression of the prophetic, the two belong together.

The Calling/Role of the Prophetic Person The prophetic function in turn sets the agenda for the job description of prophetic people. Those graced with the prophetic calling will do all they can to listen to God, see what he sees, feel something of what he feels, speak and act on his behalf, and call people to faithfulness and obedience. JR Woodward calls prophets the "heart revealers" in the ecclesia.¹⁶ In my experience, they make the best worship leaders and artists that of all the fivefold types.

Prophets are often agitators for change. In the name of greater faithfulness they will tend to ask pointed questions that highlight God's call, the gap between our obedience and his will, and our responsibility to act accordingly. Outside the ecclesia, prophetic men and women are agents for broad cultural change, social justice, and incarnational integrity. They are the God-oriented mystics who call all people to attend to the voice of God, wherever and however it reveals itself.

The prophetic vocation is likely the most difficult of all the APEST callings, partly because of the personal vulnerability involved (God is "dangerous" ... he is a consuming fire) but also because the prophetic word, like the Word of God that the prophet seeks to represent, is often rejected by people who prefer their own ways. The prophet is likely the loneliest of all the vocations and the one most open to misunderstanding. I think this is why Jesus calls us to especially respect the prophets in our midst (Matthew 10:4–42).

But because of the close association of the prophet and the unfolding of the will/heart of God, along with the innate subjectivity of this message, prophets can potentially be volatile and divisive people—especially when their gifting is immature and undeveloped. New Testament prophets are therefore put under significant restriction and are subject to corporate discernment

and discipline when necessary—we are told to test all prophecy, as well as to hold “false” prophets to account (1 Corinthians 12–14; 1 Thessalonians 5:20–21; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1ff.). The Body truly benefits from mature prophets who follow in the way of the Suffering Servant—the subversive and hidden agent of God.

But prophetic people following in the way of Jesus cannot be moralistic and grouchy religious naysayers; like Jesus, they are also harbingers of eschatological joy and hope, heroes of the faith, declarers of God’s abiding love for his people no matter what, people who find their primary comfort in God himself—the intimacy of the prophet’s connection to God is its own reward.

Evangelistic-Evangelist

At their core, the evangelistic aspects of the church relate to their unique status as people whose very existence is brought about through living into the original and originating message of the ecclesia—the gospel of the kingdom. Evangelism is essentially the task of getting the message out and getting a positive response from the audience. In many ways, the evangelistic function is the church’s inbuilt marketing department.

Seminal missiologist David Bosch offers us a packed description of the church’s evangelistic purpose:

We may, then, summarize evangelism as that dimension and authority of the church’s mission which, by word and deed and in light of particular conditions and a particular context, offers every person and community everywhere a valid opportunity to be directly challenged to a radical reorientation of their lives, an orientation which involves such things as deliverance from slavery to the world and its powers; embracing Christ as Saviour and Lord; becoming a living member of his community, the church; being enlisted into his service of reconciliation, peace, and justice on earth; and being committed to God’s purpose of placing all things under the rule of Christ.¹⁷

The Evangelistic Function/Purposes of the Church

Leveraging off Bosch’s great description, I would add that the evangelist function exists to:

- **communicate.** The evangelistic function enhances the capacities of the whole church to be able to communicate the unfolding story of the church in compelling, accessible, and understandable ways.
- **elicit response.** It elicits a response from the audience—effectively “closing the deal.” create an invitational culture. Related to the “taste and see” aspect of the previous function, an evangelistic culture invites people to experience what the church is pointing toward. In this form, it is inherently attractional.

