

1. What is the Essence of the Church?



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References to PTE = Practical Theological Ecclesiology, 2018, David A, Smith (2)

Kärkkäinen, speaking of the Free Churches, which include the Christian Brethren, states that “many of those newer Christian traditions have not yet produced much theology of the church. Even if in everyday life they do, of course, live out their ‘churchliness.’” In fact historically our churches moved one step further, taking on a reactive anti-scholarly stance. And regarding such a stance, Wright comments that “much of Christianity is afraid of scholarly learning.... But, granted that learning without love is sterile and dry, enthusiasm without learning can easily become blind arrogance.” This possibly places the Christian Brethren in the dubious category of not only being an enthusiastic movement without substantial ecclesiological thinking, and therefore operating a blind practice, but of being open to the charge of employing blind arrogance to cover our apparent theological weakness.



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What is Ecclesiology?

Expression: The ministry of the church

Essence: The nature of the church

Kärkkäinen: An Introduction to Ecclesiology, 2002, p. 14



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PTE (75)

Kärkkäinen divides ecclesiology into two parts. The first part “focuses on the question of the ecclesiality of the church, that is, what makes the church church, or what are the conditions for being a church. The second part of ecclesiology deals with questions such as the ministry, the structure and the sacraments of the church” (Kärkkäinen 2002:14). Kärkkäinen’s division of ecclesiology helps set a broad operational frame for ecclesiology in terms of ecclesiality or essence and ministry or expression (see Figure 25). Ecclesiology, as a theory of the ecclesial praxis, is then the study of the church’s indicative nature, its essence, and its imperative historical ministry, its expression.

Theology

OT *dahbar* = Word = the way one should live

NT = faithaction

Theologia

Knowledge of divine things

Knowledge of God

Wisdom for Life

The wisdom knowledge that forms the life and practice of
the faith community of God (PTE 8)



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PTE (6-7)

The history of theology is the history of God shaped active reflection. It first finds expression in the Old Testament through the Hebrew for “Word”, *dahbar*, and the unifying concept of Torah. Unlike English today, where words can be separated as a thought or an idea over against any necessary effect or action, *dahbar* is “an extension of a person into the outer world, one that has effects” (Veling 2005:xii). For God, word creates, it creates life. In the Old Testament word does not sit separate from action, word lives. In the Jewish rabbinic tradition, God’s word, the Torah “is always about the *way one should live*” (Veling 2005:14). The Torah is faith in action for God. The New Testament expresses this same thought through the marriage of faith and works. Theology, involving the intimate relationship of theory and praxis, is “the core of the entire philosophical enterprise; it involves the relations of consciousness to being, of subject to object, of idea to reality, of word to deed, of meaning to history” (Lamb 2012:149). But this all important relationship has been shattered.

In the early years of the church the term theology was rarely used in Christian circles because of its common inclusive use in referring to pagan gods. Theology or *theologia* was first understood simply as the “knowledge of divine things” (Congar 1968:29). While the usage of the term was limited, *theologia*, as a concept referring to the “knowledge of God” (Farley 1983:22; Schaff 1893:77), was “very much part of the Christian movement and Christian (patristic) literature. In other words a salvifically originated knowledge of divine being was part of the Christian community and tradition long before it was named theology” (Farley 2001:33). To distinguish Christian theology from mystical or any other form of pagan theology Eusebius (260/265 – 339/340) entitled one of his last works *On*

Ecclesiastical Theology (Congar 1968:30). He thereby set the frame of reference for *theologia* within the faith community of God.

