A wholistic (mind, body, heart) model for forming leaders in

Collaborative Ministry

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Introduction – this is not about 'fixing' finances

Many churches in Australia are not able to sustain the costs of a priest (even on a half time stipend) and the other infrastructure overheads of the church. There could be a range of reasons for this including small numbers; ageing congregation (lower giving potential); young family congregation (also lower giving potential because of costs of children or mortgages; or, to be blunt, not being courageously faithful in giving).

As any household knows, to balance income and expenditure we either need to increase income or decrease costs. One way of increasing income is to appeal for more giving. This can, despite our best intentions and theological justifications, be experienced as haranguing and lead to guilt and demoralisation. Another way is to go into huge fundraising. This, as I see it, has at least two downsides. Firstly, it can turn the field of mission into 'targets' to help us stay afloat (a reversal of the direction of mission, which is to give ourselves away, with grace, to others). Secondly, it's a distraction from Christian life and mission.

So that brings us to the other side – decreasing costs. The quickest way of cutting costs at scale is to reduce the amount of time a priest spends in a community. Perhaps the community decides to work with a half time priest which means that the priest needs to find half time work somewhere else. This typically results in a diffusion of priestly focus across two communities (say, running between two centres on a Sunday morning; two sets of parish council meetings; two lots of administration to keep an eye on etc). Plus there are the psychological impacts on the clergy of feeling like failures; constantly having to answer questions from Church Office (like, 'where's your mission plan', as if you don't already have one!); and having to justify one's own existence to parish councils which can either be supportive or punitive in their attitudes to incurring increasing debt to the Diocese. Overall, that is a clear recipe for decline.

So this is where the language of 'collaborative ministry'[i] can become misused. If collaborative ministry is really just a code phrase for churches and clergy to do more work with less money, including increasing the number of requests on laity to help 'run' the church rather than getting on with the vocations that the Spirit is truly inspiring within them[ii], all in the name of balancing the books, then that would be an ultimately self-defeating ecclesiology. A collaborative approach to being the church, supported by a 'collaborative leader', has got to be anchored theologically.

Moreover I believe the whole conversation needs to move beyond only *thinking* theologically to asking what *embodied* practices will help us to experience and learn in a collaborative way; and to consider what kind of inner work (heart work; soul work) is required to foster collaboration in churches.

This paper is written from the perspective of a practitioner. I have 22 years experience in ordained ministry as an Anglican Priest. Roughly half of this was in small financially struggling communities. The other half has been as a university chaplain combined with self-funded ministry as a professional leadership coach, facilitator and professional supervisor of clergy. I also served as an Archdeacon for Ministry Development for four years, attending carefully to what helps and hinders vibrancy in

congregations. What follows below are a few reflections, based on my own experience and observations of what enables collaborative leadership in ministry, what seems to be hindering it and some possible ways forward in an Anglican Church context.

I am not a professional theologian but an increasing number of people are doing the necessary theological work about collaborative ministry. The person I cite most in this paper is Bishop Stephen Pickard from his book, "Theological Foundations for Collaborative Ministry"[iii]. The other person who has been influential for me is Bishop Brian Farran who did his Doctor of Ministry thesis[iv] on the establishment of the 'Becoming Ministering Communities in Mission' vision in the Goldfields & Wheatbelt regions of Western Australia. There have also been some other useful prototypes (learning experiences) at the Diocesan level in the Anglican Communion over the last 20 years, including in Australia (Newcastle, North Queensland, Tasmania, Willochra), the UK, Alaska and Arizona.[v] We are starting to learn about what seems to work (by 'work' I mean what seems to foster the fruits of the Spirit of Christ in a mission-shaped church), what is sustainable and what isn't. I also have a particular interest in the way that clergy are formed and sustained in ministry for the long haul, which is where the emphasis of this paper lies[vi]

One of the things we are learning is that we can't use a collaborative approach as a 'patch' for a failing ecclesiology. By failing, I mean a 'one size fits all' structure for church communities, which forces us into some of the structural dilemmas described above and which is about managing decline rather than being proactively and flexibly missional. One of the phrases that changed my world was when someone said to me a few years ago, 'the definition of a Christian community is not the capacity to raise $140K a year'. And yet we still seem to be defining a Christian community in terms of its capacity to pay for a priest, rectory and worship centre (except now it might be $80K if we have a half time priest).

