

**The Twenty Primary Combinations**

In this chapter, we'll meet the twenty primary APEST combinations. Before we do, we'll need to keep a couple of things in mind. Firstly, we need to describe the Jesus-given people- gifts of being apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers in terms of preferences, not in terms of ministry experience (we might not have had any) or gifts of the Holy Spirit (the gift of prophecy is not restricted to prophets) or any particular church tradition (in our diversity, we define too narrowly). Secondly, we need to understand the Jesus-given people-gifts as preferences, not restrictive boxes to limit what we can or cannot do. The twenty primary combinations help us to explore and discover what kind of apostle/prophet/evangelist/shepherd/teacher I am – these gift types are not monolithic, but multi-faceted – but they should not be understood too rigidly, not least because all the gifts are carried within us and nuance us.

**Apostolic Intelligence: trail-blazers, team-builders, overseers, architects**

Apostolic intelligence is concerned with creating the necessary environment for us to fulfil our fundamental calling to fill the earth and exercise God's good rule. That is to say, it is concerned with the vision to go out beyond the already-known – guarding our sent-ness, in the face of a desire to over-consolidate settled-ness – and the call to keep returning to the founding values – guarding freedom in the face of captivity, and inter-dependency in the face of independence. Alan Hirsch and Tim Catchim helpfully distinguish between Pauline apostles (who extend their field across contexts) and Petrine apostles (who reform within their existing context), and suggest the further differentiation of pioneers (Pauline explorers), networkers (Pauline catalysts), mobilisers (Petrine catalysts) and miners (Petrine explorers). I want to offer a slight alternative: trail-blazers (Pauline explorers), team-builders (Pauline catalysts), overseers (Petrine catalysts), and architects (Petrine explorers).

**1. Trail-blazers: Apostle-prophet**

On a pioneer-settler continuum, apostles represent the pioneering end; but there is a pioneer-settler continuum within apostolic (and, indeed, prophetic, evangelistic, shepherding and teaching) intelligence. APs are the pioneers' pioneers. In the field of their choice, they are the trail-blazers. In missionary history, they are the men and women who went to the most isolated and unreached people and lived there, alone, for many years. In any field, they go to the furthest frontier, long before anyone else joins them; actively pursuing ideas ahead of their time with unshakeable resolve. Bearing in mind that Jesus apportions his gifts in varying amounts, the 'most gifted' APs are almost certainly misunderstood by their peers (often reinforced by their own eccentricity), and admired at a distance (often reinforced by being almost impossible to live with). Very often, APs don't even live to see the fruit of their life's work, which is enjoyed by others.

**2. Team-builders: Apostle-evangelist**

Like APs, AEs are very much pioneers. Unlike APs, AEs are very good at generating and perpetuating team. They have the natural ability to present the unrelentingly hard work of pioneering as a good thing to be part of (evangelists are those who carry good news). AEs make great team-builders, expedition leaders, sports coaches, motivators. Even if there is a high turnover to their teams – because pioneering takes its toll, or because they release others, or even because of friendly-fire where an AE has least preference for Shepherding – they are consistently good at team-building.

### 3. Overseers: Apostle-shepherd

Conventional wisdom tells us that apostles and shepherds are opposite ends of the people-gifts. But conventional wisdom has a tendency to lack depth of insight. Some apostles have a strong secondary preference as shepherds, and they make great overseers. As apostles, they have a concern for environments in which we can hold fast to what is good – guarding the core vision and values of their community so that they can evolve in continuity – but this is combined with a concern for people within that environment, and AS's are particularly good at deploying people and holding them accountable. This is the classic 'bishop' role, albeit that such a role is not restricted to formal bishops, and that many bishops do not fulfil the role.

### 4. Architects: Apostle-teacher

Along with the AS, the AT inhabits the consolidating end of the apostolic spectrum. Whereas the AS has a particular concern for people, the AT has a particular interest in and gift for structural relationship (living stones), for developing ideas. While structure can be unhealthy where it becomes hierarchical, ATs provide for the necessary organisation in the organism – and every organism has an organising structure, however light-weight it might be. (As an aside, I am a PA – we'll come to them next – but I am a PAT...that is to say, my secondary apostolic preference is itself AT, and I am, indeed, fascinated with structure and ideas.)

### **Prophetic Intelligence: visionaries, heralds, liberators, sages**

Prophetic intelligence is concerned with the gap between the present (what is) and the future (what could be). As with apostles, there is a diversity of emphases with which this is expressed, depending on wider personality, including – though by no means restricted to – APEST profile.

