Hubbing: The "Being" and "Act" of Leadership within Dynamic Christ-Clusters
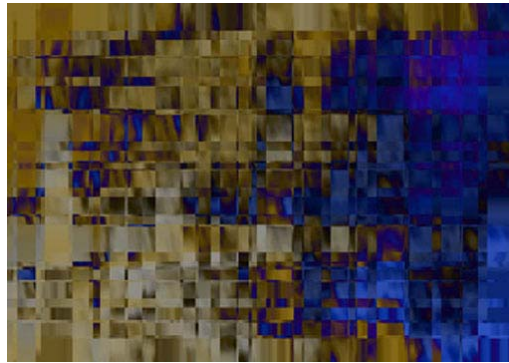

Figure 1

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Table of Contents

List of Illustrations

Précis

This essay examines the 'being' and 'act' leadership within the many and always dynamic Christ-clusters of God's Scale-Free Kingdom. Though I draw on the categories of 'being' and 'act' for the sake of organization the two cannot be separated, they are like two sides of a coin.

Commonly held contemporary theories of leadership have often assumed a leader to be an individualized, autonomous self, and ontologically created as leader with their leadership to be the exercise of said selfhood. However, I claim leadership within a Christ-cluster is a socially constructed ethos created and called forth by each Christ-cluster.   *Kenosis* is essential to the 'being' and 'act' of the leader in a Christ-cluster, as leadership must self-empty for the ongoing *perichoretic* formation of the communal-ethos.

The ethos of these Christ-clusters invites people to empty themselves in hubbing servant leadership. Those people responding to the ethos invitation to serve a hubbing role will missionally link beyond the safety of their natural community as they bridge to other nodes and clusters. Hubs will so engage with those nodes linked to them so as to introduce life-stimulating chaos into the organism. The relational reign of God is the ultimate reality that draws creation forward.

"…Relationships are not just interesting;
to many physicists, they are all there is to reality."[2]
– Margaret J. Wheatley

"Leadership is more tribal than scientific,
more a weaving of relationship than an amassing of information…"[3]
– Max DePree

Introduction

The commercial success of NBC's reality show *The Apprentice*, is serving as a catalyst for thinking and talking about leadership. Donald Trump the billionaire real estate titan, TV impresario, and bestselling author made the phrase, "You're Fired!" one of the most anticipated phrases of the last television session. The contestants on the show get the most airtime but Trump is the star. He travels in a helicopter with "Trump" emblazoned on the side in big letters, is often braggadocios with an ego even bigger than his hair.

The basic premise of *The Apprentice* is to turn the corporate search for a new CEO for one of Trump's many companies into a reality series, with twelve contestants competing for one job. Toward the end of the season-finale contestant Bill Rancic became the only contest to hear the words, "You're Hired!" NBC's website quotes Trump's newest employee saying, "I'm a trained killer - in business." When ask for his definition of success Rancic replied, "If I can lead a happy life, touch the lives of others in a positive way, win the respect of those that I care about… and make a few million [dollars] along the way then I have been successful." He went on to say that he could relate to *Roadrunner*; the

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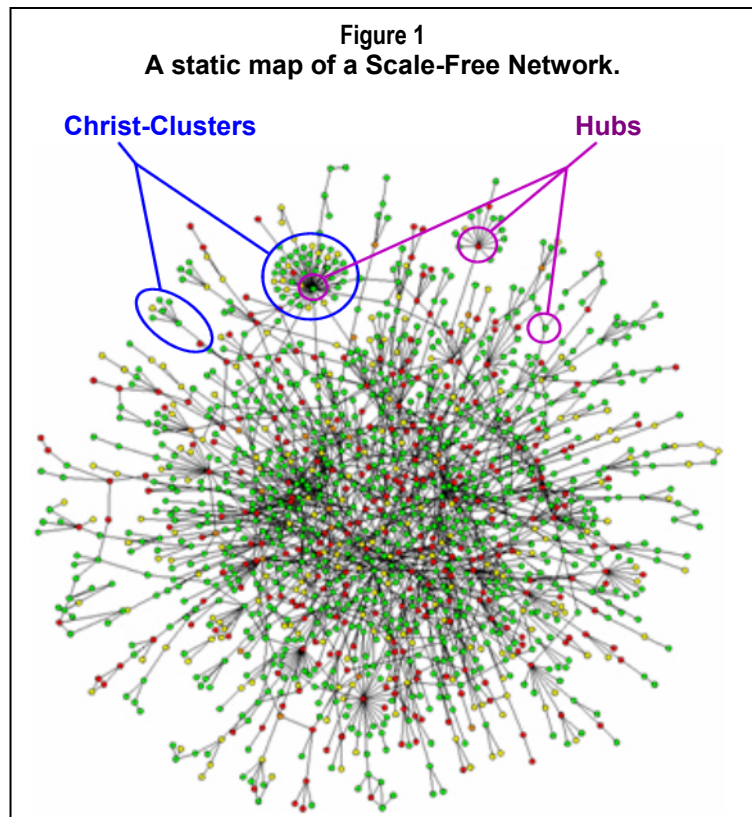
[1] Cover art, "Weave" by Emmanuela Copal de León, 1999.
[2] Margaret J. Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order is a Chaotic World* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1999), 34.
[3] DePree, *Leadership is an Art* (New York, NY: Dell Publishing, 1989), 3.

cartoon character. "[The *Roadrunner*] would see an opportunity and act upon it, always staying ahead of the competition. The fake detour sign, the falling anvil and the TNT never got to him because of his speed and perceptiveness... Beep, Beep."[4]

Though it may be a glossy caricature of leadership, *The Apprentice* seems to both connect with and reflect something of the American leadership ideal. Commonly held contemporary theories of leadership have often assumed a leader to be an individualized, autonomous self, and ontologically created yet self-made as leader with their leadership to be the exercise of this selfhood. I suggest that the way of Christ is other.

