



Seeking Apostolic Genius for Renewal of the Church:

Activating Six Critical Missional DNA Elements

THE BIG IDEA

Sixty percent or more of the population will not likely be reached by the prevailing models. Solutions will involve the activation of all of Jesus' people as transformative agents in his Kingdom, relying upon six critical elements of historical missional movements described in "The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church" by Alan Hirsch, Strand Publishing, Australia, 2006.

Future Travelers is an R&D / "skunk works" style initiative that is trying to pave the way for the church of the future with more comprehensive Gospel spreading and embedding capacities. Such exponentially effective movements will require leveraging the strengths of two church models:

- The prevailing large church – with platform, voice and resources, and
- The emerging incarnational approaches – with potential for reach, multiplication, people-movement.

Important questions will be pursued with a group of ten adventurous mega-churches who are seeking to learn lessons about increasing their missional effectiveness through experimentation and risky commitment:

1. In what ways is God positioning and using the mega-church and multi-site movements of the prevailing church to unleash a movement of incarnational faith expressions?
2. What does it look like for the prevailing church to see one of its key roles as supporting, equipping and releasing lay leaders to reach and transform their communities through more incarnational expressions?
3. How can we best leverage the mega-church/multi-site church platforms to catalyze a movement of more missional / incarnational faith communities?
4. What new strategies and innovations are necessary for reaching the 60+% of the population that current prevailing church expressions are not reaching?
5. How do our paradigms of church need to change to suit the situation of Christianity at the dawn of the 21st Century?
6. What vocabulary and new nomenclatures are needed to frame the new movement expressions that will emerge as the mega-church / multi-site church becomes a significant platform for more missional / incarnational faith community expressions?
7. What it means to unleash a genuine people movement, empowering every believer to be an agent of the Kingdom wherever they find themselves?
8. What it means to exegete the culture of the city and adapt new forms of church to suit?
9. What are the new expressions emerging for holistic AND sustainable approaches to transformation?
10. Who are the other pioneers / innovators of this emerging movement and how can we support and develop them?

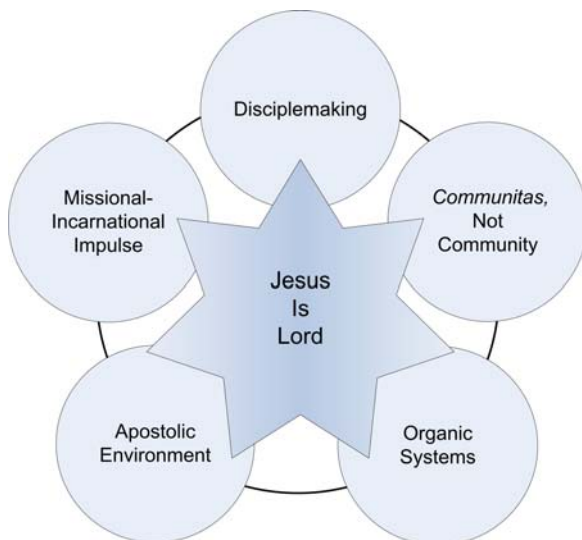
Apollos Leadership (www.apollosleadership.org) has committed to contribute to Future Travelers as researchers and facilitators. All lessons will be made available online (<http://www.shapevine.com>) and in a book by Alan Hirsch and Dave Ferguson, "On the Verge" which will also be the theme book/concept for the Exponential 2011 conference, <http://www.exponentialconference.org/> .



The Forgotten Ways

Alan Hirsh describes Apostolic Genius as the aggregation of the six elements of missional DNA (mDNA) shown below, which together are necessary for reproduction and sustainability of genuine Jesus movements in history. Five elements form a constellation around 'Jesus is Lord' which places Jesus as having the central role in defining the movement.

Jesus is Lord – Jesus is the focal point of our relationship with God, the center governing every aspect of life and the organizing principle of all genuine Christian movements (Deut. 6:4-6, Rom. 11:33-36, Col. 1:13-20).



Disciple Making – The lifelong process of becoming like Jesus (Rom. 8:29) which is supported by the Church's core task of investment in developing authentic disciples (Matt. 28:19-20).

Missional – Incarnational Impulse – The practical outworking of the mission of God and of the Incarnation.

- A dynamic outward thrust of being 'sent' into the world (John 20:21, 5:36-37, 6:44, 8:16-18, 17:18), and
- A related deepening impulse into the cultural context to seed and embed the gospel incarnationally (John 1:1-18).

Jesus practiced this through His Presence (John 1:1-15, Col. 2:9), Proximity (Mark 1:15, Luke 19:10), Powerlessness (Phil. 2:5-6, Luke 22:25-27, Matt. 23:25-28) and Proclamation.