### 5. Visionaries: Prophet-apostle

PAs are visionaries. Whereas APs travel beyond the horizon in a particular direction, PAs sow the dream of what lies beyond the edge of what is currently known. Whereas APs have the impulse to move, almost certainly alone, PAs need community around them to inspire to move; and quite likely lack the necessary focus to move in one particular direction (thus ruling out other possibilities), though this is not to suggest that they are theorists with no experience of what they speak. While needing community, PAs (like all prophets to some degree, but probably most of all) will struggle with the tension of the community being so far from where it could be and being so resistant to change. But as prophets are designed to live in that tension,

if they found themselves in a community that too closely represents their view of 'perfection,' rather than feeling at home, PAs experience a sense of homelessness. This, as well as a wide and short attention span, lends PAs to engaging in a diversity of creative interests, rather than specialising in one.

## 6. Heralds: Prophet-evangelists

The PE combination has the particular impulse to proclaim what is imminent (as opposed to merely potential or distant), and the gift of being able to present change as good news. PEs are needed in any context facing change, as the prospect of change is threatening to the majority. PEs prepare the way. Where they have been hurt, and have not experienced healing, they can be Prophets of Doom.

## 7. Liberators: Prophet-shepherds

PS's are concerned with embodied justice for real and particular people. They find themselves drawn to working with marginalised and exploited groups. A friend of mine is part of a team working on a long-term project to deliver a new hospital. In this cost- and target-driven exercise, she insists on speaking out on behalf of the staff who will work in this environment, the patients and their relatives who will experience it. PS's might campaign for women caught in the sex trade or children exploited in sweatshops; but this is a great example of a PS contributing their unique gift to their own workplace.

## 8. Sages: Prophet-teachers

If PAs are visionaries who sow dreams, PTs are sages whose wisdom in making steps towards those dreams is recognised and sought-out by others. Their wisdom, combined with their desire and ability to pass on that wisdom, lend them well to facilitating others to bring about change in structured and sustainable ways.

## **Evangelistic Intelligence: translators, midwives, convincers, enthusiasts**

Evangelistic intelligence is concerned with sharing good news. We must not confine that to good news about Jesus – evangelists who know and love Jesus share the good news about Jesus because they are evangelists. Evangelists will share news about anything that is, in their opinion, good news. Moreover, when evangelists share good news it has an attractiveness that the same news might well lack coming from an apostle, prophet, shepherd or teacher, which makes them great recruiters.

## 9. Translators: Evangelist-apostles

As with each of the people-gifts, evangelists come on a pioneer-settler continuum, and EAs are the most pioneering. These are the translators, those who not only carry good news but who find ways to carry that good news into cultures other than their own. They engage the challenge of communicating good but highly technical specialist news in popular accessible terms – so that patients can understand what they need to know without having spent six years at medical school, for example; or the challenge of translating news between written, aural, and visual media; in and

out of text and graphic. They take great pleasure in seeing how the good news they introduce is appropriated, integrated, and handed on again in the new context.

### 10. Midwives: Evangelist-prophets

If Prophet-evangelists are heralds, proclaiming the change in an imminent future as good news, Evangelist-prophets are midwives, bringing good news to the point of birth in any given context and finding themselves at the heart of the moment of celebration. In a workplace context, an EP may express themselves well in delivering a good news project, before moving on to another.

### 11. Convincers: Evangelist-shepherds

As noted in the previous chapter, evangelists and shepherds are both 'people' people; and Evangelist-shepherds are doubly 'people' people (as opposed to task-focused or principle-focused people), and this makes them natural convincers. This is not to imply any manipulation of others on their part – though certainly an ES can turn their natural ability to such a purpose should they be so shaped and inclined – but simply to say that they are naturally winsome in an infectious manner, and others are regularly convinced to come onboard with the good news they present. As such, more than other evangelists, an ES will regularly experience quick favourable decisions.

### 12. Enthusiasts: Evangelist-teachers

ETs are enthusiasts. They may be experts in their field, but they have the gift of making their expertise accessible to others in an open and engaging manner. I think of a friend who is a passionate ornithologist. Indeed, ETs make great communicators popularising good news, and I can think of several television presenters across a range of genres who are good examples.

### **Shepherding Intelligence: protectors, encouragers, healers, nurturers**

Shepherding intelligence is concerned with humanising any given context, with care for the people within that social setting, ensuring that our humanity is not devalued. Where shepherding intelligence dominates, it results in dependency; but without it, community experiences carnage.

