

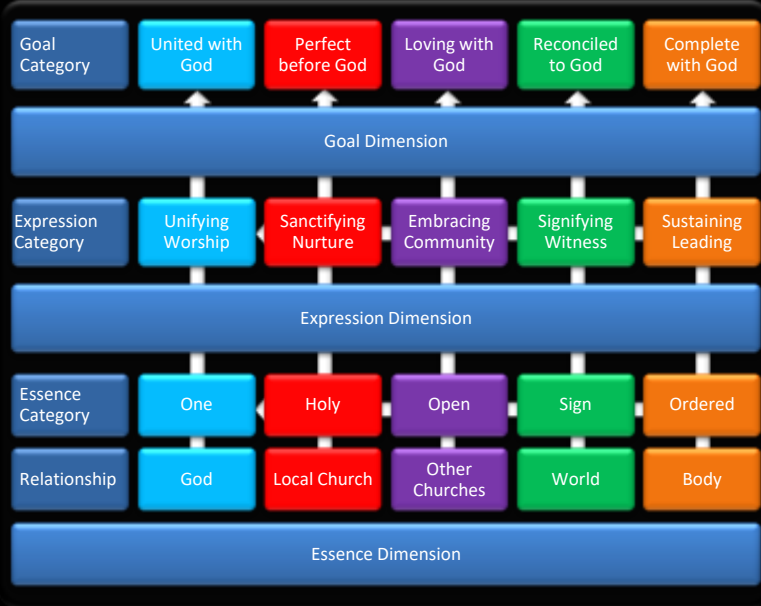
3. Evaluating the Church



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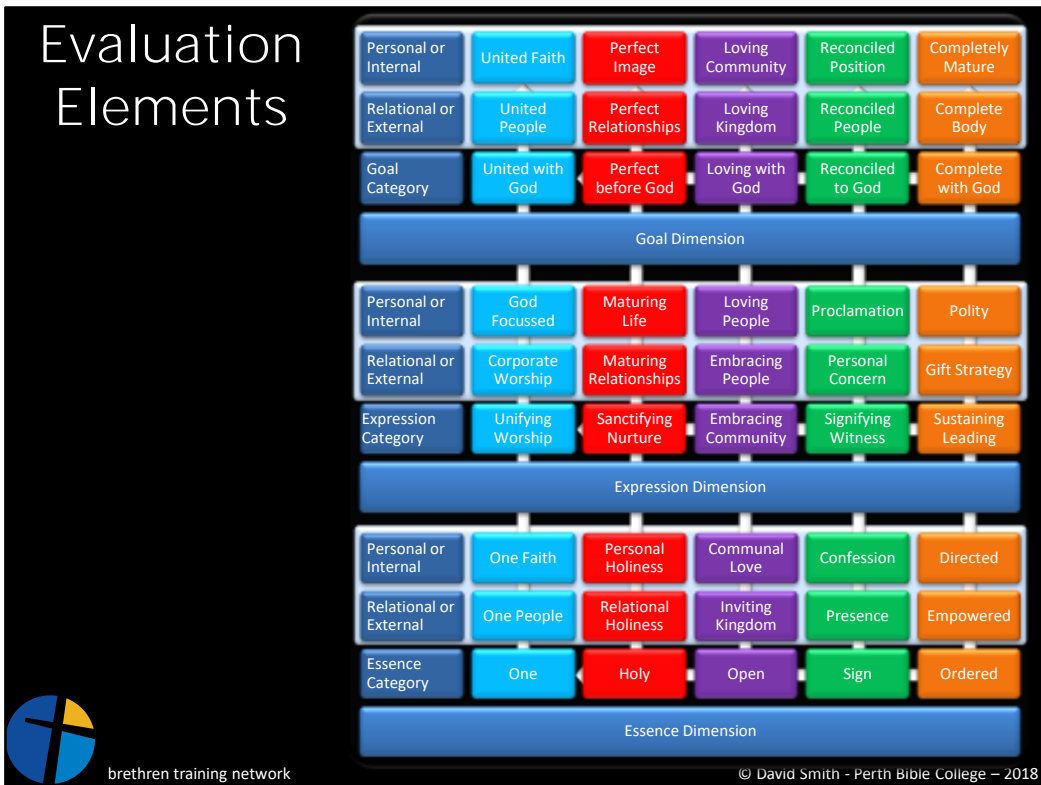
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The Church Model