We keep asking the question, 'How do we pay to keep this existing structure on the road' rather than saying, 'What is the Spirit stirring up in this particular place, and how does this interface with, or challenge, our existing structures so that new life can emerge?'

We need to start analysing our underpinning assumptions and asking why we seem stuck in certain modes of ministry in a way that is probably unhelpful for the mission of the church. What stops us from being more collaborative than we are? [vii]

I have structured my reflections in this paper under the headings of 'Head, Hands and Heart', drawing on the image of the human body as an *epistemological metaphor for adult learning.*

(i)   Head - theology of collaborative ministry

In this book, 'Theological Foundations for Collaborative Ministry', Stephen Pickard (referred to here on as SP) says:

> *"Christian ministry has a collaborative character. It arises out of a baptismal theology of death to self and new life in Christ. This is the litmus test for all ministry that bears the name of Christ. The whole people of God are called, by virtue of their baptism, to collaborate, working together for the coming of the kingdom of God. In this sense it is as true to speak of a collaborative ecclesia [church] as it is to speak of collaborative ministry. The people of God do not decide of their own accord to operate in a collaborative manner. The ecclesia is, by virtue of being the body of Christ, a collaborative entity….collaboration is encoded into the way God creates and acts….as a result when the church acts in a collaborative manner it*

actualises its own deepest reality. It can do no other. Collaborative ministry is not an optional extra but the manner in which the ministry of the gospel is gospel ministry" (Pickard, p.6-7).

One of the key questions that runs through SP's book is the relationship between formal ordained ministry ('Offices' of the Church) and the generalised ministries of the church embodied in the gifts of all the baptised (1 Cor.12). Or, in slightly different language, what is the relationship between the 'priesthood of all believers' [1 Peter 2:9] and the ordained priesthood?

Broadly speaking, SP talks about two emphases which stand in tension with one another. One is *Christological* in the sense of a ministry passed from Christ, to the disciples and from them to future leaders of churches, around whom church communities get constituted (one could think of St Paul going from place to place, preaching and establishing new churches). Here, ministry is first and foremost an apostolic movement of being 'sent' by Christ into the world in fulfillment of the great commission in the last verses of Luke's gospel. A downside is that this emphasis on direct succession from Christ can, and has, led to a concentration of power and authority in the hands of the ordained (sometimes called 'clericalism'), a devaluing of lay ministry (or denying that the word 'ministry' can even be applied to the laity), and a rigidity/ossification of church structures.

The other emphasis which SP refers is *pneumatological* (the work of the Spirit). Ecclesiologies which put more emphasis on ministry originating with the Spirit will perceive the church as a whole, through the Spirit inspired gifts of all the baptised, as being where the primary ministry lies, and that any formal ordering of ministry is what rises up 'from the bottom'. A downside is the risk that the church cannot hold a form over space and time (because everything is 'up for grabs' according to the latest perceived movement of the Spirit). Mis-use of power can also emerge in Spirit-driven churches, not from ordained clergy (because there may not be any) but from charismatic power-brokers, leading to insular and sometimes even cult-like outcomes.

SP gives an interesting analysis of how churches have long struggled to come to terms with the relationship between the ministries of the whole church and the specific ministries of the ordained offices, particularly over the last couple of hundred years. He sees that this conversation has been particularly influenced by the growing ecumenical movement where recognition of formal ministries between churches is an important part of the conversation.

SP suggests that in considering the 'relationships' between these different kinds of ministries (formal offices and the vocation and charisms of all the baptised) we could be helped by the relational aspects of Trinitarian thinking. However he sees such Trinitarian work in relation to ministry as very underdeveloped. He regularly refers to Paul's claim in Romans 12:5 that 'individually we are members *one of another'* and keeps posing the question about the implications of this for the relationships *between* the ministries, especially of lay and ordained.