- **sneeze the movement message.** Evangelism involves the infectious sharing of the movement's core message. This is done both inside and outside the community of faith. The message itself must remain compellingly related to real existential human issues so as to retain its infectious and timeless nature. The message is viral and can readily be passed on. A church without an evangelistic function is definitely on its way to death, precisely because the gospel (the evangel) is what brings new life.
- **ensure cultural relevance.** Evangelism makes rich use of popular culture (symbols, language, narratives, and ideas) to find the gospel-keys into the heart of the immediately surrounding culture (not necessarily cross-cultural).
- **develop sticky messaging.** The sticky message is simple, surprising, emotive, and creates enthusiasm. The evangelist ensures the "stickiness" of the core message of the church—the evangel, or the cause of the organization.
- **present the value proposition.** It is vital that all understand the "value proposition" that is the church of Jesus Christ. To use the words marketing, sales and promotion does not cheapen but rather highlights the irreplaceable importance of the function for movemental forms of church.
- **create branding.** Branding involves the management of how the organization is being perceived and experienced. Because it is concerned largely with the communication and reception of the message, evangelistic functions will need to include the issue of branding and brand consistency.
- **value the individual.** Evangelism takes individual people very seriously. Each person is a vital part of a network in the broader society. Each person is an object of God's eternal compassion.
- **demonstrate catalytic witness.** Because of this external focus, evangelism is an essential catalyst for people movement. It's not just about verbal proclamation but is also committed to the demonstration of good news in word, sign, and deed. Evangelism is therefore witness to the good news of the reign of God in Jesus.
- **recruit to the cause.** Sociologically speaking, evangelism is all about recruitment to the cause. Cultivating an innate evangelistic sensibility therefore requires making sure that the message is transmitted well and is received by the recipients in ways that draw them into the saving story of Jesus. But recruitment is not just about "saving people." It also describes the general capacity to draw people into the various other functions of the church in mission.

The Calling/Role of the Evangelistic Person

The whole church, in fact all Christians, are to be involved in extending the message of the church. But some are called to embody and exemplify evangelism in the community. These are the evangelists.¹⁸ Evangelists are exceptional recruiters. The most obvious outcome of the ministry of evangelists is that people are enlisted to the cause of Christ. In other words, the church grows. Evangelists have the capacity to get significant buy-in from their hearers. They are persuasive, infectious people with appealing personalities.¹⁹ In terms of the diffusion of ideas and the spread of movements, they are the persuaders—people with significant negotiation skills. They tend to have an indefinable trait that goes beyond what they say and makes others want to agree with them. For this reason, evangelists are agents of conversion.

Evangelists tend to be great social connectors—the kind of people who can link the rest of us up with the world: “They have a special gift for bringing the world together,” as Malcolm Gladwell puts it.²⁰ They have a capacity to make connections with people in a way that demonstrates social as well as emotional intelligence. In many ways, their function is therefore genuinely priestly, in that they mediate between God and people as well as between people and people. Evangelists also have an affinity for the gospel that makes them adept at applying it to people’s unique experience and circumstance.

They really are positive, good news people. The sharing of good news is an inextricable part of their capacity to understand people and make connections. Not only do they have strong relational affinity, they also have a great capacity to translate the gospel into the prevailing culture in ways that make a lot of sense. This too is an intrinsic aspect of priestly ministry: mediating the knowledge of God, sharing good news, and inviting people to join the story.

Outside the organized faith community, evangelists tend to be entrepreneurs, excellent communicators, motivators, marketers, and enthusiastic storytellers.

Shepherding-Shepherd The ideal of a good shepherd is widespread throughout the Bible (Psalm 23) as is conversely the image of a bad one (Jeremiah 21). The shepherd, the one who cares for his sheep, symbolizes one of the ideal forms of political dominion in Israel. The Lord tells David, “You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler” (2 Samuel 5:2). Following the many archetypal biblical cues, fulfilled and exemplified by our Great Shepherd, the shepherding purposes given to the church will tend to be those associated with social connectivity in the community and the church’s purpose to be an agent of God’s healing—helping people to develop resiliency and protecting them from damaging influences.

The Shepherding Function/Purposes of the Church

The shepherding function or purpose of the church exists to:

- **enrich communal experience.** At its core, the ecclesia is a community gathered in adherence to Jesus—the recipients of his saving, reconciling, and healing grace. The

shepherding function exists to enhance the communal dimension of the community. Friendship, mutuality, reconciliation, and devotion in the midst of life together demonstrate a better way to be human together.