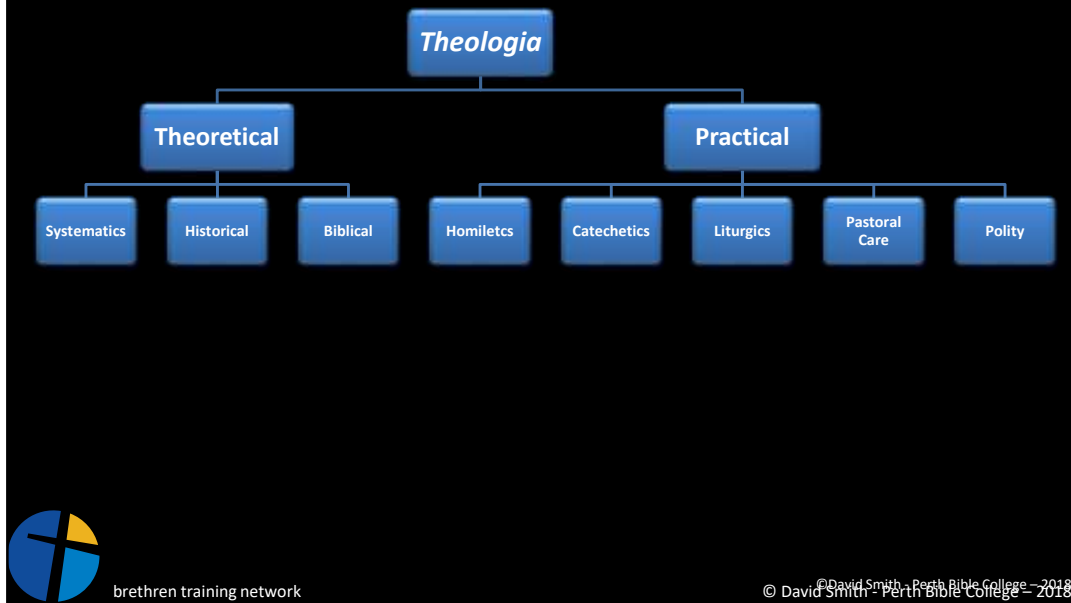
So how did the early Christians understand theology? “Early Christian practice suggests ... at the most basic level [theology] was understood as a *habitus* of the Christian believer ... the implicit world view that guided the temperament and practice of believers lives” (Maddox 1990:651). That is, theology was a knowledge “habit of the human soul” (Farley 2001:31) that attends faith. It was a faith “disposition of mind and heart from which action flows naturally ...” (Forrester 2000:5). There was considerable debate as to the nature of the knowledge habit of theology, and “if there is a dominant position it is that theology is a practical, not theoretical, habit having the primary character of wisdom” (Farley 2001:35). Theology as wisdom was conceived not as an end in itself, but as formative in the life of faith, as the “discipline of study, instruction, and shepherding directed toward forming theology/*habitus* in believers” (Maddox 1990:651). Further, for Farley, theology is caught up in the purposes of God, as *habitus* it is directed toward “the sake of God ... for God’s appointed salvific end of the human being” (Farley 1983:27).

Putting these thoughts together we can say that the early understanding of theology as *habitus* was:

The formation by wisdom knowledge of the life and practice of the faith community for God.

At its genesis then, theology pursued wisdom knowledge, with the goal of this wisdom knowledge being formational for, the individual life and practice of faith, and the life and practice of the community of faith, oriented toward the purposes of God for his people. “Theology in this sense cannot be anything but practical” (Farley 1983:27).

Theological Splintering



PTE (11-12)

We are now in a situation where academic theology produces cognitive theological theories with pure research as the goal, and separately, practical theology serves to produce technical advice to inform and improve the actions and expressions of clerical ministry. With such an apparent division we can generalise and say that theology has become increasingly blind and disconnected from the praxis, and the praxis increasingly blind and ungrounded in theology.

Theological Splintering

Expression: The ministry of the Church

Essence : The nature of the church



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Blind Theory and Praxis

Blind Theory

Disconnected
Unreflected

Blind Praxis

Ungrounded
Unreflected



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PTE (13)

The historical movements within theology have served to separate theological theory from the praxis, leading to: possibilities of blind theory and blind praxis, the setting of theological theory primarily as the master of truth and praxis as master of activity, has shifted the focus from life wisdom and community transformation, to that of educating academics and informing the practical tasks of ministry. It seems that, theology as truth, and praxis as the context of grace, has been divorced. The progressive divorce of theology and praxis over time is shown in the following chart (see Figure 2).

What Ecclesiology is used in your church?

Trinitarian
Missional
Sacramental
Herald
?