I claim leadership within a Christ-cluster is a socially constructed ethos created and called forth by each Christ-cluster. From the cumulative developments of the three prior essays in this series, institutional churches are best understood as Christ-commons. Christ-commons are the meeting places that encourage clustering around Christ. Christ-commons are to Christ-clusters, what hardware is to World-Wide-Web.[5] Christ-clusters are the communities of the Spirit indigenous to its shaping nodes: particular, dynamic

Figure 1
A static map of a Scale-Free Network.

Christ-Clusters   Hubs

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[4] "Bill Rancic," in The Apprentice, NBC.com, <http://www.nbc.com/nbc/The_Apprentice/contestants/about_bill.shtml>, 24 April 2004.
[5] Metaphorically speaking, Christ-commons (institutional church structures) are to Christ-cluster what Computer hardware is to the World-Wide-Web. Hardware such as computers, servers, fiber optics, telephone lines, routers, etc. are essential to the existence of the World-

and self-determining.[6] We now turn our attention to the substance and function of leadership within such a living complex adaptive system.

We will address two primary questions. First, we will look at the question, "who is a leader?" Secondly we will explore "what is the work of a leader?"

> *"For even I, the Son of Man,*
> *came here not to be served but to serve others,*
> *and to give my life as a ransom for many."*[7]
> – Jesus

> *"Are you seeking great things for yourself?*
> *Don't do it! But don't be discouraged."*[8]
> – God through Jeremiah

Who is a Leader?

Who is a leader? Ontologically speaking no one is a leader, while socially speaking everyone leads. The most common understanding of leadership is influence.[9] J. Oswald Sanders in *Spiritual Leadership* states, "leadership is influence, the ability of one person to influence others."[10] Everyone has relative influence, therefore everyone leads. The socially designated title of 'leader'

World-Web. At the same time hardware is not the Web. Hardware facilitates and dynamically participates creating the links but has no transformational content in itself. A node in the World-Wide-Web is a single web page. A web cluster is a website (with many internal links and often with links outside of itself). The Hub (or leader) of a website is its 'home page,' as it is the central place for making connections within a given cluster. 'Hardware administration' or 'network administration' is a leadership function that supports the dynamic linking of the Web. The hardware and the World-Wide-Web are fully interdependent. Most contemporary Western institutional churches have elevated 'network administration' leadership as the primary leadership model.

[6] See Appendix III for an abstract of Module three's essay where this was detailed.

[7] Matthew 20:28, New Living Translation. Unless stated otherwise all Scripture quotations will be quoted from the NLT.

[8] Jeremiah 45:5a.

[9] For further treatment of leadership as influence see; Gary A. Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1981), 3; Paul Hersey and Kenneth H. Blanchard, *Management of Organizational Behavior* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1988), 5; John C. Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993), 1; Howard Gardner, *Leading Minds* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1996), 8-9; and Walter C. Wright, *Relational Leadership: A Biblical Model for Leadership Service* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Publishing, 2000), 23-62.

[10] J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 1967, revised edition (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980), 35.

reflects the relative scale of one's social influence. The question, 'who is a leader?' is the same question as asking 'who is a person?'[11]

Leaders are not born, they are summoned into being.[12] All calling forth to leadership service is occasional. Or to put it another way, leaders are not summoned in such a way that having responded to the ethos-invitation to lead they remain as leaders indefinitely. As a Christ-cluster ethos morphs, so does its ethos-invitation for leadership. The Christ-cluster ethos does not stand apart from the "leader" and call out to the person. Rather the persons themselves shape and are shaped by the communal ethos which woos them to lead.

The communal-ethos is the distinctive spirit of a specific Christ-cluster. It is the basic underlying attitudes and beliefs of a group, movement, or culture, which give it its unique character. This ethos is dynamically shaped by each participant and each participant is dynamically shaped by the ethos, we see the Trinitarian *imago dei* reflected. It is this living *perichoretic* ethos which summons people(s) to service. The ethos is dynamic as it changes with, and brings change to bear on the people shaped by and shaping it. Each ethos is itself constituent of the ethoi of many prior communities which contribute to its social construction.

We do ourselves a disservice when labeling people as 'leaders.' We create a false dichotomy between leader and follower. This dichotomy lends itself to abuse by the person social labeled as 'leader,' while encouraging a type of

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[11] Much has been written about the, 'postmodern loss of self.' This essay could be understood as a postmodern loss of leaders. The 'loss' is a 'moving beyond' a Newtonian/Cartesian view of an autonomous individual. For further study I commend: George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, & Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*, Works of George Herbert Mead, ed. Charles W. Morris, vol. 1 (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1967); Robert Kegan, *The Evolving Self: Problem and Process in Human Development* (Cambridge, UK: Harvard University Press, 1982); Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); Alistair I. McFadyen, *The Call to Personhood: A Christian Theory of the Individual in Social Relationships* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990); and Kenneth J. Gergen, *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1991).
[12] Leonard I. Sweet, *Summoned to Lead* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2004).

disengagement from person(s) socially labeled as 'followers.' Peter Senge of MIT challenges our fixed understandings of leadership:

> Our traditional views of leaders – as special people who set the direction, make the key decisions, and energize the troops – are deeply rooted in an individualistic and nonsystemic worldview… At the heart, the traditional view of leadership is based on people's powerlessness, their lack of personal vision and inability to master the forces of change, deficits which can be remedied only by a few great leaders.[13]

As we are exploring cluster leadership within a framework of Christian theology we must look first at God, in whose social image humanity is created.[14] The Apostle Paul encouraged the Christ-commons in Corinth to look at Christ when they wanted to understand God. When Paul wrote, "…Christ, who is the exact likeness of God,"[15] he was saying that to see Christ, is to see God.

