

What Future – Our Church ?!

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3. Models of the Future Church

- MEGA
- EMERGING (E Gibbs, R Bolger, R Anderson, A Hirsch, M Frost)
- PENTECOSTAL
- ETHNIC-SPECIFIC (Faith in a Hyphen)
- MISSIONAL (Gospel and Culture in North America)
- CHURCH OF THE CROSS (Douglas Hall)

MEGA

Strengths

- A critical mass
- Vitality
- Sense of success - growth
- Attractive
- Socially influential

Weaknesses

- Doubtful sense of belonging
- Focused in particular ways
- Success is measured in social terms
- Limited ecumenical commitment
- 'attractional'
- Clergy-centred

EMERGING

Strengths

- Innovative
- *Outreaching*
- Committed
- Belonging
- Vitality
- Culturally relevant
- Non-denominational

Weaknesses

- Idiosyncratic
- Anti - ecumenical
- Anti - tradition
- Theologically shallow
- Culturally captive (self; fragmentary; self-consciously 'right')

PENTECOSTAL

Strengths

- Focus on the Holy Spirit
- Focus on Experience
- Space for emotions
- Sense of belonging
- Focus on community
- Sense of growing in faith

- Culturally relevant
- Numerically strong

Weaknesses

- Personality of leaders
- Fragmentary - division
- Anti-ecumenical
- Culturally captive

ETHNIC-SPECIFIC

Strengths

- Cultural identity
- Language
- Community - belonging
- Embraces whole of life
- Gospel and culture
- Nurturing in an alien environment
- Evangelical roots

Weaknesses

- Culturally exclusive
- Gospel and culture confusion
- Hyphenated existence
- Inadequate for second generation

MISSIONAL

Strengths

- Evolves from what is
- Serious about the tradition
- Serious about being contemporary
- Whole community in mission
- Recovery of the heart of the Gospel as the heart of the church
- Engages with gospel and culture issues

Weaknesses

- Slow evolution
- Doesn't engage with new generations
- Legacy of 'Christendom'

CHURCH OF THE CROSS

Exploring what it means to be shaped by the cross in its cultural powerlessness and weakness rather than being shaped by a theology of glory (and success)

Taking seriously the brokenness of human life and the world

Challenging the Christian tradition

Redefining Jesus relationally -

The true humanity of Jesus is in his human orientation to God who has created us for communion ... in the cross

The true divinity of Jesus is in his divine orientation of suffering love turned towards the world ... in the cross

Redefining The Church

The Body of Christ in the world

Broken

Compassionate - com / passion

Turned towards God in our calling to be truly human

Turned towards the broken world in our divine calling

Is the present period of decline of the established churches in the western world the work of God to renew the Church as the Body of Christ in and for the world - to move us from glory to cross and from success to compassion?

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