- **develop social bonding.** In many ways, the shepherding functions develop the necessary attachment and bonding to the movement and its purposes in the world. The focus therefore falls strongly on developing loving relationships that mirror the love of Jesus in the world. In a sense, the shepherding function is the ecclesial equivalent of an organization's human resource (HR) department.
- **demonstrate credible witness.** It was Lesslie Newbigin who said that the greatest evidence for the power of the gospel is the life of a community who is willing to live by it.²¹ The shepherd purpose of the church will be then to nurture just this form of alternative society of local disciples witnessing to the blessings of the kingdom of God.
- **protect the Body.** Healthy communities are notoriously difficult to develop and maintain. Because each member of the community is capable of sinful actions and each community is made up of selfish people, community life is inordinately vulnerable to damage. Therefore, like the Good Shepherd, shepherding will serve to protect the church from influences and people that will destroy it from the inside out. More often than not, these forces are inside the church; the shepherding function will at times therefore need to be able to identify, correct, and discipline errant members.
- **promote and facilitate healing.** This highlights the healing and restorative dimensions of the gospel of Jesus. This function spans from practical care of the sick and feeble, to prayer for healing, to counseling and reconciliation in broken relationships—a very important aspect of healthy community.
- **encourage shalom and wholeness.** The biblical idea of peace (shalom) involves not just an absence of conflict, but also the active experience of harmony, restoring of wholeness, and the experience of godly prosperity.
- **champion inclusion and embrace.** The members of the church are chosen by Jesus and not by societal trends and preferences. The church is a new humanity made up of all classes, ethnicities, and genders, united together in Jesus and called into his Body. There is a deep respect for the poor and the excluded.
- **assist in discipleship in the Way.** This function requires each church to assist its members in living consistent lives in the everyday. The local church is in essence a disciple-making system where everyone is committed to following Jesus in the context of all of life. Perhaps one of the best ways to articulate the essence of the shepherding function is summed up in the word formation in the way of Christ, lived locally and communally.

- **enable human flourishing.** The shepherding function creates a culture and an environment where people can thrive and flourish and reach their full potential as creatures made in the image of God.
- **cultivate the family of God.** One of the main goals of the shepherding functions is to draw people together and reconcile them together as a redeemed family. The functions look to restore God to the people as father and to each other as brothers and sisters. Family is God's plan A, and the shepherding functions highlight the empathetic nature and loyalty that keeps families together.
- **cultivate rich and loving community.** Scripture is clear that one of the main ways the world will know us is by our reputation as a loving community (John 13:35). Deep and meaningful relationships with one another, along with a strong value for each person's story exemplify the shepherding functions that seek to create and maintain healthy community.

The Calling/Role of the Shepherding Person

At its core, the shepherd is the vocation tasked with creating and maintaining healthy community, promoting the common good, encouraging people in the faith, and ensuring the welfare of the people as well as the broader society in which the community abides.²²

Shepherds pay close attention to their immediate environment, noticing details about people and the state of the community. They necessarily have strong empathic aptitudes and heightened capacities for meaningful friendships and relationships. To be a good shepherd in any reasonable sense of the word would be to know all the names and the stories of the people in one's immediate care. Although this does not exclude a broader shepherd-of-shepherds (pastor et pastorum) role that occurs in a larger pastoral organization, it does highlight that calling oneself a pastor or shepherd yet not knowing the personal details of the particular people in one's orbit probably disqualifies one from being a shepherd in any meaningful sense of the term.

Because of their great sense of and need for cohesion and unity, shepherds will find it disheartening when people leave the community—for good or not-so-good reasons. People, even (or perhaps especially) the most unlikely, most vulnerable, and most insignificant ones, matter to shepherds.

Teaching-Teacher

The teaching function has roots in the scriptural tradition but came to prominence in Israel's exile, as the people of God had to cultivate a distinctive worldview in a hostile context—hence the role of the rabbi by the time of Jesus. Other than that, its roots are in Israel's wisdom literature, whereby people were schooled in seeing the world through the eyes of faith.

