

## **Outward is Forward: Tabor C.F.M. Adelaide 2000**

### **1. Introduction**

Rider: John Yates' perspective from WA

1. Discerning the times and the seasons.

- (i) time of discipline  
cf. Heb 12:5-11 (holiness)
  - (ii) time of refreshing  
cf. Acts 3:20
- } in a time of transition

(iii) time of harvesting

Luke 10:2 harvest is plentiful  $\therefore$  sending out of the 70.

God is (a) turning outward

(b)  $\therefore$  preparing the church for a harvest.

2. Re-defining the church

Perth: forum "Working Together"

Atmosphere of mutual regard/trust/blessing.

3. Initiative for this.

Patrick Johnstone 1998 *The Church is Bigger than You Think*. Christian Focus.

### **The Vision Channelled**

A Biblical Theology for the Structure of the Church

3 Fold form of the church

"3 modes of operating for the one goal of world evangelism" p. 158.

- centred on world evangelisation
- subsidiary goals

## 1. Ministry of Jesus

- (1) discipling/training ie. Twelve/seventy
- (2) sending/apostolic structure ie. (1) sent out.
- (3) gathering/ecclesial structure ie. synagogue.

All 3 are essential if the goal is to be reached.

## 2. Early Church

- (1) discipling in apostolic teams eg. Barnabas → Paul → Timothy
- (2) apostolic teams eg. Paul and Barnabas
- (3) local churches

## Today

- (1) building up body structure (teacher)
- (2) mission/evangelism (evangelist/apostle) : needs a distinct apostolic structure apart from local church or denomination
- (3) equipping the saints locally (pastor/prophet)

## Ch. 15: A 2000 Year History of Church Structures

### 1. Roman Catholicism c.1500

(1)= universities for clergy training

(2)= monastic orders

(3) = church under Pope

a functioning tripartite model overlaid with non biblical doctrine etc.

### 2. Reformation c. 1600

(1)= universities

(2)= denominations and churches

(3) = no structure for mission

n.b. separation of the spheres; tripartite structure of the church no longer existed

3. Evangelicals c. 1980

(1)= training institutes eg. Bible Colleges and discipleship schools

(2)= agencies eg. mission societies.

(3) = Churches and denominations.

n.b. autonomy, each has subsidiary goals, evolution of the “para church”

4. Evangelicals c. 1980

Independence, competition, predation by so called “para”-church. Failure to recognise the need for a variety of structures for the variety of ministries.

‘Our theological institutions have probably been the greatest factor in the “Sinful Delay”!’ (176) ie. in relation to world evangelisation.

“Churches need missions because modalities (structured churches) need sodalities (societies, agencies, fellowship).” (178)

Johnstone: ecclesiastical structure lacks freedom of action essential for accomplishment of missionary vision (179)

“The local church is the launch pad for missions.” (181)

Ch. 16: Who Sends the Missionaries?

“all three structures of the ONE church walking in mutually accountable partnership?” (187)

Local church is “launch pad for missions...the fundamental structural component of the Church for mission.” (190)

Ch 17 How can a local church become Mission minded?

Ch 18 How can a Bible School/Seminary become both Mission and Church minded?

Training institutions are servants of the church and accountable to it. (203)

(Ten Theses of G.C.O.W.E., Pretoria: 1997)

Ch 19 How can a Mission Agency become Church minded?

All 3 are part of the sending. Final diagram (210)

## **2. The Other Centredness Of God: Life and Personhood as Ex-Centric.**

1. The nature of the Church as the people of God in all its expressions must correspond to the nature of God.
2. The three Persons of the trinity indwell one another.  
eg. John 14:10-11; 17:21,23; cf. 15:10.
3. This indwelling (perichoresis) means that the Persons are neither separate nor discrete but distinct and mutually realised.
4. This indwelling is other-centred (allocentric).  
eg. John 1:1; 10:37-38; 14:10 (Father and Son); Matt 10:20; John 15:26 (Spirit of Father); John 1:33; 3:34 (Spirit in Son).
5. The mutual and complementary ex-centricity of the three Persons constitutes the unity and oneness of the Godhead.  
God exists-in-ex-centricity. This means that the being of God is dynamically realised in absolute relationality.
6. Therefore the dynamic of love is the essence of the being of God.
  - (a) God is love  
(1 John 4:8,16)
  - (b) God is the living God  
(1 Sam 17:26,36; Dan 6:26; John 6:57; 7:38-39; 2 Cor 3:3 etc.)
7. Creation and Incarnation involve a movement (mission) “out of” God for the purpose of inclusion in God.  
“that God may be all” (1 Cor 15:28)