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Various Ecclesiologies

Catholic = Mediating Sacramental

Orthodox = Icon Sacramental

Lutheran = Herald

Evangelical = Missional

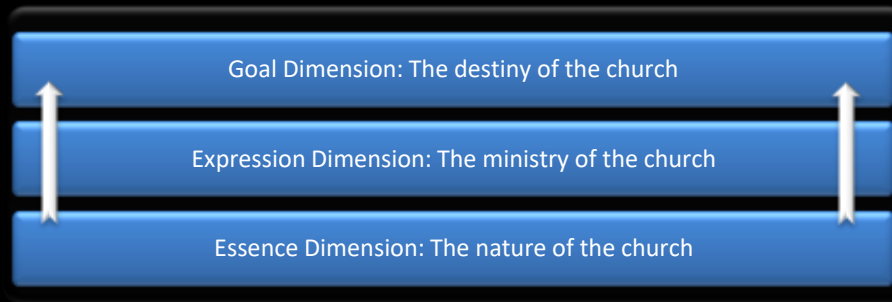
Pentecostal = Spiritual Presence



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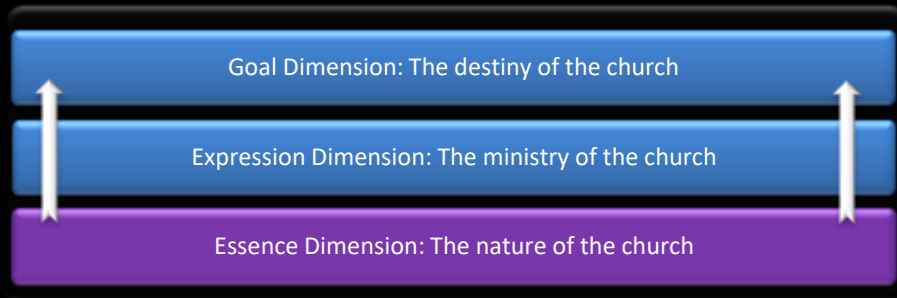
Dimensions of Ecclesiology



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What is the Essence?



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Essence Approaches

Traditional
Reformed
Dynamic
Trinitarian
Relational

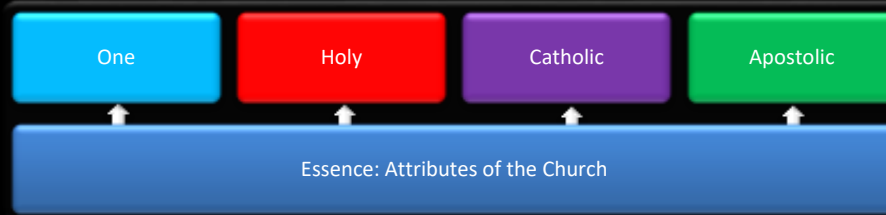


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Traditional

Attributes: One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic



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PTE (83-84)

Cyprian of Carthage (AD 250) formulated one of the earliest confessions which made reference to the church. He said, "I believe in God the Father, in his Son Christ, in the Holy Ghost. I believe the forgiveness of sins, and eternal life through the holy Church" (Schaff 2007:20). To the words in this confession the Apostles' Creed added the word catholic, confessing the holy catholic church (Schaff 2007:45). Following the Council of Constantinople in 381, the four words taken from the Nicene Creed, "one holy catholic and apostolic" (Schaff 2007:59) have been used for much of church history to express the nature or essence of the church. These words, the *notae ecclesiae* are called the "notes", "attributes", or "marks" of the church. These attributes were originally viewed as qualities or characteristics of the church under the dominance of the Roman Catholic Church. Following the emergence of other churches throughout the times of the Reformation these attributes transitioned into marks used as a polemical tool in determining that which is the "one united true church of faith" (Küng 1976:345).

Dulles, speaking of the words in their original context writes, "The term 'holy' was not ordinarily used, in the early centuries, as a criterion for distinguishing the true Church from its counterfeits" (Dulles 2002:115). Rather it was used to refer to the faith of the church arising from the residing presence of the Holy Spirit. The term "apostolic" was originally used polemically against movements such as the gnostics to distinguish between false and true doctrine "that was taught by those churches that stood in the apostolic succession" (Dulles 2002:116). The term "catholic" was originally used to encompass the "whole church as opposed to the particular churches composing it" (Dulles 2002:116). It also served to exclude early independent movements such as those

arising from the Donatist schism in North Africa.

A post Vatican II interpretation of the creedal attributes states that:

The church is one because of the indwelling of the one Holy Spirit in all the baptised; it is holy because it is set apart by God's graciousness for the reception of a mysterious love of predilection; it is catholic in the original sense of the word, meaning that it is whole and entire, possessing all the parts needed to make it integral; and it is apostolic because it remains in continuity in essentials with the original witnessing of the first-century apostles.... (Fiorenza and Galvin 1991:43)

These four attributes, although variously interpreted, have been largely unquestioned (Berkouwer 1976:14) and widely received and used by systematic theologians as points of departure for ecclesiological discussions on the essence of the church (see Küng 1976, Oden 1992, Clowney 1995, Williams 1996, Horton 2011). By Catholics, these terms are mostly used in a realised sense, and by Protestants, largely in an eschatological sense.

Traditional Attributes

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- it is **CATHOLIC** in the original sense of the word, meaning that it is whole and entire, possessing all the parts needed to make it integral;
- and it is **APOSTOLIC** because it remains in continuity in essentials with the original witnessing of the first-**century apostles....”**

Fiorenza and Galvin 1991:43 - Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives – Volume 2.



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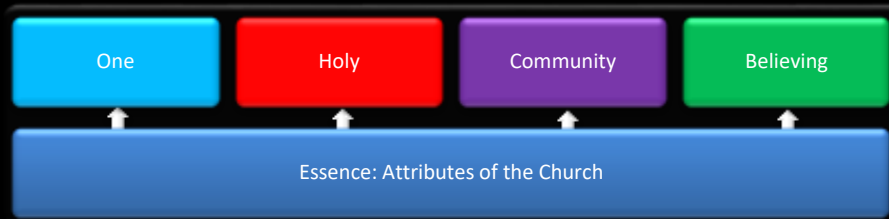
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Fiorenza and Galvin 1991:43 - Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives – Volume 2.