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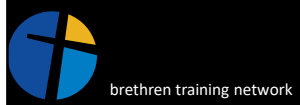
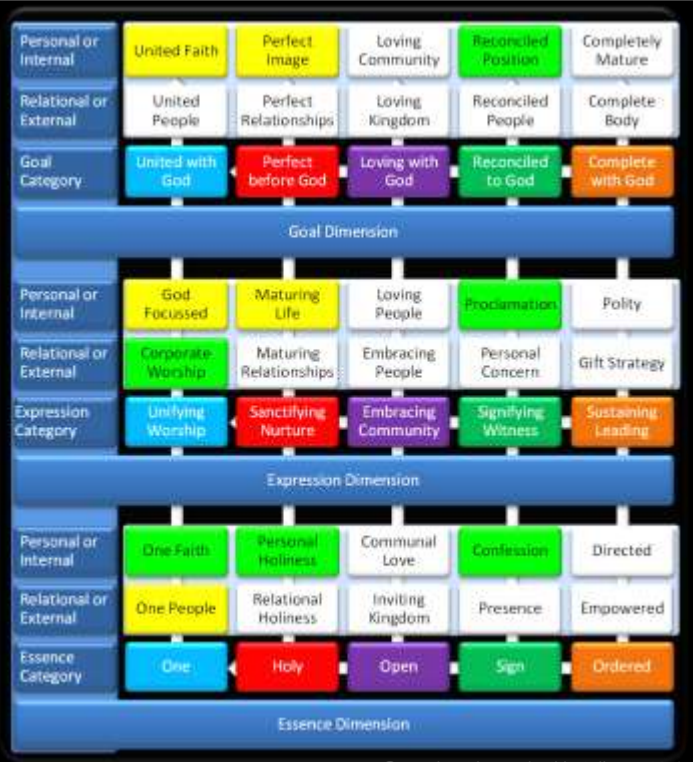


PTE (156-157)

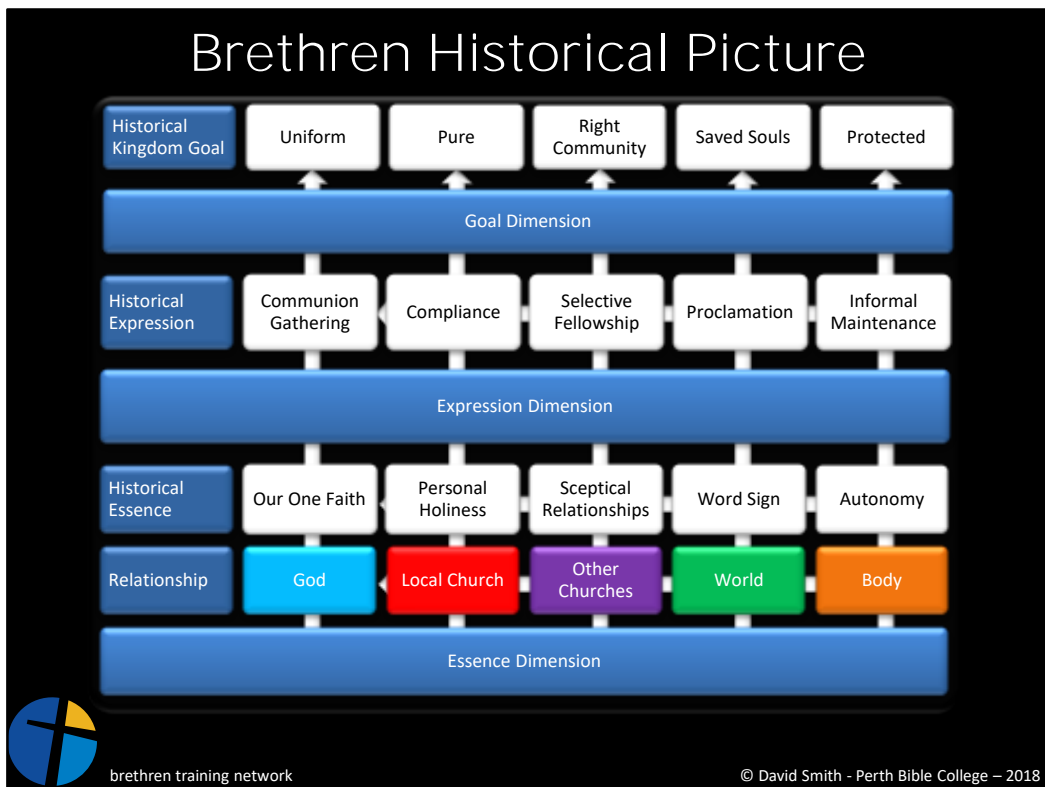
Our operational ecclesiological model is relational. However, it would be easy from a Western worldview perspective to view the categories as relating to only individuals; that is relationships between individuals and God, other Christians, and other churches and the world. While these relationships are important and included we need to also keep the corporate nature of church in view and capture the grounded theory in relation to corporate relationships internally within the church, and also externally with other churches and with the world. To protect this relational integrity, essential to the church, we need to ensure an ecclesiological focus that includes the individual and the internal and also the communal and the external.

