




EPHESIANS 4:11-12
In the Post-Christian West

THE ART OF 
REACHING

with Carey Nieuwhof and Mark Clark

The Art of Reaching

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“And it was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for works of ministry and to build up the body of Christ.”

Ephesians 4:11-12

Something we must constantly remind ourselves to do is to **‘think mission, not church.’**

The church is a means to accomplish the mission of God in the world; reaching and discipling people. Of course, there are many ways the Church is called to do that.

It’s interesting that Jesus doesn’t lay out the how’s when he gives us the Great Commission (except of course, the general exhortation to baptize and teach people to obey all that he commanded... notice that is different than just teaching people all he commanded!)

The how, in a sense, is wide open - there are a million different ways.

One way, arguably the paradigmatic way of all time, laid out by the Apostle Paul is to utilize the gifts Jesus has given to the Church. Some have proposed we actually structure our churches around the roles, and while there is an argument for that, it isn’t the main priority of this exercise.

Instead - thinking mission, not church - we’ll go through how to utilize each of these roles in a **chronological**, not arbitrary, order.

In his book *The Forgotten Ways*, Alan Hirsch lays out the roles in modern vernacular.

Below is just a quick glance at the many ways each of these roles could look in the world. So, the first step is people understanding which they are: identity, gifting and the question of calling. The second step is figuring out a way to walk in these callings on the daily: the question of ministry.

APOSTLE

ENTREPRENEUR

One who oversees larger mission organization, church planting, network developers, 30-thousand foot visionaries, etc.

EVANGELIST

RECRUITER

One who actually leads people to make decisions for Jesus, who networks with people, connects with people, who has a knack for lovingly and convincingly presenting the gospel to people that causes them to 'cross the line' and become Christians.

PROPHET

COMMUNICATOR

One who is very clear on truth and communicates that truth to people in a way that causes repentance. One who not only 'teaches' the Bible, but also 'preaches' the Bible into a particular cultural context.

PASTOR

CAREGIVER/LEADER

One who leads and cares for a group of people with spiritual direction and care for them.

TEACHER

SYSTEMIZER

One who takes biblical ideas (theology) and presents them to people in a digestible, clear way that stirs affection for the ideas and for the God they point to.

The final step, Hirsch argues, is that each of the roles has a chronological order which isn't arbitrary. So how does that apply to the mission of the Church post-Christian West?

1. The Apostle

First, allow the Apostles to do their work. Here's some examples of the works of apostles:

- Dream of new models and modes of church
- Plant new versions of local and global churches
- Utilize modern technology
- Start networks of leaders on mission
- 'Poke the box' on wineskins and the way the church and the gospel functions in a particular culture

This person will typically be more macro, or 'flock', focused than 'sheep' focused (see Pastor).

2. The Prophet

Once the work of the Apostle is happening, the Prophet takes over. This may be the same person, or it could be a different person. The Prophet begins to take the truth of biblical teaching, the gospel, principles, theology, etc., and speak them into individual lives and into the life of a culture. They lovingly and boldly call for change, repentance, faith and a re-alignment to the Kingdom of God instead of the kingdoms of this world (money, beauty, sex, success, etc.)

3. The Evangelist

Then, once that messaging starts to till the soil, the work of the Evangelist kicks in. They actually lead people to move from 'the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his beloved son' (Col. 1:13). The Evangelist takes the truth the Prophet laid out and says 'now let this be your story, here is how to come to know Jesus.' Hirsch refers to them as 'recruiters'. The people who get others onto the team.

4. The Pastor

When the work of the Pastor kicks in, people who have given their lives to Jesus now need leadership, care, and discipleship in their daily lives. They need:

- Guidance
- Wisdom
- Biblical direction
- Spiritual leadership
- A clear model of Christianity
- A person to do soul-care
- Practical care

Similar to the saying ‘all politics are local’, the Pastor makes that a reality. They are ‘sheep-focused’. This role, along with the Teacher, are often gifted administrators because they need to be able to lead a multitude of people.

5. The Teacher

And finally, the work of the Teacher. If the work of the Pastor represents leadership and care, the Teacher helps to systematize that care for people locally. They take the deep doctrines of the faith, and of the Bible, and make them applicable to the lives of people. Teachers, along with the work of the Pastor, lead the heart, soul, mind, and body of their people through behavior modification, biblical truth, and methodology. They know that the main task of discipleship isn’t just to catch a fish for people, but teach people how to fish for themselves

The big takeaway here is that if the people of God amplify each of these roles, in the proper chronological order, we will be more effective at the mission of reaching and discipling people.

- Let the Apostle dream up new works and blaze a new path.
- Let the Prophet call people to stop believing in the gods they worship and move their allegiance to Jesus.
- Let the Evangelist take those people, stirred, and lead them to faith in Jesus.
- Let the Pastor begin to lead and disciple them in their new relationship with Christ.
- Let the Teacher inform their new life by truth and biblical doctrine.

Worksheet

1. Get your staff to analyze themselves within these roles:

- Personality
- Gifting
- Passions
- Experience

2. Get your staff to analyze each other (in groups of 3 or 4) to see if there is a proclivity toward one or two of these roles.

3. Pray over each person and see if there is a desire to play more of a certain role in your organization.

4. Be willing to look at your Org Chart and re-arrange people in light of these gifts, passions and identities.

5. How do expectations need to change around certain roles in your organization in regard to the speciality work of individuals? Are they being used in the right places in your church or ministry?