Reformational



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PTE (84-86)

“The reformers did not deny the four attributes of the Church; in fact they specifically emphasised their adherence to the creeds of the early Church” (Küng 1976:345). Luther states, “at all times there must be and remain one holy Christian church” (Augsburg Confession 7.1 in Kolb 2000:42). However, they reacted to the possibility of the existence of the church being viewed separate to its relationship with and in Christ. The reformers asked not the question “What is the church?” but rather, “Where is the true church?” The reformers, therefore, largely focussed on the practical marks of the church as identifiers of that which is false rather than on the attributes of what the church is in its essence.

There are a number of Reformation statements which help us construct a Reformation essence model. Luther, maintained that “the church as the ‘communion of saints,’ in accordance with the apostles’ creed, is ‘called together by the Holy Spirit’” (Kärkkäinen 2002:39–40). The Augsburg confession refers to the church as “the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is purely preached and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel” (Augsburg Confession 7.1 in Kolb 2000:42). For the reformers the church exists where the communion of saints is gathered by faith into a holy word and holy presence context.

For the reformers the oneness or unity of the church is found in the “gospel event itself rather than in ecclesiastical uniformity” (Kärkkäinen 2002:41). For the Lutheran church the pure proclamation of the word and the right administering of the sacraments ensure the unity of the church grounded in Christ. Therefore, for the reformers the word “believer” has replaced the prior apostolic focus. The faith and faithfulness of the

believer based in the word replaced the focus on apostolic succession and witness, which for the Catholics was largely attached to the institution and hierarchy of the church. Likewise it also appears that the idea of the catholicity of the church, while not neglecting its worldwide nature, is replaced by an emphasis on the gathering of the believing, or for Luther, the communion of the saints, or in Calvin's terms, the elect. Rather than the institution of the church and its appointed representatives providing ecclesial presence, now the gathering of the believing to participate in the free offer of the word and the sacraments constitutes the ecclesial presence. Seeking to more closely define those comprising the church, Calvin placed more emphasis than Luther on the faith and holiness of the church members. He states, "members of the church [are] those who by confession of faith, by example of life, and by partaking of the sacraments profess the same God and Christ" (Calvin 2008:4.1.8). For Calvin, holiness and purity of the church and the life of the member was also essential. In light of the above the nature and essence of the Reformation church could be stated as being, "one holy believing community."

Those inclined toward the traditional static attribute approach, view the essence of the church as its spiritual invisible dimension. Such ecclesiologists then propose practical marks "that render the catholic and apostolic church visible to the world. These are marks that have to do with the activity of the church, the way it demonstrates its faith and witness in the wider society" (Bloesch 2006:103). Initially the reformers saw preaching as the preeminent sign or practical mark. For Luther, "Where there are the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, there is the church" (Bloesch 2006:104). To this Calvin added the sacraments stating, "Wherever we find the word of God sincerely preached and heard, wherever we see the sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ, there we cannot have any doubt that the church of God has some existence ..." (Calvin 2008:4.1.9). To these primary marks the characteristic of church order and discipline was added. Calvin however, "included discipline in the proper observance of the sacraments" (Clowney 1995:101). Since then theologians have categorised the essential functions of the church under three Greek words "kerugma (proclamation), koinonia (fellowship, including liturgy) and diakonia or diaconal service" (Heyns and Pieterse 1990:57).

Trinitarian

Grenz' Model

God's Covenant People

Christ's Loving
Community

Spirit's Kingdom Sign

Essence: The covenant community



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PTE (101-103)