We see the Lord Jesus Christ baptized by John despite the Baptizer's protests that it ought to be the other way around. We see Jesus ask a lot of questions and give by contrast few clear answers.[16] We see Christ challenging the religious establishment more than the Roman occupation. We see a Christ who is at times lonely and scared. We see Christ scandalously engage with women, gentiles, lepers, Jewish sellouts to the Romans, and unlearned people. When opportunities seem to present themselves for Jesus' fame to increase he asks people to keep things hush, hush. Early on in his teaching career he has large crowds eating out of the palm of his hand when by the end of his life just a handful of close friends are left, and even they scatter when it gets tough, not to mention that one of his closest associates sold him out. Then of course is his death; nailed to a gentile cross on Jerusalem's garbage heap to die along side common criminals. And we best not forget that he was born out of wedlock, in a stable, and placed in a feed trough by a teenage girl who claimed to be a virgin.

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[13] Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1990), 340.
[14] See Appendix I for an abstract of Module One's essay where this was detailed.
[15] 2 Corinthians 4:4.
[16] Conrad Gempf, *Jesus Asked: What He Wanted to Know* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2003).

"…Christ, who is the exact likeness of God." God is the kind of leader whose power is in powerlessness.[17] God is a leader whose authority comes not from title or position but from *being*. A God who cares not for the power of God, but joyfully emptying such Divine rights or privileges for those loved and those led. And this emptying is not some kind of humble gesture; it is in-fact essential to what it means for God to be love. God's oneness or God's ethos calls forth the action of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in kenotic service. This Divine ethos is eternally coming into being as the Trinitarian persons relate *perichoretically*. In God's 'leadership' we see a radical departure from commonly held notions of top down leadership. In our social God we see a servant leader[18] holding nothing for Godself, rather freely, lovingly, and lavishly offering 'self' to 'other.' John – Christ's beloved disciple – declares, "Even in this world we are as he is."[19] Our Holy Spirit guided self-emptying use of power may be one of the great witnesses of our oneness with Christ.

Who is a leader? Leaders are people, who tacitly know themselves in relation with others; who live present to those relationships, emptying 'self' for the fulfillment of 'other.' Leaders do not exist in an ontological sense. Leadership is summoned by a communal-ethos to serve a socially determined set of functions which the community itself determines and invites a person to fulfill.

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[17] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Power of the Powerless: The Word of Liberation for Today*, 1981, trans. Margaret Kohl (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1983).
[18] Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey Into the Nature of Legitimate Power & Greatness*, 1977, 25th anniversary edition (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 2002).
[19] I John 4:17.

"God's being is in becoming"
– Eberhard Jüngel

"Because each existence is in constant change,
there is no abiding self."
– Shunryn Suzuki

A Leader is a Social Being

By defining leaders as people who tacitly[20] know themselves in relationship with others we are emphasizing a social self. *Ubuntu* is the Zulu word for 'people' is expressed, "We are, therefore I am."[21]   This understanding of self-in-community is the foundation for another Zulu saying, "It is through others that one attains selfhood." Persons are a type of social construct; uniquely 'selves' as more then the sum of their relationships.   Kenneth Gergen states it this way,

> In this era the self is redefined as no longer an essence in itself, but relational. In the postmodern world, selves may become manifestations of relationship, thus placing relationships in the central position occupied by the individual self for the last several hundred years of Western history.[22]

Miroslav Volf, writing from a Trinitarian perspective of a social self says, "Every human self is conditioned in an essential fashion by relationship with other human beings, and by societal structures and institutions."[23] This essential relationality is true of human beings because humans are created in the image of God whose 'being' is in becoming.

In Jüngel's examination of Barth's theology of the Trinitarian being of God he states,

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[20] I am drawing from Michael Polanyi's use of 'tacit.' He used 'tacit' or 'personal knowledge' to describe knowledge being understood without being expressed directly or taught directly. For instance, when a person says, "I just knew I was going to marry him," or the way a master craftsperson picks up two pieces of wood and after examining them knows that one piece would make a great violin while the other piece would not. Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1974).
[21] Randy Frazee, *Making Room for Life: Trading Chaotic Lifestyles for Connected Relationships* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2004), 29.
[22] Kenneth J. Gergen, *Saturated Self*, 146-47.
[23] Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, Sacra Doctrina: Christian Theology for a Postmodern Age, ed. Alan G. Padgett (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 183.

> The being of God was conceived of in the unity of three modes of being differentiated from one another. God's being is thus *self-regulated* being. As being it is relationally structured. But this relational ordering of God's being does not structure God's being as an impersonal structure over again this being; rather, the modes of God's being which are differentiated from each other are related to each other in such a way that each mode of God's being *becomes* what it *is* only *with* the two other modes of being. The relational structuring in God's being expresses different 'relations of origin' and 'processions' in God's being. As the being of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, God's being is thus a *being in becoming*.[24]

This vital understanding of God as a social being whose being is in becoming or whose being is in relationship forms the theological grounding for our understanding of human relational self. Human beings exist in and through relationship because God exists in and through relationship. Jean-Luc Marion in *God Without Being*, takes this the concept of a social God further and challenges the fundamental premise of both metaphysics and neo-Thomist theology placing God within the realm of agape love.[25] Margaret Wheatley places this social understanding of self within a leadership framework.

> All living beings create themselves and then use that 'self' to filter new information and co-create their worlds. We refer to this self to determine what's important for us to notice. Through the self, we bring form and meaning to the infinite cacophony of data that always surrounds us. Yet it is very important to note that in all life, the self is not a selfish individual. 'Self' includes awareness of those others it must relate to as part of its system. Even among simple cells, there is an unerring recognition that they are in a system; there is a profound relationship be individual activity and the whole.[26]

Theologian Catherine Keller, of Drew University writes,

> To see connections, we must see connectively. That is, we see connections in and by making them. Inspired and angered and energized by the relations we feel, we weave the web further by making the

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[24] Eberhard Jüngel, *God's Being is in Becoming: The Trinitarian Being of God in the Theology of Karl Barth*, 1986, trans. John Webster (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 77, emphasis in original.