The Teaching Functions/Purposes of the Church

The teaching function of the church exists to:

- **bring wisdom and understanding.** At its core, the teaching function is focused on acquiring wisdom and understanding in the community of God's people. This is achieved partly by cultivating a culture of curiosity and the pursuit of insight and learning, as well as through the interpretation and explanation of the Scriptures. In the New Testament, the church is meant to be its own seminary, a place of learning, and is directly responsible for the teaching function.
- **develop worldview formation and maintenance.** Christianity has a distinctive "take" on the world. There is such a thing as a biblical mind. It means seeing the world as God sees it, as described in the Scriptures. One of the key purposes of teaching is the development of a philosophy congruent to Scripture and workable in life.
- **cultivate a love of the Scriptures.** The Scriptures are complex and rich documents that require devoted and loving study in order to see their true beauty. The teaching function seeks to reveal the beauty to all within the church.
- **ensure theological discourse.** One of the key aspects of the teaching function is to ensure ongoing theo-logos (God-talk) through engagement with the primary texts of the movement among all the members of the community.
- **develop resources for learning.** A critical aspect of the teaching function is to communicate ideas through the various media at hand. This also involves developing useful tools, writings, liturgies and practices that can embody ideas.
- **integrate life and thinking.** Good teaching not only informs; it also forms people in an ethos ... a way of discipleship. For theology to be truly grasped, it must be lived. We must become the truth that we seek to convey. The medium must become consistent to its core message. This involves lifelong learning and practice.
- **transmit ideas.** It is very important for the church to be able to transfer its worldview and ideas to individual people, and through them, to different generations and cultures.
- **develop traditioning.** This involves the development of a "tradition" (paradosis) or learning that can be handed down from one generation to another, which creates a legacy of those ideas. The articulation of this tradition is an important aspect of the teaching function.
- **create a culture of lifelong learning.** The teaching function creates a passion for learning within the community. Teachers create a culture that values and creates pathways for learning, and makes learning accessible to all. Learning is lifelong because

we are continually being transformed, as well as continually exploring and discovering ever-greater depths of God.

The Calling/Role of the Teaching Person

As we can see, at its core the teaching function is about mediating a particular type of practical wisdom and philosophical understanding nuanced by the biblical worldview. A teacher therefore will largely be concerned with helping people gain insight into how God wants them to see and experience their world. As such, they will seek to bring theological truth and shape the consciousness of God's people to be consistent with that truth.²³

In many ways, teachers are similar to prophets and apostles in that they deal with ideas that shape life. The difference perhaps is that teachers are concerned more about broad comprehension and systematic understanding as opposed to faithfulness to the covenant (prophets) and the nest of more foundational and formative (meta)ideas for which the apostle is the assigned custodian. Teachers often do not have that sense of urgency that drives the apostolic and the prophetic functions.

From a biblical perspective, teaching is not about speculation in and of itself (idealism); rather, it is about the ministry of ideas in action (ethos), that is, discipleship or formation. Teachers cannot teach what they do not know, and they cannot lead where they will not themselves go. Therefore, biblical teachers must have real participation in the ideas they propose.

Bringing it all Together

Summarizing all this in a table might look like this (see below):

Table 7.1 Comprehensive List of Functions and Possible Expressions of Callings



APOSTOLIC / APOSTLE

APEST Functions (Purposes)	APEST Callings (Roles)
• Seeding the DNA of the church through mission and works that extend the movement • Maintaining an abiding commitment of sentness (mission) throughout the organization • Extending the missionary impact of the church • Maintaining compliancy around core ideas and culture (DNA) • Networking translocally • Maintaining paradigm and vision • Maintaining a strategic commitment to church planting strategy and pioneering leadership • Ensuring organizational agility, adaptability, and scalability • Mobilizing leaders, resources, and churches • Maintaining a sense of the big picture which makes sense of the small issues • Priming the organization for innovation and entrepreneurship • Developing capacities for appropriate risk-taking (develop “anti-fragile” organization)	• Missional leaders • Movement starters • Church planters (though not all) • Innovators • Pioneers • Custodians of the DNA of the Church • Entrepreneurs • Organizational architects and designers • Cross-cultural missionaries • Founders of organizations/ movements • Guardians of the organizing ideas (DNA) • Designers and architects • Networkers • Culture creators • Missional trainers • Research and development workers • Consultants • Ambassadors (agents and representatives) • Quality controllers