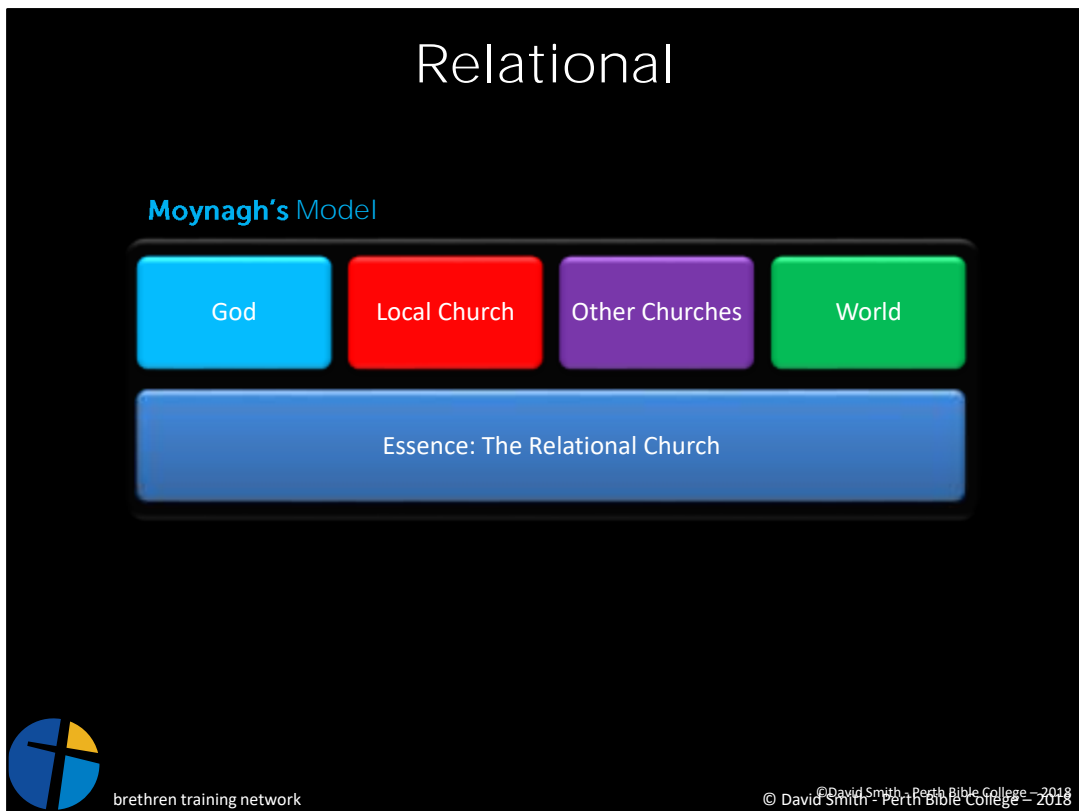
Grenz also believes the traditional attribute approach to church has “emphasised its static, theoretical essence” (Grenz 2000:464–65). Grenz proposes a more dynamic trinitarian understanding by appealing to “three concepts which describe its fundamental nature: covenant, kingdom sign, and community. The church ... is a people standing in covenant, who are a sign of the divine reign and constitute a special community. In short, the church is the eschatological covenant community” (Grenz 2000:464). For Grenz what the church is now “is determined by what the church is destined to become” (Grenz 2000:479).

Grenz believes that Christians fundamentally “saw themselves as a people called together by the proclamation of the gospel for the purpose of belonging to God through Christ” (Grenz 2000:465). Further, through employing the images, “the nation of God,” “the body of Christ,” and “the temple of the Spirit,” where each image is connected to a member of the triune God, Grenz views the church relationally, and primarily because of Christ as a covenant people belonging to God. Grenz sees the concept, “the church as the covenant people,” as constitutive, providing the church with an understanding of being “those whom the Spirit has called out of the world through the gospel proclamation to walk together as God’s people” (Grenz 2000:472). From a trinitarian perspective the church is God’s covenant people of faith who are in Christ by the Spirit.

The second concept, “the church as the sign of the kingdom,” refers eschatologically to God’s ultimate purpose for the church as being now, “a foretaste of the eschatological reality that God will one day give to his creation” (Grenz 2000:479). According to Grenz,

the church is not the kingdom; it has been created through the breaking in of the kingdom in Christ and through the Spirit. The “kingdom remains broader than the church. The kingdom concept encompasses God’s domain in all of its aspects which when viewed eschatologically includes the entire created universe as well as the heavenly court. The church, in contrast, arises from God’s program in calling out a people to belong to him in Christ” (Grenz 2000:478). The church as a sign of the kingdom is a Spirit witness now to the eschatological hope to come in Christ.

The third concept, “the church as community,” arises out of the presence of the covenant “which stands at the foundation of the church as a community.... The church consists of those persons who declare individually their loyalty to God through Christ” (Grenz 2000:480). For Grenz, it is this individual confession of Christ that is the basis of the covenant relationship, and it is this joint faith confession that forms the covenant community. “Indeed, the presence of the covenant is what transforms a loosely related group of people into a community” (Grenz 2000:480). For the covenant people to be a sign of the kingdom, Grenz suggests, “means to reflect the very character of God. The church reflects God’s character in that it lives as a genuine community – lives in love – for as the community of love the church shows the nature of the triune God” (Grenz 2000:483). The church is such a community of love, “a people bound together by the love [of God] present among us through the power of God’s Spirit” (Grenz 2000:484). The church is a people called to be a sign of Christ’s covenantal love to the world.