[25] Jean-Luc Marion, *God Without Being*, 1982, trans. Thomas A. Carlson (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

[26] Margaret J. Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order is a Chaotic World* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1999), 167.

connection conscious. Thinking relationally about relatedness embroiders new designs into the tapestry of relation.[27]

Leadership is facilitating the embroidering of unique cluster-designs within God's Scale-free kingdom. The function of leading within a Christ-cluster links other nodes, fosters interpersonal relationship and facilitates connection, and then is open to getting out of the way, encouraging the new relationship to develop as those in relationship self-determine.

Leadership within a self-organized social construct is dynamic and is called into existence by the community itself. The leader does not stand apart from the community with a vision that is wholly other. The person responding to the specific ethos invitation to serve a momentary leadership function is both shaping and shaped by the vision that the community[28] is calling forth. Thus all leadership is respondent to the ethos invitation of the Christ-cluster. A follower of Christ responding to the communal ethos inviting them to a function of leadership service will embody kenosis. Who is a leader? A leader is one who's being is emptying for the sake of the other.

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[27] Catherine Keller, *From a Broken Web: Separation, Sexism, and Self* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1986), 159.

[28] Throughout this essay, use of "Community" or "Communal Ethos" is presupposing the active personal involvement of God by the Holy Spirit in the life and shape of the community. In this way the Holy Spirit is an ethos-shaping member of every Christ-cluster.

"Christianity is not about flourishing;
it is about taking up one's cross."[29]
– Anders Nygren

"Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone;
but if it dies, it bears much fruit."[30]
– Jesus

"Die before ye die."
– Muhammad

A Leader is Kenotic

Because a 'self' is best understood socially, the make-up of one's social relationships is central to the 'essence of self.' The perfect love of the Divine persons in Tri-unity so seek the fulfillment of the 'other' that self-fulfillment as a goal is nonexistent. The absence of the goal of self-fulfillment in Divine irony leads to the exaltation of the Divineself, effecting further self-emptying, hence greater love. Greater love in service is the exaltation of the Divineself. This is the kenotic process of *perichoretic* love. Thomas F. Torrance says it this way,

> The love of God revealed in Jesus Christ is his total unconditional self-giving to mankind, love in which he does not withhold himself from loving to the utmost or cut short its full movement, and it is upon that love that our hope of redemption and resurrection is grounded. It is the love of the eternally self-affirming and self-giving God, and so the love he pours out freely upon us through the Holy Spirit is love that affirms itself as love against all that is not love or resists his love… He does not hold back his love from the sinner, for he cannot cease to be the God who loves and loves unreservedly and unconditionally."[31]

Or as Denis Edwards writes, "The Trinitarian vision of creation is one which involves the kenosis of love, love which willingly allows itself to become vulnerable to human freedom and to the natural processes of the universe."[32] While Moltmann describes the God's self-empting love this way,

> On the cross of Christ this love is there for the others, for the sinner – the recalcitrant – enemies. The reciprocal self-surrender to one another

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[29] Brett P. Webb-Mitchell, *Christly Gestures: Learning to Be Members of the Body of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 84.

[30] John 12:24.

[31] Thomas F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God: One Being Three Persons* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Ltd., 1996), 246.

[32] Denis Edwards, "The Discovery of Chaos and the Retrieval of the Trinity," in *Chaos and Complexity: Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action*, ed. Robert John Russell, Nancy Murphy and Arthur R. Peacock (Vatican City State: Vatican Observatory Publications, 2000), 174.

within the Trinity is manifested in Christ's self-surrender in a world which is in contradiction to God; and this self-giving draws all those who believe in him into the eternal life of the divine love."[33]

Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his *Letters and Papers from Prison*, states,

> God lets himself be pushed out of the world on to the cross. He is weak and powerless in the world, and that is precisely the way, the only way, in which he is with us and helps us… The Bible directs us to God's powerlessness and suffering; only the suffering God can help.[34]

These theologians serve to underscore the rich testimony of Holy Scripture:

- "Since God did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't God, who gave us Christ, also give us everything else?"[35]
- "For God so loved the world that he gave…"[36]
- "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."[37]
- "We know what real love is because Christ gave up his life for us."[38]
- "But among you, those who are the greatest should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant. Normally the master sits at the table and is served by his servants. But not here! For I am your servant."[39]

This Scriptural sampling offers a snapshot of God's person. To see God is to see perfected leadership. Christ-followers open themselves up to the Holy Spirit-through-community-deconstruction of themselves. This path of *kenosis* is the way of the cross; the death that is life; the emptying that is filling. This form of leadership reflects the very person of God in the losing oneself to find oneself. God's sovereignty is that God empties Godself of sovereignty. God's power is that God makes Godself powerless. Finding oneself for the giving of oneself is

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[33] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, 1991, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 137.

[34] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, trans. E. Bethge (New York, NY: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1971), 359-61.

[35] Romans 8:32.

[36] John 3:16a.

[37] John 10:11.

[38] 1 John 3:16a.

[39] Luke 22:26-27.

the very life of Christ. It is only when we understand God as social a God that God can be understood to be love. Divine love is self-emptying.

Kenosis is leadership within the Christ-cluster, it is self-voiding of power. It is God who is self-emptying and invites us to share in God's own life. Self emptying demands openness more than orthodoxy. Who is a leader? A leader is one who lives into the reality of 'self' in community responding to the ethos' invitation to empty self in the loving service of other(s). We now move to our second question.

> *"But among you it should be quite different.*
> *Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant."*[40]
> – Jesus

> *"In life, the issue is not control,*
> *but dynamic connectedness."*[41]
> – Erich Jantsch

What Does a Leader Do?