Brethren Historical

White = Low
 Yellow= Medium
 Green= High



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PTE (208-209)

From this operational ecclesiology summary (see Figure 75) it would be possible to say that the following statement represents the essential characteristics of the historical church:

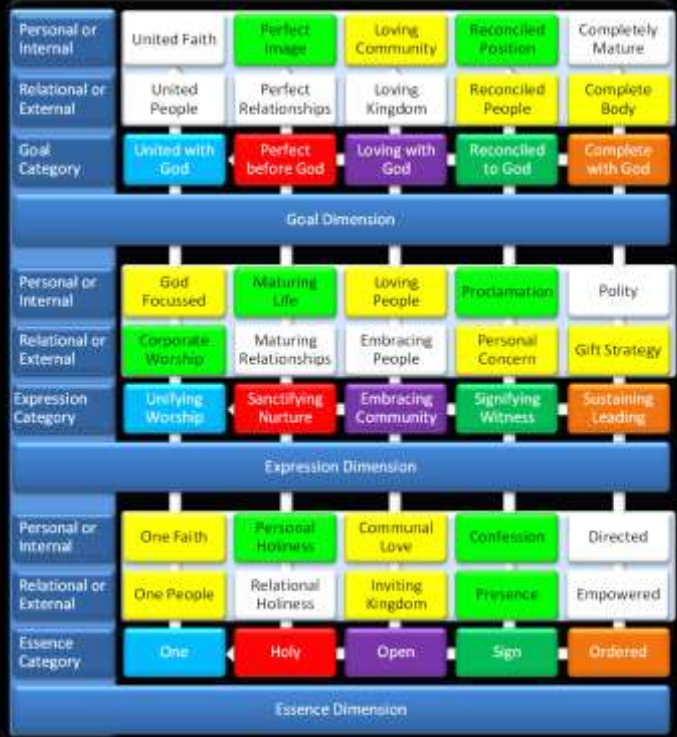
The church is an autonomous gathering of believers given to an agreed faith, personal holiness, right relationships, and proclaiming the gospel.

The historical referential ecclesiology summary chart (see Figure 75) clearly outlines the theory categories which required historical grounding attention. Of the fifteen categories of ecclesial theory considered none delivered a substantive grounding, only six showed a moderate grounding, three had minimal grounding, and the remaining six had no identifiable grounded theory. Specifically, relationships with other churches which are guided by the theology of openness needed critical attention. Also the body, with its order and leadership categories of the church historically received little attention. It may be concluded that it was this lack of leadership focus that led to the lack of reflection on ecclesiology by the movement in its entirety. The other categories of essence, expression, and goal, all required further work in the historic praxis because, according to the

conclusions depicted above, not one category displayed both completeness and consistency in both elements of ecclesial theory. Therefore, overall we can say that the historical referential operational ecclesiology of the early Brethren was only grounded to a minimal extent. Our attention now turns to analysing and completing the contemporary picture.