PTE (112-115)

The influence of Grenz and other social Trinitarians has placed relationship and community at the centre of discussions of what forms the essence of the church. Writing for the emerging church Mobsby puts it this way: “The holy Trinity is beckoning the emerging Church to model a way of being a spiritual community that reflects the very nature of the Trinitarian Godhead” (Mobsby in Moynagh 2012:105). Similarly for Moynagh, the essence of the church is connected to the nature of the triune God. Moynagh, writing from a missional and communication perspective, sees the church’s call is to imitate the communicative and relational nature of God and participate with him in his kingdom mission.

Following this relational and missional line of thinking Moynagh and the Fresh Expressions Movement suggest that:

The church is comprised of four sets of relationships centred on Jesus – to the Godhead, between members of the local church, to the world, and between each part and the whole body. In believers’ experience, these relationships are what church is. Take any one set of these relationships away, and the church would be less than fully church. These four sets of relationships are essential to the being of the church. (Moynagh 2012:106)

They see that,

These four ecclesial relations echo and participate in the Trinity. The relationship with God is modelled on the Father's giving to the Son (Matt 28.18) and the Son's obedience to the Father (John 28.28-9). The relationship with the world is a participation in God's mission through the Spirit. Fellowship within the gathering reflects the mutual love of the divine persons. Relations to the whole church are the ecclesial counterpart to the *perichoretic* relationships within the Trinity – one affects all. (Moynagh 2012:108).

And these four sets of relationships can be described as:

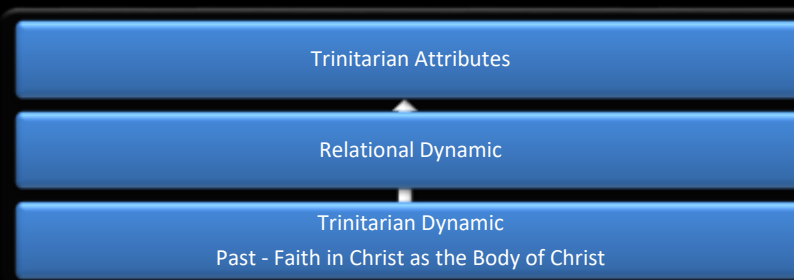
UP relationships through participating in the life of the Trinity

IN relationships through fellowship within the gathering

OUT relationship in love for, and service of the world

OF relationships, as part of the whole body, through connections with the wider church. (Moynagh 2012:107).

What is our Essence model?



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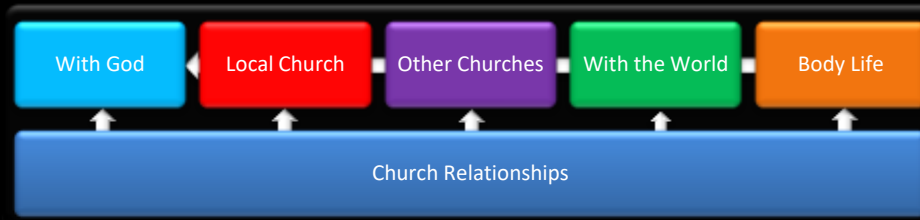
PTE (128-129)

By putting these three levels together and adding the essence categories we can now construct the dynamics and the categories involved in the essence dimension of our operational ecclesiology model (see Figure 51).

1. The Overall Trinitarian Dynamic: It is grounded by faith in Christ as the body of Christ.
2. Relationships: According to Moynagh, the church as the people of God is constituted relationally through four sets of interconnected relationships: with God, within the local church, with other churches and with the world. To these relationships we add the important relationship of “body life” which is connected to the trinitarian attribute of order affirmed by Volf and Dever. The body life relationship, taken from the image of the church as the body of Christ, refers to that which constitutes the social dynamic of the church as a whole. It comprises the relational life brought about through order and governance, and the actions and contributions of the diverse parts to sustain and grow the whole. Importantly body life serves to connect and guide the church, moving it to be holistic in its essence, expression and goal, rather than fragmented and segmented in its life and practice. The role of the body life relationship is to ensure that the church embraces all dimensions and relational categories, and that it is organised and ordered to channel the life and energy of the faith community toward the vocation and goal that Christ, as the head, has given his church (Grenz 2000:542). The horizontal arrows (right to left, from the body life across all relationships) have been added to reflect this (see Figure 51).
3. Trinitarian Attributes: Similar to Volf and Dever, the relational being and movement

of the church is guided and matured in accordance with the attributes of its essential nature: the attributes of one, holy, open, sign, and ordered. The word "catholic" has been replaced with "open," to overcome any obvious confusion with the Roman Catholic Church, and also to express the more general meaning of the church being universal and for all without exclusion. The word Apostolic has been replaced with "sign," which retains the idea of faithful connection and witness to Christ, excludes the thought of singular reference to apostolic succession, and also is inclusive of the Reformational concept of faithfulness to the apostolic word. The attribute of "ordered," which Volf and Dever also include has been added as a qualitative extension of the social body life of the church.