Most general leadership research conducted over the last three decades has focused on the question to which we now turn our attention. What does a leader within a Christ-cluster do? Rather than fane an attempt at an exhaustive response to this question, we will allow the uniqueness of leadership within Christ-clusters to call forth a few key features which set it apart. We will explore leaders engaged in the service of hubbing connections, linking missionally, and introducing chaos.
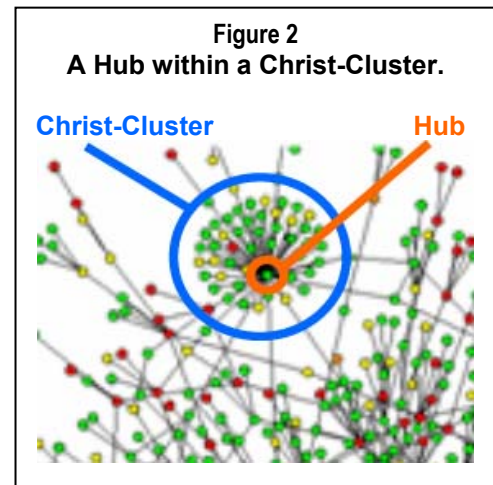
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[40] Mark 10:43.
[41] Erich Jantsch, *The Self-Organizing Universe* (Oxford, UK: Pergamon, 1980), 196.

*"A perspicuous representation produces just that understanding which
consists in 'seeing connexions.'"[42]*
– Ludwig Wittgenstein

*"Very life making.
I can't think of a better term for the power of connection."[43]*
– Edward M. Hallowell

Hubbing

For those people summoned to serve as hubs
within God's Scale-Free Kingdom, relationships
are everything. Nodes cluster around hubs not
just for the personality, or charisma of the hubbing
node but also for uniquely embroidered relational
mosaic that is the hub and thus the possibility of
linking to other nodes through that hub, (other
people, ideas, institutions, attitudes, resources,
etc).[44] Max DePree has challenged us to
"Understand that relationships count more that structure."[45]

**Figure 2
A Hub within a Christ-Cluster.**

The cross of Christ is the ultimate act of hubbing leadership. It is an act of
humble self-emptying service to which Christ is summoned by His affective
community. Christ's love for the other two persons of the Godhead and his love
for humanity compelled him to serve as a hub. His hubbing action on the cross
is self-emptying for the sake of relationship. Christ the hub, relationally bridges
God to humanity in the ultimate act of redemption and reconciliation while

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[42] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 1953, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, Third edition, German text, with a revised English translation (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Inc., 2001), 42e/122.

[43] Edward M. Hallowell, *Connect: 12 Vital Ties That Open Your Heart, Lengthen Your Life and Deepen Your Soul* (New York, NY: Pocket Books, 1999), 111.

[44] It is important to highlight the risk of hubbing in human relationships. Some nodes will attach themselves to a hub solely for the links available through the hub. Because our understanding of the social self when any node seeks self and self's fulfillment the health of the entire ethos is jeopardized. This is why it is essential for every node to own their relative hubbing role, and their inescapable influence in shaping the communal ethos. When nodes seek self, the ethos of the cluster becomes increasingly self-seeking; conversely, when nodes seek the fulfillment of the other, the ethos becomes increasingly marked by love. "Networking" or "working the room" is using relationships for selfish gain.

[45] Max DePree, *Leadership is an Art* (New York, NY: Dell Publishing, 1989), 28.

simultaneously bridging human to human.[46] The Apostle Paul puts it this way, "In Christ there is no Jew or Gentile…."[47] suggesting that Christ's hubbing can serve to link nodes which had seen no connection prior to Christ. Christ serves as the incarnational bridge. Christ holds onto nothing for himself even sacrificing his relationship with his Father and in so doing finds everything.

Those responding to a leadership ethos invitation to hub seek out opportunities to be influenced by others. They do this because the strength or health of a Christ-cluster requires multiple links – even weak links – bridging outside of the immediate cluster. The multiplicity of links bridging beyond an immediate community is what knits the members of a Christ-cluster into the larger fabric of the Scale-Free Kingdom. When Christ-clusters live into the links beyond their immediate community[48] they find a type of intrinsic accountability stemming from an infinitely larger network giving meaning and definition to the localized Christ-cluster. Without connections beyond itself the rogue Christ-cluster can assume a type of totalitarianism, heresy, cultish tone or any manner of idiosyncrasies, which further reinforce its isolation from the rest of the network.[49]

Any thoughtful node serving a hubbing function for a Christ-cluster will seek to link its participants with other nodes within their cluster and will not stop there.

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[46] Christ's hypostatic union even finds visible expression in the physicality of the cross; with one vertical beam (God to humanity) and one horizontal beam (human to human). The fact that Christ bridges between one repent thief and one unrepentant thief may further bear witness to the bridging of Christ, as the mission of God.

[47] Galatians 3:28.

[48] These links can be to the other concurrent clusters which share similar characteristics or the links could be to denominations, or learning institutions, or great cloud of witness – past and present – through their writings, websites, other forms of media, etc.

[49] Rogue Clusters left to themselves turn into virus within the Network as a whole. The nodes making up this rogue cluster, continue to live and relate and their influence spreads throughout their nodal networks. And the longer those groups are left without healthy interaction with nodes from outside the rogue cluster the more pervasive the ethos of the rogue community becomes. The growth of the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter Day Saints could be an example of this phenomenon. Of course we can only speculate, but if church leaders had connected with Joseph Smith and drew him in to closer relationship, linking him to theological training and Biblical exegesis, rather than cut ties with him, we can only wonder whether Mormonism would be the same today.

Hubs will aid each connecting node in weaving a web which safely and uniquely cradles that node. As David Bjork writes,

> They understand the need to integrate the converts into the Christian community, which they see as a networking of mentoring and accountability relationships with are distinguishable from ecclesiastical structures and with transcend denominational distinctives."[50]

Thus, one of the primary 'acts' of a hubbing node is to facilitate the linking its nodes beyond the hub's person.