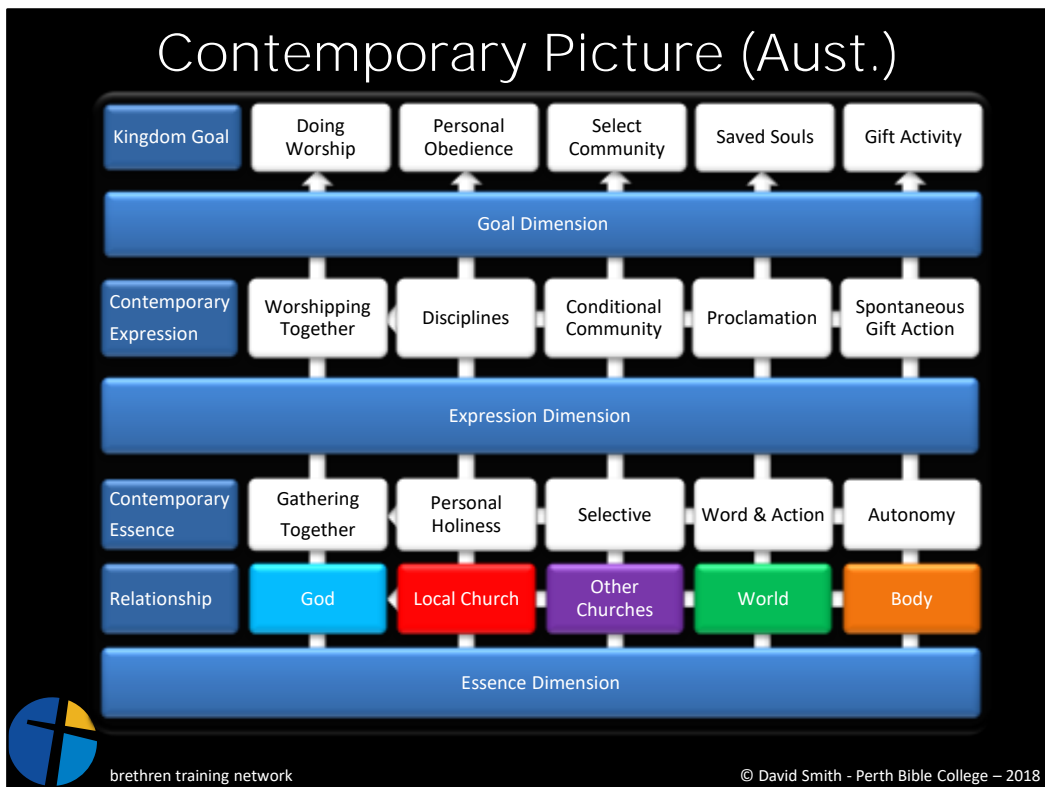
Australia Present

White = Low
 Yellow= Medium
 Green= High



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PTE (227-228)

From this operational ecclesiology summary (see Figure 95) it would be possible to say that the following statement represents the essential characteristics of the contemporary church:

The church is an autonomous gathering of believers given to worship, personal holiness, selective community and witness by word and action.

The chart above (see Figure 95) clearly highlights the theory categories which required contemporary grounding attention. Of the 15 categories of ecclesial theory considered only one category, the essence category of sign, has substantive grounding. Of the remaining categories 6 show a moderate grounding, 6 have only minimal grounding, and the remaining 2 have no identifiable grounded theory. The contemporary experiential praxis much like the historical referential is operating from predominantly a blind praxis position. The goal category of oneness, being united with God, and the essence category of order require critical attention. In the contemporary praxis the theory of oneness has moved from a focus on one faith and one people to the point that the goal is now activity and not essence based. The one remaining factor that unifies the people appears to be gathering to worship. The idea of being united worshippers together in Christ is absent. The essence, expression and goal of openness, as in historically, is also very poor, having little external focus. The grounded theory for order tends to be undirected and uncoordinated, being activity based rather than leadership for maturity based.

Essence Questions

Church Evaluation Questions					
ESSENCE QUESTIONS	Never 1	Seldom 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Always 5
The church exists to be the following:					
1. ONE FAITH: The church members are one in faith and belief.					
2. ONE PEOPLE: The church members are united relationally.					
3. PERSONAL HOLINESS: The church members live holy and God honouring lives.					
4. RELATIONAL HOLINESS: The relationships of the church members are holy and God honouring.					
5. COMMUNAL LOVE: The church is an open loving community for all (includes other churches and the world).					
6. INVITING KINGDOM: The church is inviting and kingdom focussed (includes other churches and the world).					
7. CONFESSION: The church is the witness of God to the world (word).					
8. PRESENCE: The church represents the presence of God in the world (deed).					
9. DIRECTED: The church is clearly ordered and directed.					
10. EMPOWERED: The church members are empowered to serve God.					