Relational Essence Dynamic



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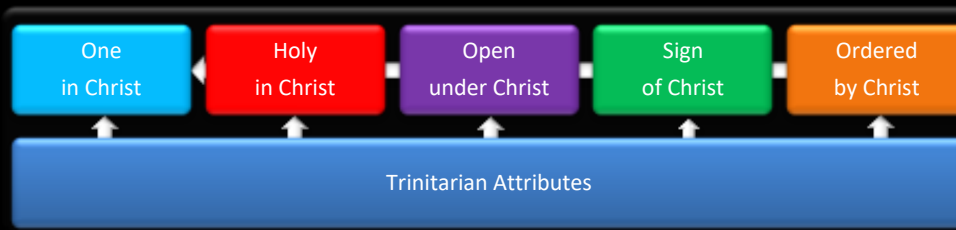
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According to our model the essence categories are held together by the guiding concept of being the body of Christ both as a reflection of the relationality of the triune God and as an attributive reflection of Christ sent into the world. Thus the essence attribute categories of one, holy, open, sign and ordered, are relationally grounded within the relational dynamics of the faith community being with God, with those in the local church, with other churches, with the world, and within itself as an organised social body. Across the entire model it is important to keep in mind that while there are vertical relational movements there is also a horizontal holistic attributive cohesion which is to be present across all relationships. Therefore, for example, while our relationship within the church may be marked specifically by holiness it is equally to be marked by oneness, openness, being a sign, and having order. The dynamic of body life also exists in part to specifically draw the church and its relationships together in a holistic, and according to our model, a horizontal way.

We turn now to consider the frame of reference for each category. It is not our desire to prescribe the full content of each category but rather to give a content frame which while biblical and theological, can be fleshed out by each faith community according to their specific communal essence theology.

The essence of the church is comprised of five relationships. The relationship with God has both a communal and an individual reference. It speaks of the fact that a personally shared covenant relationship with God is essential to being and belonging within the faith community of Christians. The relationship with other Christians in a local church speaks of the fact that individually being a Christian means automatically belonging to a gathered covenantal faith community. Therefore faith and family cannot be separated. The relationship of one local church with other local churches means that we acknowledge the one headship of Christ, are interdependent and inclusive, and called to live within an open perichoretic giving and receiving dynamic. Faith, family, and community cannot be separated. The relationship with the world speaks of the fact that the church is the ongoing presence and sign of Christ as his reconciling representative in and toward the world. Faith, family, community and presence in and for the world cannot be separated. The social construct that is the body life of the church is the relational social dynamic that exists as the “container and sustainer” of life. Faith, family, community, presence, and life exist together in the church.

Trinitarian Essence Attributes



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PTE (149-151) These relationships are then qualitatively grounded. The categories of oneness, holiness, openness, sign, and order are qualities that should mark each relationship. The definitions of these terms could vary widely, from an institutional view, to a word based view, to a congregational view, to an existential view. However, following the categories chosen in the practical theological ecclesiology model (see Figure 62), and picking up on Volf and Dever we will broadly interpret these categories from a God based trinitarian perspective as follows:

- One – The church is one because God is one. The trinitarian nature is woven into the constitution of the church. Under God’s will the church is the creation of the Son and the Spirit. Also as God is one united relational community, so in Christ all share in the one covenantal united relational Spirit as a community of faith. Therefore, by faith oneness exists in vertical and horizontal dimensions. Oneness in Christ draws us relationally and vertically toward God and horizontally toward his family. The church is united with all who confess the apostolic word of God and thereby constituted by the Spirit as the people of God. For the church to evidence a trinitarian oneness, the Christ and Spirit dimensions of oneness must be held together. The absence of a call to communal faith opposes oneness in Christ. And the individualisation of this covenant call opposes the Spirit unity of the community of faith. Pickard notes that, “While it is through the Spirit that faith recognises Jesus the individualistic

focus inevitably omits the constituting work of the Spirit for the ecclesia” (Pickard 2012:19). He continues, believing with Schwöbel, “The Reformation focus on the Church as the creature of the divine Word (*creatura verbi divini*) appears incomplete, if it fails to recognise the Spirit’s action in constituting the fellowship of believers as Church” (Pickard 2012:19). Pannenberg confirms this dual Christ and Spirit role, “The Christological constitution and the pneumatological constitution of the Church do not exclude one another but belong together because the Spirit and the Son mutually indwell one another as Trinitarian persons” (Pannenberg 1998:16–17).