PROPHETIC / PROPHET

APEST Functions (Purposes)	APEST Callings (Roles)
• Maintaining the God focus/orientation throughout the organization through prayer and worship • Maintaining covenantal bonds throughout church/organization (love, passion, and responsibility) • Cultivating commitments to social justice and commitments to respect the poor • Engaging in spiritual warfare • Speaking truth to power • Encouraging repentance to maintain the God-relationship • Questioning the institution where it becomes inhuman, self-protective, and/or oppressive • Developing learning through questioning • Maintaining the moral and spiritual witness of the community • Maintaining the “soul” of the organization • Fueling passion for the cause • Renouncing idolatry and false forms of worship • Maintaining the integrity and authenticity to the founding values • Maintaining and cultivating a holy imagination of life under God’s rule and covenant • Developing prophetic sensibilities in leaders and ministers • Developing prefigurative communities that witness to God’s presence and purpose • Maintaining self-critical insight in the organization and the people	• Call to repentance and faithfulness • Intercessors • Social activists and campaigners • “Passionary” (maintaining the soul and passion of the organization) • Worship leaders • Questioners of the status quo • Holy rebels/dissenters • Incarnational missionaries • Innovators of new forms • Poets • Artists • Musicians • Prayer and deliverance ministers • Local activists • Non-violent protesters • Aid and development workers • Problem solvers • Detectives • Mystics • Insightful/deep thinkers • Whistle-blowers • Investigative journalists



EVANGELISTIC / EVANGELIST

APEST Functions (Purposes)	APEST Callings (Roles)
• Developing an invitational and welcoming culture (enhancing attractational capacities) • Proclaiming the core messages of the organization/church • Championing cultural relevance of organization and message to primary audience • Developing the stickiness and simplicity of the core message • Entrepreneurial • Developing evangelistic culture • Ensuring Evangel(ical) theology and ethos • Maintaining cultural relevance • Developing evangelistic leadership and ministers • Maintaining connections with outsiders • Maintaining positive, life-affirming and redemptive “vibe” in the community	• Recruiters to the cause • Contagious agents of the message • Singers of the organization’s song • Spreaders of the message • Apologists • Entrepreneurs • Salespeople • Communications and media workers • Marketers • Storytellers • Leaders of large and expansive organizations • Journalists • Networkers • Event producers and directors • Deal-makers



SHEPHERDING / SHEPHERD

APEST Functions (Purposes)	APEST Callings (Roles)
• Cultivating a loving and caring community • Being the extended “Family of God” • Including the unloved and marginalized • Ensuring bonding among the followers in the Jesus movement • Cultivating wholesome relationships in community • Developing a loving culture • Developing a high EQ Culture • Championing a commitment to discipleship • Ensuring the appropriate protection of members (inclusion/exclusion) • Maintaining relational glue • Developing and maintaining pathways for maturity and discipleship • Enacting communal discipline • Creating a place of healing • Developing pastoral leadership and ministers	• Defenders and guardians of the community • Pastoral carers • Spiritual directors • Community developers • Networkers (relational) • Healers-counselors • Spiritual directors • Human resource workers • Recreational workers • Social workers • Police and defense personnel • Conveners of community • Liturgists (communal worship)



TEACHING / TEACHER

APEST Functions (Purposes)	APEST Callings (Roles)
• Fostering a learning culture—the church is its own seminary • Developing resources for learning • Developing active learning experiences through engagement with God and World • Cultivating a culture of curiosity and the love of insight • Explaining and interpreting the Scriptures • Articulating the theology-philosophy of the group • Transferring ideas across generations • Providing instruction in the Way • Fostering wisdom and intelligence • Developing a philosophy congruent to Scripture and life • Training wise and informed leaders and ministers	• Mediators of wisdom and understanding • Instructors/trainers • Managers of meaning • Mentors/coaches • Educators • Theologians • Philosophers • Guides for the perplexed • Writers • Thinkers • Truth-tellers • Researchers