"Weak links are often of greater importance than strong links because they act as the crucial ties that sew the social network together."[51]
– Mark Buchanan

"For there is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and people. He is the man Christ Jesus."[52]
– Paul the Apostle

Missional Linking

Hubs engage in missional linking. Missional linking is what it means for a hubbing node to seek connection beyond its natural affective community. In *The Cluetrain Manifesto*, David Weinberger describes 'missional linking' using the term 'hyperlinks.' He writes,

> [Hyperlinking] throws everyone into immediate connection with everyone else without the safety net of defined roles and authorities… Conversations subvert hierarchy. Hyperlinks subvert hierarchy. Being a human being among others subverts hierarchy.[53]

Having written extensively on missional linking, Darrell Guder of Princeton Theological Seminary says, "connectional structures are missiologically essential to the apostolicity, catholicity, holiness and unity of the church."[54] He further

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[50] David E. Bjork, *Unfamiliar Paths: The Challenge of Recognizing the Work of Christ in Strange Clothing* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1997), 65.
[51] Mark Buchanan, *Nexus: Small Worlds and the Groundbreaking Science of Networks* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002), 43.
[52] 1 Timothy 2:5.
[53] Rick Levine, et al., *The Cluetrain Manifesto: The End of Business as Usual* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing, 2000), 122-23.
[54] Darrell L. Guder, editor, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, The Gospel and Our Culture Series, ed. Craig Van Gelder (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 264.

stresses that, "the movement toward missional connectedness should be centrifugal, starting from particular communities and expanding to the global dimensions of the church."[55] Hubs engage in missional centrifugal linking,

moving beyond their affective Christ-clusters to other nodes and clusters. This process of missional linking impacts the very being of the hub. As noted earlier, hubs are socially constructed thus missional-linking with any 'other' node or cluster will also contribute ongoing 'becoming' of the hub.[56]

Figure 3
Missional Linking.
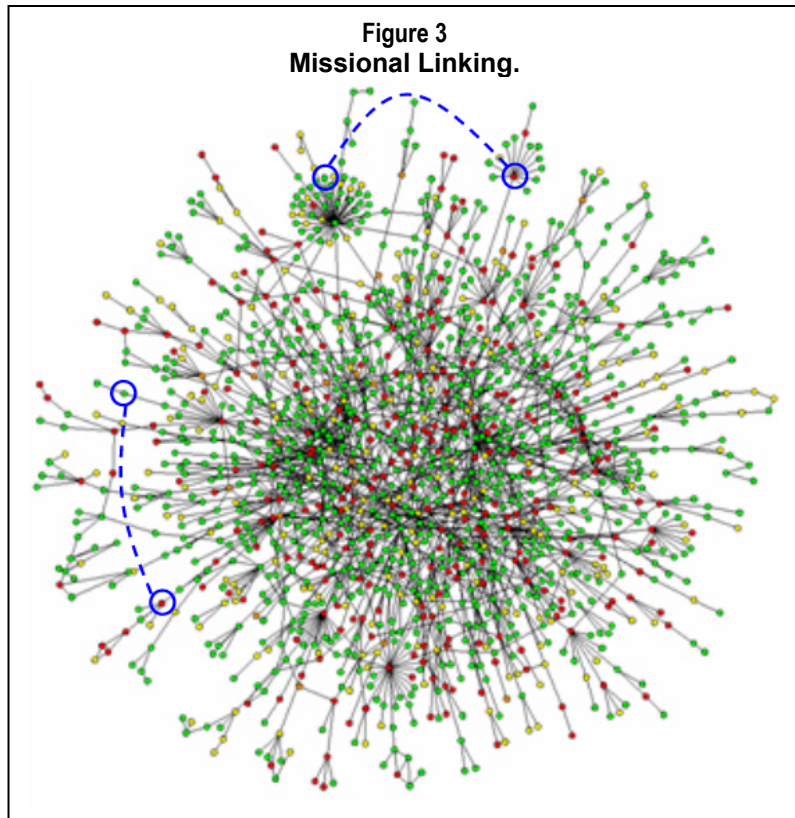
The Apostle Paul's words to the Christ-commons in Corinth may be more then a "missional strategy." His words may reflect the truth that Paul's 'being' was literally being constructed by the nodes and clusters with whom he was linking.

> When I am with the Jews, I become one of them so that I can bring them to Christ. When I am with those who follow the Jewish laws, I do the same, even though I am not subject to the law, so that I can bring them to Christ. When I am with the Gentiles who do not have the Jewish law, I fit in with them as much as I can. In this way, I gain their confidence and bring them to Christ. But I do not discard the law of God; I obey the law of Christ. When I am with those who are oppressed, I share their oppression so that I might bring them to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone so that I might bring them to Christ. I do all this to spread the Good News, and in doing so I enjoy its blessings.[57]

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[55] Darrell L. Guder, *Missional Church*, 265.
[56] Any node engaged in missionally linking will be changed. It is this process of being shaped in and through missional relationships that could offer fresh understandings of syncretism, contextualization, and incarnational ministry.
[57] 1 Corinthians 9:20-23.

Nodes responding to an invitation from a Christ-cluster's communal-ethos to serve as a hub will position themselves in such a way that the safety of their own social construct is jeopardized, for the sake of establishing links where none existed prior. God perfected missional linking in Christ; God incarnate.

Missional-linking facilitates change in the very person of the hub. This transformation within the hub inevitably introduces chaos to the hub's affective cluster(s).

> *"You need chaos within,*
> *to give birth to a dancing star."*
> – Friedrich Nietzsche
>
> *"The edge of chaos is the precondition*
> *for transformation to take place."*[58]
> – Richard Pascale

Introducing Chaos

The introduction of chaos disrupts cluster order. On first hearing this we might think that the disruption of order would be undesirable. "Chaos demonstrates, however, that a system can have complicated behavior that emerges as a consequence of simple, nonlinear interaction of only a few components."[59] Within living organisms chaos is a necessary prerequisite for change, innovation and creation. This is the heart of transformational discipleship. "When a complex adaptive system is moved toward the edge of chaos – when hurricanes and typhoons roil the deep seas, or fires rage through forests or parries – the potential for generativity is maximized."[60] Without chaos there is no learning, no change, and no transformation. Chaos can be understood as a type of worldview deconstruction. "There is order in chaos: randomness has an underlying