- Holy – The church is holy because God is holy. The church is formed and set apart for conformity to the will of God, expressed fully in Christ, which is to be the image of Christ. Holiness then is to be reflected not only in the individual life of the Christian, but in the relationships of Christians together. Therefore, the absence of a call to image Christ, being different from and set apart from the world, both individually and communally opposes the individual and communal holiness of the faith community.
- Open – The church embraces all because God is a God of mutual love, one for the other. God is a triune community. Just as within God there is a mutual permeation of the other (*perichoresis*), there is to be openness, a dynamic of relational love, a mutual giving and receiving, of being impacted and of impacting others. An open church is therefore truly catholic, it is kingdom focussed and invitational in outlook and posture, not sectarian or exclusive. Therefore the absence of open diverse ecumenical relationships with others and other churches in favour of a closed, inward, and localised dynamic opposes the call to openness.
- Sign – God is a self-revealing God, through Christ, the Spirit and the church. The church, caught up in the revealing action of God, exists to reveal God through the confession of the one true God and as a faithful present living sign of that apostolic confession to the world. The Apostle’s Creed and the Nicene Creed both place the church under the article about the Holy Spirit. The church is the dwelling place of the Spirit and the Spirit is the life of the church. The church “can see and understand itself, its own existence in this basic sense, only in the light of the illuminating and therefore constitutive power of the Holy Spirit as the power of the Word of God, and therefore only in relation to the world created and actively loved by this God” (Barth 1962:787). The church’s “task to be light in the world [comes from] the gift of its specific being, and therefore in and with its creation ...” (Barth 1962:787). In this sense it is originally and essentially light, the light which by the power of God and therefore of the Holy Spirit may reflect His eternal light in the world. In this sense, it has fundamentally no option but to exist for the world as it reflects the light of God and is itself light (Barth 1962:787). As this sign the church seeks to be both salt

and light; being both that which is present in the world (salt) as the ambassadors of the gospel, and that which shines (light) as confessing witnesses of the gospel of reconciliation. Therefore, not being a relational reconciling presence that is evident or a witness that is manifest opposes the call to be a sign of Christ.

- Ordered – The trinity exists as a specific dynamic of ordered relationships. Just as God exists, and we in his image “are embodied, social, and historical beings,... our common life requires embodied, social, and historic structures” (Sherman 2015:142). The church exists as a social body whose life is ordered because God exists as a dynamic ordered community. Under Christ the church is called to be led, be sustaining, and grow as all contribute in unity toward the maturity of the body of faith. Therefore, leadership and gift deployment that is stifled or chaotic opposes the order and life of the faith community.

In summary, in its essence the church is and is to be an ordered body life of one, holy, open, sign to God, each other, other churches, and the world. 1 Corinthians 10:17, I

The Trinitarian Essence Categories

ONE – The church is one because God is one.

John 17:22

HOLY – The church is holy because God is holy.

1 Peter 1:16, Eph 2:21

OPEN – The church embraces all because God is a God of mutual love, one for the other. John 13:34-35

SIGN – God is a self-revealing God, through Christ, the Spirit and the church. 2 Corinthians 5:19-20

ORDERED – The trinity exists as a specific dynamic of ordered relationships. Ephesians 4:11-16



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So the church is to be:

One – John 17:22

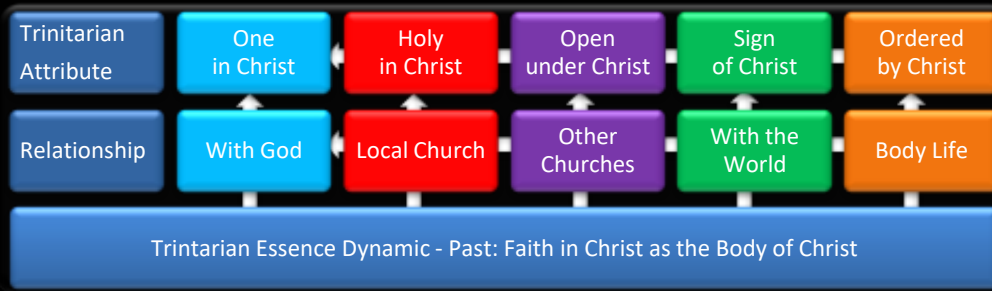
Holy – Be Holy as I am Holy - 1 Peter 1:16, Holy temple in the Lord - Eph 2:21

Open – John 13:34-35 Love one another

Sign – Be my Witnesses, 2 Cor 5:19-20

ORDERED – Appointed to bring maturity – Eph 4:11-16

The Essence Dimension



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Trinitarian Essence Dynamic: By Faith – As the body of Christ

Questions?



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