At present it seems that all our models of ministry are almost exclusively tied to a particular ways of envisaging the role and responsibilities of ordained and lay ministries. At one extreme we end up with two almost completely separate (parallel tracks) kinds of ministries (he wonders if this is a kind of 'ministerial Nestorianism'). At the other extreme, any distinctions collapse entirely such that that nothing can be said to be distinctive about each of the ministries.

In my own experience I resonate with SP's observations that there is an uncertainty and confusion about the relationship between ministries which becomes more acute when thinking about collaborative ministry. There were at least two salutary learnings for me, while working with Bishop Brian Farran on the 'Ministering Communities in Mission' vision in Perth (c.1995-2005). Firstly, we could talk all we liked about the 'team ministry' and valuing 'the ministry of all the baptised', but if

all the big symbols validated ordained ministry but virtually ignored lay vocations (e.g. ordination services in cathedrals; the language of liturgy in relation to clergy being 'set apart'; the way stipends gravitated to the ordained rather than to lay roles), then this was sending a powerful message to people…..'you're only a *real* minister if you're ordained'. The consequence was that nearly everyone who started 'local ministry' team training ended up getting ordained and we ended up with virtually no theologically trained lay members of ministry teams[viii]

The second learning for me was that it's a big cultural shift to address the dynamics of power in a church which suffers from clericalism. As Pickard observes, collaboration is neither 'labouring over' others or 'labouring under' others, but 'labouring with' (co-labour). Achieving this is not as easy as it sounds. For example, in Perth, what we started to notice with some of the team-based ministries is that rather than becoming a collaborative 'model' for the ministry of all the baptised *in mission*, some of the teams started to develop features of power-acquisition previously associated with clergy (those who have read the novel, 'Animal Farm' will remember the observation that 'some animals are more equal than others'). I sometimes said that a five-person ministry team can start to look like a 'five-headed priest'.

SP asks the important question, "*what understanding of ministry is necessary for a fully collaborative practice to emerge?*" (Pickard, p.7). In chapters 8 and 9 of this book, he uses the emerging science of complexity theory from the biological/physical sciences to suggest some ways forward in developing a theological frame for collaborative ministry. Complexity theory gives insights into how the inter-dependent parts of a system are both mutually enlivening and ordering.

In ecclesial language, we have tended to think of the 'ordering' of the parts of a system as a kind of mechanical and external imposition (i.e. we might think of a priest imposing order on a bunch of unruly or uncoordinated ministries). This can be a kind of 'tyranny from above'. Alternatively charismatic outbreaks of dynamism in a community can be accompanied by a resentment of any perceived control or order from above (from clergy). This can become a kind of 'tyranny from below'. Either of the above results in alienation and breakdown of relationships between ministries.

However, viewed through the lens of a complex adaptive system, order *and* dynamism are intrinsic emergent properties of the system as it self organises itself, through novel adaption to its environment. A system which is organically self-organising delivers both order *and* vitality without having to impose or force either from outside the system.

 In making the theological connections between theology and complexity theory, SP envisages ministries as 'dynamically ordered relations' which are genuinely co-creating of each other, in a way that makes sense of Paul's conception of being 'members one of another' (Romans 12:5). This dynamic ordering is grounded in, and springs from the 'energetic order of the divine life' (Pickard, p.143) which is simultaneously transcendent and the internal 'ground' of the system.

Where such dynamically ordered relations exists, they are neither *top-down* nor *bottom up* (the debate about which Pickard says is 'endemic in Anglicanism' (p.105)) but mutually and dynamically forming and enriching of each other. Taking this approach it's not possible to think of 'individual ministries' that are merely co-operating and getting on well together (which a strictly mechanical view of the body might suggest). Here, there is no such thing as an 'individual' ministry. All the ministries are affecting each other and mutually constituting each other. This is an organic view of the body.

All of the above might sound a bit abstract. What does it mean in practice when it comes to deciding what different ministries 'do'?. SP, sensibly I think, doesn't try to lock it all down into a new

dogmatic suggestion about 'roles of the laity and roles of the clergy', which would be to fall into exactly the trap he's trying to avoid. But he does sound some particular warnings about how our understandings of Diocesan and Episcopal practices have led to a kind of 'managerialism' (Bishop as CEO) which could be quite unhelpful to the true mission of the church as well as the wellbeing of Bishops.