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[58] Richard T. Pascale, Mark Millemann, and Linda Gioja, *Surfing the Edge of Chaos: The Laws of Nature and the New Laws of Business* (New York, NY: Crown Business, 2000), 66.
[59] James P. Crutchfield, et al., "Chaos," in *Chaos and Complexity: Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action*, ed. Robert John Russell, Nancy Murphy and Arthur R. Peacock (Vatican City State: Vatican Observatory Publications, 2000), 35.
[60] Richard T. Pascale, Mark Millemann, and Linda Gioja, *Surfing the Edge of Chaos*, 66.

geometric form. Chaos imposes fundamental limits on prediction, but it also suggests causal relationships where none were previously suspected."[61]

In the Creation account of Genesis chapter one, we see the Spirit of God hovering over chaos birthing Divine order. The story God's people is narrated through the introduction of chaos. From Abram's invitation to leave the security of his homeland for destinations unknown; to the forming of national identity through the chaos of Egyptian slavery; to the cycle sin, judgment, redemption seen throughout the prophets; to the introduction of a Savior who is a national disappointment yet a global redeemer; to the countless personal crises of belief recorded for us in Scripture. Throughout history we have witnessed that out of seasons of political, social, and religious chaos a new ordering emerges. In fact, argues Wheatley, "Chaos is necessary to new creative ordering."[62]

When the equilibrium of relationally organized clusters is thrown into chaos, the Christ-clusters do what all living organisms try to do when thrown off balance, they try to stabilize. Relational stability becomes a goal and the cluster or the individual node will link and re-link with other nodes seeking to reestablish equilibrium. This drive to forge new relationships further knits the node(s) of that Christ-cluster within the Scale-Free Kingdom even though it may demand a radical reorganization of the Christ-cluster such the node which had been serving a relatively significant hubbing function ceases to do so.

In the solid church paradigm the group dispersement and an altering of a node's hubbing significance would usually be seen as failure, however, within the Scale-Free paradigm dispersement serves as a type of cross pollination which actually strengthens God's Scale-Free kingdom as a whole. "Complex adaptive systems become more vulnerable as they become more homogeneous."[63] So when a Baptist converts to the Church of Rome, or a Methodist becomes a Mennonite, or

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[61] James P. Crutchfield, et al., "Chaos," 35.
[62] Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 13.
[63] Richard T. Pascale, Mark Millemann, and Linda Gioja, *Surfing the Edge of Chaos*, 28.

a pagan joins the Orthodox Church the Network is strengthened. Amazingly, even when a long time member of a Christ-cluster walks away from church they too strengthen the network, as they cannot help but bring something of the Christ-cluster ethos along with them. As such, they can serve as unintended missional weak link[64] bridging the unchurched world to the churched world.

Equilibrium in living organisms is a death sentence. The moment a cluster settles comfortably into its presumed static existence it runs the risk of becoming a cancer or a parasite of sorts. "Disorder becomes a critical player, an ally that can provoke a system to self-organize into new forms of being."[65] A hubbing node will be tuned to the relative sense of equilibrium experienced by its connected nodes, and will seek to introduce *kyros* moments, moments of crisis for individual nodes as well as for the cluster.

It is important to stress that the service of introducing chaos is not the same as wrecking havoc.[66] The introduction of chaos is not an end in it self, but is a nudge out of a false security of preceded equilibrium, for though we often long for equilibrium we stagnate in it. Chaos is antithesis to one's thesis. Like a mother eagle nudging her eaglets out of her nest introducing chaos is an act of love. A type of bold love which says, "I love you enough to let you not like me," or "I love us enough to let this cluster dissolve."[67]

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[64] See my treatment of the strength of weak links in the module three essay, and Mark Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology* 78 (1973): 1360-80.

[65] Margaret J. Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 12-13.

[66] Its not that a hub is going from node to node stirring up trouble for the sake of trouble, rather as an attendant to the divine drama at work in and around a node or a whole cluster the person serving the hubbing function is uniquely positioned to link the node or the cluster with another node or cluster which can encourage active trust in God. Knowing one's cluster and the individual nodes and listening attentively is essential is key.

[67] This is largely the role of discipleship; it is learning, it is a chaos producing journey. From Christ saying, "You've heard it said… But I say to you…" cognitively this is a deconstructive and reconstructive process of becoming. Christ's interaction with the "Rich Young Ruler" in Matthew 19:16-22 is an example.

Self-emptying results in chaos, and chaos is the seed of creation and creation is an act of love.[68] Chaos, though never easy, is an invitation to rely on others. It is God's incubator for trust; a difficult place to be but a glorious vantage point to wait with bated breath to see what God is doing.

"Leadership is not a series of acts. It is a process.
Good leaders show followers the way by how they live their lives."[69]
– Carlton J. Snow

"The 'mask', or the role, of leader emerges in the interaction and
those participating are continuously creating and recreating the meaning of
the leadership themes in the local interaction which they are involved."[70]
– Douglas Griffin

Conclusion

While exploring the "being" and "act" of a hubbing node within a Christ-Cluster it is essential we see them as two sides of the same coin.[71] My intention is not to separate a hub's "person" from a hub's "work," but to highlight hubbing service within a Christ-cluster to aid the reader in seeing the uniqueness of hubbing in contrast with traditional hierarchical leadership forms. Though specific functions of a hub will vary with the ethos of each Christ-cluster, hubs are socially constructed beings whose hubbing services are called forth from the ethos of the Christ-Cluster and kenotically engaging the nodes and other clusters connecting to them.

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[68] John C. Polkinghorne, Editor, *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001); and Keller, *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming* (London, UK: Routledge, 2003), 1-25.

[69] Carlton J. Snow, "Rebuilding Trust in the Fractured Workplace," in *Faith in Leadership: How Leaders Live Out Their Faith in Their Work and Why It Matters*, ed. Robert J. Banks and Kimberly Powell (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 44.

[70] Douglas Griffin, *The Emergence of Leadership: Linking Self-Organization and Ethics*, Complexity and Emergence in Organizations, ed. Ralph D. Stacey, Douglas Griffin and Patricia Shaw (London, UK: Routledge, 2002), 217.