### 13. Protectors: Shepherd-apostles

At the heart of Psalm 23, we see a gem of an insight into the particular preference and gift of the shepherd-apostle. Apostles are concerned with environments, and shepherd-apostles express this through establishing an environment for nurturing to flourish – creating safe spaces, the shelter of a 'pen,' the freedom of a 'field.' Their particular calling comes to the fore in leading people from one space to another, in leading through transition, through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. SAs are protectors, who bring comfort as they help people move on. This is very different from the tea-and-sympathy stereotype of the pastor!

### 14. Encouragers: Shepherd-prophets

Like SAs, shepherd-prophets are far from the tea-and-sympathy pastoral stereotype. They see healing as being found not in the present but in the possible future, and their preference is to hold that hope out and encourage people to move towards that healing, rather than be content to sit with them in their hurt. In holding out both invitation and challenge, the SP will often have a bias towards challenge (the 'get a grip' or 'pull yourself together' school of pastoral care). This should not be mistaken for a lack of caring, but is an area for self-awareness.

### 15. Healers: Shepherd-evangelists

Good news gladdens the heart, and SEs are healers. Their particular pastoral focus is seeing healing experienced in people's lives – to return to the image of Psalm 23, rubbing oil on the wounds picked up on the journey through the Valley of the Shadow of Death once the sheep reach the other side. In any community – neighbourhood, workplace, church – people pick up self- and other-inflicted wounds, which, if left unattended, fester and become septic. SEs are gifted at bringing good to light and to bear.

### 16. Nurturers: Shepherd-teachers

STs predominate as the classic local church leader. Problems arise when – in any context, not only the local church – they try to be the provider: this keeps others in dependency, as infants. Rightly expressed, they are nurturers, strengthening others in healthy development towards maturity. STs are the consolidating end of the pastoral spectrum, and as such are one of the most common personality groups (I say group because each of the 20 primary combinations has a further range of combinations: in this case, STAPE, STAEP, STPAE, STPEA, STEAP, STEPA – we'll return to the full 120 combinations later). This is because community that has enough stability to hold together while having enough generativity to perpetuate life requires a majority of settlers or consolidators (shepherds and teachers) and a potent minority of pioneers (apostles, prophets, evangelists).

### **Teaching Intelligence: patrons, scribes, speculators, trainers**

Teaching intelligence is concerned with the handing on of knowledge, so that learning is perpetuated and skills are not lost.

### 17. Patrons: Teacher-apostles

TAs represent the pioneering end of the spectrum of teaching intelligence. Among teachers,

TAs are most likely to have greatest interest in extending the frontier of knowledge in their

given field. But more than that, TAs are patrons, who gather others together for the cross-pollination of knowledge, its weighing and testing and applying, and, having brought together, the 'packaging' and distribution of that knowledge. A friend of mine displays this primary preference pairing, which is creatively expressed in bringing together people from different places and interests to network and learn together. By patron, I do not mean one who bestows their wisdom from a place of hierarchical strength, but one who creates environments for the Research & Development of their field to take place.

### 18. Scribes: Teacher-prophets

Jesus spoke of 'scribes of the kingdom' who brought out of their treasure chest (the resources available to them) treasures old (received) and new (not seen before). While scribes of the kingdom may be restricted to those who know and love king Jesus, and are not restricted to any one personality, I choose to identify TPs as scribes because of their preference for the fresh application of learning, their ability to pass on what they have received often making their own contribution. If TAs create environments for learning, TPs create moments of learning.

### 19. Speculators: Teacher-evangelists

Evangelists are 'people' people; and transmitters of, and recruiters to, good news. If ETs are enthusiasts, who popularise their field of interest, TEs are speculators, who make particular if passing investments to pass on not only subject-matter but a passion for teaching. An example: in high school I had two Geography teachers and a History teacher who all saw in me a love of learning and encouraged me (not so much to pursue further study in their discipline) but to consider teaching high school as a career. Though that wasn't to be my vocation, teaching is a big part of what I do and love doing. As speculators, perhaps they backed someone who didn't respond in quite the way they hoped – but for speculators the outcome is not so much the point as the action-preference on their part.

### 20. Trainers: Teacher-shepherds

TSs represent the consolidating or settler end of teaching intelligence. Remember, we are talking about preference here, not boxes. It is not that a TS is unable to function as a patron, scribe or speculator, but their preference and fundamental motive is to be a trainer: one who, hands-on, hands on knowledge or skills to others. Without trainers in every discipline or vocation, skill sets are lost, perhaps forever. Of course, a TS will often enjoy learning a new skill as well as passing one on – appreciating the gifting of another TS. While competence is acquired through investment and practice, and some are more gifted than others, TSs as a preference group – like STs – represent a large percentage of the population.

These, then, are the twenty primary combinations.