The good news is that as I read SP's theological reflections, I have a strong intuitive sense that the church has access to some significant existing practices that can give experiential/physical form to what SP describes as 'dynamically ordered relations' between ministries, in which, ''neither ordained nor other ecclesial ministries can be what they are or shall be *without the other"* (Pickard. P.149). The specific processes I refer to, and which are described in the next section, are '*Open Space Technology'* and '*Talking Circles'*. These dialogic processes have deep roots in indigenous cultures and from a western analytic perspective they also reveal, from a human systems perspective, many of the dynamics described in complexity and self-organising systems theory.

My proposal is that, alongside the question posed by Stephen Pickard ("*what understanding of ministry is necessary for a fully collaborative practice to emerge?*"), there is a complementary question, which is, "*what practice of ministry is necessary for a fully collaborative understanding of ministry to emerge?"* For me, as a church leader, the use of circle work (primarily Talking Circles and Open Space Technology) provides an experiential basis for exploring and validating the ideas which Stephen Pickard articulates. In particular, I am curious about the 'dynamic relations' which occur when the church (both clergy and laity) sits in a circle to listen together and thereby to *affect* each other.

(ii)   Hands – embodied practices of collaborative ministry

My experience as a parish priest is that I started off with a great deal of expectation on myself to be the person who was supposed to cast the vision and lead from the front, coming up with all the good ideas, in rather a 'heroic leadership' way. I think this could also be described as a form of 'clericalism' in the sense that there was a lot of 'I' language in it and not much 'we'. While I don't think I imposed my ideas in a heavy-handed way on congregations in which I was appointed 'Rector' (ruler) or 'Priest in Charge' (notice the loaded language) it was always clear that the agenda was being set by me. I know I'm not alone in this leadership style. I had imported this way of leading from my years of working in hierarchal structures of business and, frankly, I'd never experienced anything much different in churches. This kind of leadership was not life-giving for either me or the churches I ministered in.

For me, the big turning point, which was a liberation for me and my parish was being introduced to Open Space Technology (OST)[ix], and its underlying principles in complexity thinking. This gave me a new way of re-envisaging leadership and mission, in terms which Margaret Wheatly calls a shift from 'hero to host'. [x]

I believe that the 'hosting' paradigm is a way of envisaging a collaborative approach to leadership which sits in the 'dynamic relational space' between 'top down' and 'bottom up'. It seems to me that, at least in the Anglican Church, an important part of the ordained leader's role is to *steward* the story of the gospel (to remind the community of the **'who and why'** of our life together - the community's ontological identity in Christ and why this leads us to be who we are in the world), while also 'hosting' a collaborative, relational, hospitable, encouraging, supportive and enabling space for the spiritual gifts of all the baptised to emerge and be expressed (the '**what we do' and 'how we do it'**).

All conversation space, in any organisation, is ultimately *bounded* by the core identity and purpose of the community. Historically, one way of framing the ministry of the clergy is that the ordained person 'represents the community to itself'. From a complex systems perspective, this is not done from outside, or from a distance, but from within the circle itself - embodying 'power with' rather than 'power over' or 'power under'. Another way of talking about this is the vital function that formal leaders have in creating the *conditions* necessary for collaboration to emerge as a group phenomenon rather than just being the activity of an individual (which can be part of the problem of thinking of collaborative leadership as something that a priest *does to* a congregation). I refer to one of my colleagues, Dr Neil Preston's work on these conditions in the end notes. [xi]

I have experienced *Open Space Technology* and *Talking Circles* processes as very practical, embodied ways in which people can experience the dynamics of 'power with', which starts with collective listening. The processes can be very effective in creating conditions for co-learning and experimentation in the midst of complexity and/or conflict. Harrison Owen describes the circle as the 'architecture of collaboration' which is neither 'top down' or 'bottom up' but a dance between both. Within the circle there is a 'formal' leadership aspect from the 'office' of the ordained as conversation host[xii] in which the host is a *part* of the circle rather than standing *above* the people; and there is a 'whole body' aspect in which the ministry of all the baptised constitutes the circle rather than standing *below* anyone . In the relational dynamics of the circle a genuine mutuality exists while also recognising the distinctive kinds of ministries.[xiii]

This is a way of leading that most clergy are not trained in and is easier to experience than describe. It is because I know that these circle processes lead to deep listening and effective collaborative outcomes that I have committed part of my life over the last 10 years or so to teaching and mentoring clergy and laity in these processes. The move to more systematic capacity building for clergy and lay leaders, in such processes, is an alluring possibility.