[71] Colin Gunton's final book before his death last year powerfully drew together the 'Act' and 'Being' of God. A relentless critique of the way theological separation of God's being from God's action distorts the very doctrine of God. God's being is God's action, is God's word, is God's motive, is God's love. Colin E. Gunton, *Act & Being: Towards a Theology of the Divine Attributes* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002).

Hubbing leaders ask different questions than hierarchal leaders ask. Hierarchal leaders ask: Who is following me? Who is different? Who is my enemy? How can I show my superiority? Who will support me?

Hubbing leaders ask: Where is our common ground? How can we aid one another? What are our hopes and dreams – any intersection? How can we introduce chaos so that we become more deeply knit into the network of God's Scale-Free Kingdom? How can we make more room around the table? How can we bridge the gulf that has separated us?

Lipman-Blumen of Oxford University, in her book, *Connective Leadership* writes,

> [Connective leaders] focus on common ground, the connections among people, not on the contrasts and chasms that separate them. Of course, connective leaders recognize the differences, but they welcome them as a source of multithreaded strength. By loosening the bonds of individualism, they use diversity to brace interdependence, to stimulate innovation, and to serve the needs of all. For these reasons, if for no other, connective leader are our best hope for achieving renewal through interdependence.[72]

The Scale-Free Kingdom paradigm liberates Christ-followers to relationally organize themselves in meaningful Clusters centered in Christ. The ethos of these Christ-clusters invites people to empty themselves in hubbing servant leadership. Those people responding to the ethos invitation to serve a hubbing role will missionally link beyond the safety of their natural community as they bridge to other nodes and clusters. Hubs will so engage with those nodes linked to them so as to introduce life educing chaos into the organism. The relational reign of God is the ultimate reality that draws creation forward. Transformational churches are socially constructed, occasional and indigenous Christ-clusters making visible the relational reign of God in God's Scale-free kingdom. Hubs respond to the ethos invitation of Christ-clusters in kenotic love, relationally offering themselves to be whatever Christ and the local Christ-cluster require. This is the glorious hope of Christian service.

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[72] Jean Lipman-Blumen, *Connective Leadership: Managing in a Changing World* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996), 339.

"We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus,
on whom our faith depends from start to finish.
He was willing to die a shameful death on the cross
because of the joy he knew would be his afterward.
Now he is seated in the place of highest honor
beside God's throne in heaven."[73]
– Author of the letter to the Hebrews

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[73] Hebrews 12:2.

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Appendix I: Abstract of Essay One
The Divine Dance as the Hermeneutical Key to Ontology and Revelation

God is ontologically relational. God is one and three; three and one. Father, Son, Holy Spirit in a *perichoretic* interpenetrating relationship which simultaneously affirms both individuality and mutuality. It is this relational God who has created human beings *imago dei*. Human beings are best understood as ontologically relational or social beings. We are not just created for relationships rather have our being in and through relationship. Our being is in relationship with God, with other humans and with the entire created order. To relate is to have a connection, and God created humanity to enjoy deep interpersonal connection with himself. The spirit of oneness humans enjoyed with God in the Garden of Eden was damaged as sin was introduced. The very fact that God initiates dialogue with us through his Spirit, through creation, through Scripture and through Jesus is his invitation not just to a connection with God but an interpersonal connection with him and in this sense special revelation is God's relational invitation to *perichoretically* dance with Him.

Appendix II: Abstract of Essay Two
I-Thou-Us: Interpersonal Relations as Living Spirit

To have a relationship is to have a connection. From this starting point we understand all that is, is in fact connected. The very fact that we can speak of something implies knowledge of; and "knowledge of," is a type of connection. Though "knowledge of" is not required for a connection to exist: as it is virtually impossible to detail all the connections contributing to even one person's being. A connection between two people (*I-thou*), does not automatically imply an interpersonal connection. Connections may be economic, geographical, political, gender, chemical, social, biological, etc. Interpersonal relationships are best understood as a living, dynamic *spirit*. As *I-thou* engage interpersonally the spirit of *us* is born. As such all interpersonal relationships are trinitarian (*I-thou-us*). The *us* is living, *perichoretically* informing, transforming, interpenetrating and interrelating with both *I* and *thou*. The *us* cannot be *us* without the *I*, and the *I* cannot be the *I* without the *thou*, and the *thou* cannot be the *thou* without the *us*. The *us* can be uniquely described and is distinguishable from both *I* and *thou* yet simultaneously inseparable from both *I* and *thou*. In this way *perichoresis* is the hermeneutical key to understanding interpersonal relationality. Because the *I-thou-us* is rooted in time and place, the *us* is morphing and developing. With even the slightest development in one party to the relationship, the whole of the relationship may be changed. This understanding of the dynamic nature of human interpersonal relations has radical implications for all theology, and in my forthcoming essays we will explore the impact specifically on ecclesiology, missiology and our understanding of the Kingdom of God.

Appendix III: Abstract of Essay Three
Scale-Free Networks: A Structural Hermeneutic for Relational Ecclesiology

The Kingdom of God is a vast shaping network, linking all of creation under the relational reign of God. Each node of creation is related to every other node through a dynamic web of constantly morphing links. Until recently network theory could not explain clustering phenomena; it is the reality of clustering that makes scale-free network theory so important. Scale-free network theory accounts for the clustering of nodes around hubs (or popular nodes). It serves as a hermeneutic of the relational structure of all of life, and opens new vistas for understanding and experiencing the living relationship between God's World, God's Kingdom and God's churches.

Within God's "scale-free kingdom" churches are best understood as Christ-clusters. Christ-clusters are groupings of nodes responsible for discrete Holy Spirit led/cluster-determined cellular functions. These Christ-clusters are usually distinct from, though often synergistically related to the institutional church. Institutional structures like churches, denominations, para-church organizations, families, colleges, and even corporations can serve as a type of 'commons' for Christ-clustering. Leadership within Christ-clusters is a hubbing function that is radically democratic and cannot be positionally hierarchal.