Expression Questions

Church Evaluation Questions					
EXPRESSION QUESTIONS The Church actively does the following:	Never 1	Seldom 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Always 5
11. GOD FOCUSED: The church has "God focussed" worship.					
12. CORPORATE WORSHIP: The church has "corporate unifying" worship.					
13. MATURING LIFE: The church nurtures members toward holiness and maturity.					
14. MATURING RELATIONSHIPS: The church nurtures relationships toward holiness and maturity.					
15. LOVING PEOPLE: The church expresses love for all people (includes other churches and the world).					
16. EMBRACING PEOPLE: The church actively embraces all people (includes other churches and the world).					
17. PROCLAMATION: The church actively and clearly proclaims the gospel to others in the world.					
18. PERSONAL CONCERN: The church actively expresses personal concern for the wellbeing of others in the world.					
19. POLITY: The church has an effective leadership structure and life giving leaders.					
20. GIFT STRATEGY: The church has a strategy to involve the gifts of all members in serving God.					



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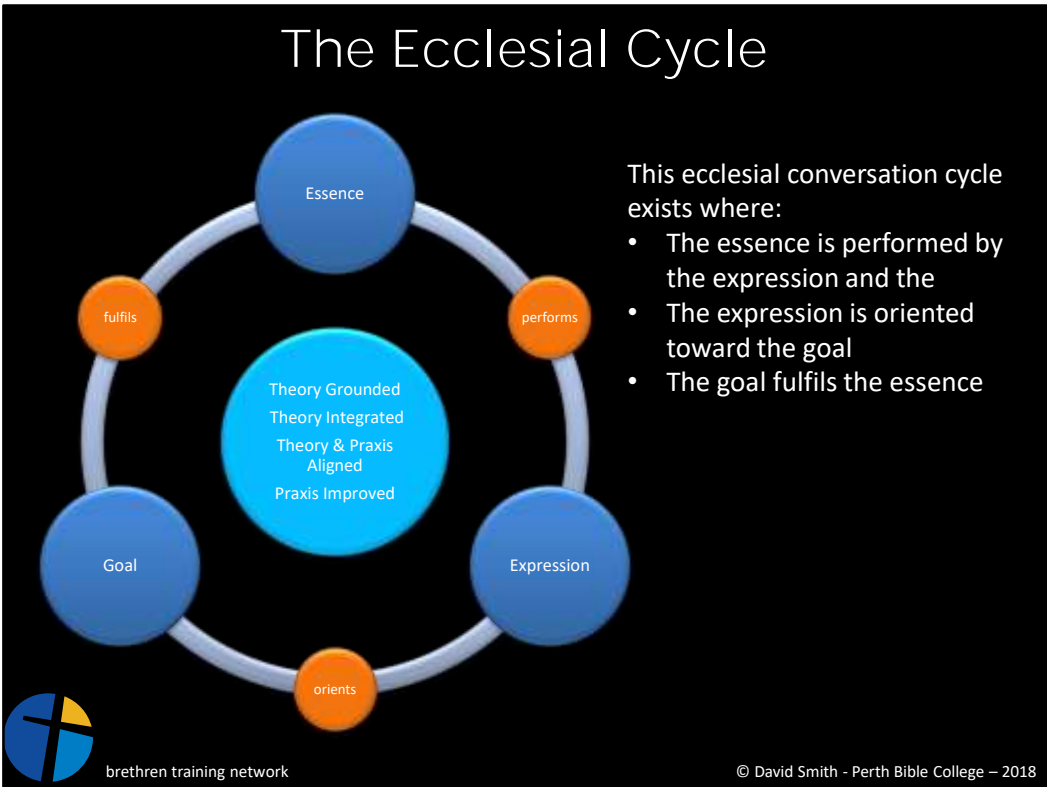
Goal Questions

Church Evaluation Questions					
GOAL QUESTIONS	Never 1	Seldom 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Always 5
The Church has the following goals:					
21. UNITED FAITH: The church intentionally seeks to have unified faith in God.					
22. UNTIED PEOPLE: The church intentionally seeks to be relationally unified with God.					
23. PERFECT IMAGE: The church intentionally nurtures members to become the perfect image of Christ.					
24. PERFECT RELATIONSHIPS: The church intentionally nurtures members toward perfect relationships.					
25. LOVING COMMUNITY: The church intentionally seeks to be a loving community of God.					
26. LOVING KINGDOM: The church intentionally seeks to lovingly embrace all people.					
27. RECONCILED POSITION: The church intentionally seeks to bring the world to salvation in Christ.					
28. RECONCILED PERSON: The church intentionally seeks to bring the world to wholeness and fullness in God.					
29. COMPLETELY MATURE: The church intentionally seeks to be the complete mature body of Christ.					
30. COMPLETE BODY: The church intentionally seeks all to play their complete part in the body of Christ.					



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