### 3. Jesus As An Essentially Other-Centred Person

1. Jesus is “sent” into the world by the Father.  
(Matt 15:24; 21:37; Mark 12:6; Luke 4:43; John 3:17,34 etc. (≈ 40x in John) 1 John 4:9,10,14; Acts 3:26; 7:37; Gal 4:4)  
This happens in the Spirit (Matt 1:20; Luke 1:3) cf. Mark 1:12; Luke 4:18.
2. This is so that the Word might indwell another, that is, our humanity (John 1:14). Or, that the fullness of God might subsist dynamically in a human body (Col 1:19; 2:9). The Word continually subsists as flesh by ex-centricity.
3. As a “sent” Person, Jesus is the “Apostle” of our confession (Heb 3:1)
4. The purpose of his sending by the Father is that God might indwell us by grace as he has indwelt Christ by the Spirit.  
(John 15:10; 17:21, 23; Rom 8:16; Gal 4:6; Eph 3:17; Col 2:10; 3:16; 2 Tim 1:14 etc.)
5. This places us in the centre of the divine communion (cf. John 14:6) As such, it is participation in the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4).
6. This communion is realised as the Sent One gathers to himself those whom the Father has given him, discipling and sending them out in the truth of the Father’s love (John 10: 22 –30; 17:6 - 19). This is the process not only described in the teaching and actions of Jesus in the Gospels, but enacted in his atoning work (John 12:32).
7. Jesus therefore is the relational centre out of which the ecclesial, discipling and apostolic realities of the church are constituted (cf. 1 Cor 12:12).
8. Their essential unity is their coinherence in the person of Christ.