Apostolic Environment – The environment created by empowering, servant leadership influence (Luke 22:25-27, Matt. 20:25-28) that:

- Stewards missional DNA, and
- Catalyzes the ministry functions (Eph. 4:7, 11-12; APEST: apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, shepherding, teaching) for release of spiritual gifts.

Organic Systems – The structuring of the organization around living systems principles that result in viral or exponential growth and have ability to adapt quickly to changing environments; such systems:

- Embody movement ethos or dynamics, e.g. disturbing the status quo, driven by a cause, strong appeal, etc.,
- Are highly networked and de-centralized, and
- Keep structures simple and are easily reproducible, i.e. every group of God's people have the 'DNA' needed to adapt and thrive.

Communitas, Not Community – A deeper form of community or comradery that forms in the context of involvement in a cause or shared ordeal, most typically involving the shedding existing securities and movement along adventurous, challenging paths.



Provocative, but orthodox ideas from Alan Hirsch: (Paraphrased)

On ecclesia...

“How did they do it?” was the driver for Alan’s research.

There is no silver bullet, but there is a silver imagination, which is about re-calibrating to our founder - Jesus; a process Alan calls radical traditionalism.

We have a way of thinking about church – institutional, priestly dependency, and ~5% are active. Since only a few can be ‘professional’ it drives passivity.

The church is perfectly designed to achieve the results we are achieving!

Every believer contains incredible potential for world transformation.

- The potential is sometimes dormant, i.e. God’s people are ‘carriers’ of ecclesia, seeds for forests, sparks for a fire, etc.
- Everyone has to play! The biggest demonic trick was separation of priests and people of God.

Our goal is that every believer is a church planter, and every church a church planting church.

The church is a “scratch and sniff” experience of the Kingdom.

Missio dei – we have a sent, redeeming God (sentness); we got it backwards; church took precedence over mission.

Some emergents are deconstructionists, defining what they are against vs. what they are for.

On ‘Jesus is Lord’...

‘Jesus is Lord’ or ‘Yahweh is King’ (Deut. 6:4) - a worldview in three words. This is a claim to absolute loyalty, absolute sovereignty and bringing all aspects of our lives back to God.

The Incarnation was how God engaged the world. As evangelicals, we sometimes miss the ‘middle life and teachings of Jesus, and his humanity’ by limiting His influence to salvation only. He also came to rule as King.

If we don’t get Jesus right, we create a toxic system, which produces toxic people.

Christology informs....Missiology (sits under God) informs....Ecclesiology (plant gospel, not church).

On Disciple Making...

“Discipleship is becoming more like Jesus, which commits us to ‘embodiment of message,’ just as ‘Jesus the Word,’ which is our spiritual authority.”

How can we get onboard with Jesus’ plan of discipleship? “Die.”



Movement dynamics are proportional to number of disciples. The twelve pulled it off because they were first true disciples.

We should take lessons from learning systems theory and create communities of practice. We must act our way into a new way of thinking not vice versa. It's not enough to introduce (teach) practices that form culture.

We should work with the normal rhythms of life – since all of life is sacred, breaking down the dualism between sacred-secular.

You cannot learn leadership, mission, or ministry divorced from context. We must place people where they must learn to survive, putting people at risk. Teaching needs current experience in what we're trying to teach.

With disciples you can go places, with consumers you can't.

If you want to reproduce, you have got to be "reproduce-able."

On Missional – Incarnational Impulse...

This is the theology of a missional and incarnational God. God engaged the world by sending, deepening – sending deepening.

All missional effort is cross cultural, learning other people's culture and 'being with them,' which is an act of love and requires commitment, and is the heart of the Christian message.

On Apostolic Environment...

Apostolic leadership catalyzes an extension of Christianity through the power of the Holy Spirit. They embed mDNA and create the environment in which other ministries emerge.

If we want missional church, we need ministry and environment to go with it. We find these ministries in Eph. 4:7, 11-12 represented as APEST: apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, shepherding and teaching. Leadership

Your dominant APEST is your motivation or your calling is the way you use your gifts, which are functional to your calling. Most people have multi-dimensional APEST profiles, where we see complementary expressions, e.g. one's dominant APEST might 'apostle' who is 'teaching' or A^t.

On Organic Systems

The church is most phenomenal when it organizes itself as a living organism - the rhythms and structures of life and a common biblical metaphor.

We see a profoundly an interconnected and highly networked structure with distributed intelligence, adaptability and virus like growth and reproducibility.



On Communitas, Not Community

Communitas is a unique form of togetherness binding God's people together as they pursue mission, sharing adventures, ordeals and common stories of life and faith.