#### 4. The Church Is An Ex-centric Reality.

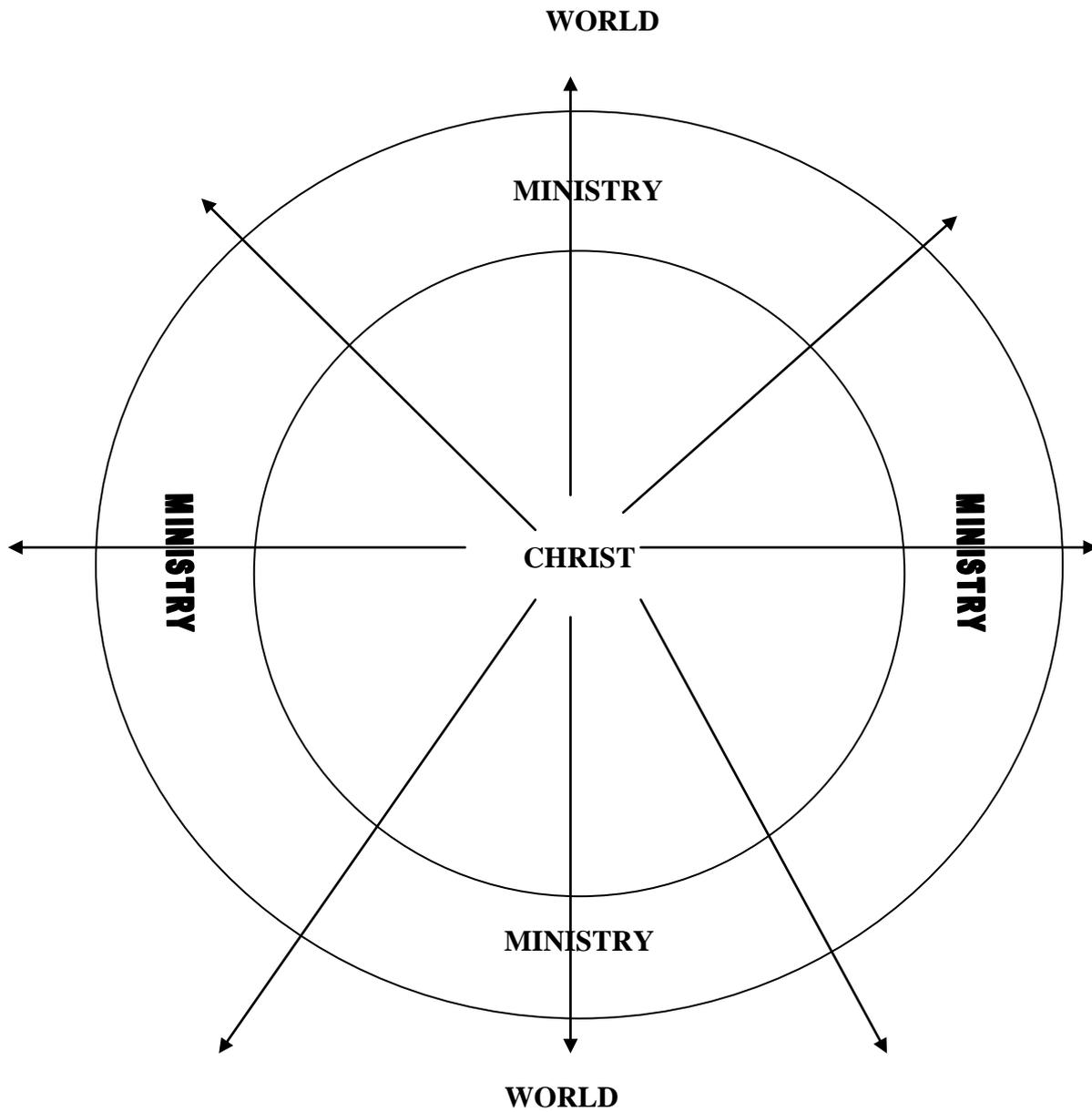
1. The Church (not just the ministry) is by nature sent, that is apostolic.
  - a. in the sending of the apostles who are the first church.  
(Matt 10:5; Mark 3:14; 6:7; Luke 9:2; 10:1; Matt 10:16; Luke 10:3)
  - b. in the command to disciple the world.  
(Matt 28:28ff; Luke 24:46ff; [Mark 16:15])
2. This is a participation in the sending of the Son by the Father in the power of the Spirit.  
“As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world”  
(John 17:18)  
“As the Father has sent me, so I send you” (John 20:21)
3. For the church to be taken up into the flow of this dynamic is to live. It does not first live and then witness.  
“The Church is the mission.” (M.A.C. Warren)
4. The object of this dynamic is the ex-centric communication of the fullness of Christ which indwells the body of Christ in its obedience to his commands. This is the fullness of the Spirit.  
(Acts 1:8; 2:4ff; 4:8,31 etc)
5. Or, in the language of communion, it is the impartation of indwelling or fullness.  
(Eph 3:17; 4:7ff cf. Eph 1:22-23)
6. The ministry of the people of God is the medium of the communication of the life of Christ, the expression of his life.
  - a. to those who do not yet have life.  
(2 Cor 2:16)
  - b. to those who have life and need to be built up in this life.  
(2 Cor 4:10-12)
7. Ministry is the form of the expression of the Incarnation and Glorification of humanity in Christ.
  - a. this is outlined in Ephesians 4:7-16.
  - b. it is a dynamic act through which persons are properly conditioned (*katartismos*) for service
  - c. it is conformity to the humiliation and exaltation of Christ; and as such, servanthood.  
(1 Cor 3:5; 4:1, 8-13; 2 Cor 1:8-11; 4:7-12; Eph 3:13; Phil 3:10; Col 1:24-25 etc)

8. This can be summarised in the following sequence.

Christ → ministry → Church → world

Christ: ministry:: ministry: Church, so that

Christ: Church:: Church: World



9. The world does not “become’ the church by some process of assimilation but through the same way as it became the church in the first place, by entering in to the new creation in the power of the resurrection. This is an ever repeated miracle of the kingdom of God.
10. All Christian ministry which is church creating is apostolic.  
“The ministry is the apostolic mission of the Church: its task is essentially pioneer, it is the spearhead of the Church.” (A.T. Hanson)  
“The proper place for the minister is on the frontiers of faith.” (A.T. Hanson)
11. The ministry of the Church needs always to remind the church that what are taken to be internal and external boundaries or barriers only inhere as realities in the minds and hearts of men and women in the state of sin.
12. As Jesus honoured the Father by recognising, accepting and protecting the persons the Father had given to him as the Son (John 17:6,11), so the church must respect the men and women given her if she is to revere Christ as her Head cf. Eph 4:11.
13. This includes a proper recognition of the order of ministries in the New Testament. Apostles and prophets always precede teachers and pastors; not in terms of rank as in a hierarchy, but in church creation, as in a movement.  
(Eph 4:11; 1 Cor 12:28 –29)
  
14. In contrast to Johnstone, it is best not to see three “structures” in the church, even if these are defined operationally. This type of conceptualisation remains tied to the old paradigm of institutionalisation, competition and self preference. (So called “institutions” are not part of the kingdom of God as such, whether they be named as denominations or societies or colleges. What has true and final existence is only that relational part or aspect of the entities which shares in the reality of the communion of the trinity). The ecclesial, apostolic and discipling dimensions of the church properly inhere in the whole church (and so in one another) as it is gathered to Christ, a reality realised as the church lives out the life of Christ to the world
15. The spheres or dimensions may be conceived in some way as distinct, but they are not separate or discrete, but dynamic realities of mutual self realisation (they are, after all, constituted by persons). (This discussion may usefully be compared to the discussions of whether human beings are tripartite or dipartite.)

## **5. Implications For Tabor**

### **1. The recognition of the ex – centricity of God in our time.**

It is important to be able to translate accurately the depth grammar of the utterances of the Spirit in the contemporary church. Theology is always an expression of culture as well as scripture. Some important examples of this in the realm of church ex - centricity include “vision”, “apostle/ new apostolic reformation”, “accelerator”, “spiritual D.N.A.”. The danger is that each of the respective dimensions of the church will operate in their own language and activity to the exclusion of the others. This can lead to both the inappropriate use of language and concepts by the initiators, and to misunderstanding and an attempt to “correct” by those who experience themselves as in some way standing outside of the initiating sphere.

(I consider a classical example of this misunderstanding the Evangelical rejection of the Pentecostal doctrine of the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” at the turn of the last century. A relational problem from which we have not yet fully recovered.)

Conscious and serious work in the arena of translation needs to be taken up on an ongoing basis with so – called “movers and shakers”. This requires sustained relational connection, as this is the means of the reality of the interpenetration of the spheres of the church. What is experienced or “read” in this way are the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

### **2. The importance of the frontier in the dynamic of the kingdom growing the church.**

The revelation of the Father – Son love in the Church is the cutting edge of the Spirit’s power (John 17:6; Heb 2:12; Ps 22:22). To be centred in Christ is to be ex-centric. Whatever is self centred/focused is non ex-centric and so loses power. eg. the dominance of the pastor-teacher, many approaches to ministry and counselling studies in terms of College training.

We need to make allowance for the different needs of those other than pastor – teachers in terms of equipping.

If the College is to be a “centred set” rather than a “bounded set” we need to think more in terms of “mobile campus”. This mobility is not so much a physical matter but the ability to continually change form or expression in relation to what God is doing in the church and the world. (The danger with the priority given to buildings, which is hardly a New Testament matter, is that they can be part of a mindset that focuses on survival rather than kingdom growth.)

### **3. The importance of biblical categories in the recovery of apostolicity.**

eg. J.Y. to Y.F.C. executive director “What are you? Evangelist, pastor...”

Redefining language can be the commencement of the deconstruction of reality as presented in revelation. eg. President, National Executive Director, Principal, Lecturer. If the popular language of contemporary culture as used in the church cannot be translated back into biblical terminology then we may expect that a distortion has occurred.

**4. The importance of catholicity in the dynamic of Church creation.**

If the apostolicity of the Son is revealed in the unity of the church (John 17:20,23) then all that is non-inclusive of other Christians in an area is non-apostolic (eg. “charismatic” as unqualified), and so diminishes the presence of Word and Spirit.

**5. The shape of gospel ministry.**

Any structure/organisation/institution must be perpetually dying to self interest in order to live for others.

If we (ie. national, state, personal,) are unwilling to die we are already not seeking God’s kingdom first of all, thus what we need can not be supplied.

Readiness to die is the key to kingdom partnership with all the other forms of the church.