 I think the reason for the very slow update may be that we are still embedded in a primarily intellectual approach to learning (thinking our way into a new way of acting) rather than an action-learning epistemology of 'acting our way into a new way of thinking (theologically)'.

Heart – the inner work of collaborative leadership

There is no doubt, in my experience as a priest, professional supervisor and coach to clergy, that once we, in formal leadership roles, try to lead in a more collaborative way, that various inner psychological mechanisms get activated as we are thrust into ever more complex relational dynamics. Frankly, it seems far easier to just tell people what to do, or be told what to do (there is often an agreed symbiotic relationship between congregations and clergy in this regard).

To do ministry effectively in a collaborative way requires specific understandings of, and skills in, the nature of dialogue.

Below I mention three very helpful 'frames' for the inner work of collaborative leadership:

Power and Love

A very practical exploration of the dynamics of dynamics of dialogue can be found in Adam Kahane's work, 'Power and Love'.[xiv] The title of the book is based on a quote by Martin Luther King:

"Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anaemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love." (Martin Luther King)

I have provided a visual overview of Kahane's work in the attachment to this paper. In short, most of us are dancing between the twin poles of advocating/speaking for a position (power) and 'letting go/listening to the views of others' (love). Each of these poles has a 'shadow' in which we can lapse into either being a 'control freak' (the shadow side of power) or being a 'door-mat' (the shadow side of love). These poles can have corporate dimensions, such as when a priest dominates a congregation (who collapses/submits into passivity) or when a congregation dominates a priest (who relinquishes required leadership). In either of the latter cases, there is no co-labouring but only 'labour over' or 'labour under'.

The 'sweet spot' of collaborative leadership is a constant dance between the twin poles of power and love (intention and surrender), being alert to when we are collapsing into the shadow. In this sense, I am now starting to see that 'collaborative leadership' and 'nonviolent leadership' are really interrelated terms. To unconsciously allow the shadow side of power or love to take over our behaviour is to do violence to ourselves and others.

Anthropology and theology of active nonviolence

A second aspect of inner work is having a knowledge of how violence works in human systems. When a system is under stress, as the church currently is, there are clearly observable dynamics of what Rene Girard calls, 'mimetic rivalry' and 'scapegoating'[xv]. Groups look for someone to blame for their troubles. The scapegoat can be an individual or another group/tribe. I am familiar with a diocese in which tribal barriers and lines of offence/defence have been established between parishes and staff in church office, each blaming the other for their respective problems.

When this starts to happen, people will adopt entrenched positions in which coercive power (power-over) becomes the default mechanism. Symptoms of this occurring could be: the design and implementation of policies without the collaborative participation of those the policies will affect ('collaboration' needs to be understood here as qualitatively different to 'consultation'[xvi]); a punitive application of those policies to discipline rather than a relational and restorative approach (often with a 'defence' that 'we are just following the statutes); a passive-aggressive spirit of resignation among those who feel powerless and/or people using 'work around' mechanisms to avoid imposed systems which they believe to be unjust or unfair. In all cases there is a severe deterioration of relationships.

An important part of the inner work of collaboration is knowing how to identify when our own mimetic rivalry and scapegoating tendencies are being activated, and how to handle this in a productive way. Theologically, nonviolence in rooted in the nonviolence of Christ, who offers a way out of mimetic rivalry. It seems to me that *nonviolent leadership* and *collaborative leadership* are virtually synonymous terms. To be collaborative requires practicing active nonviolence.

This approach is, by its very character, missional because living in this way is living the gospel of Christ. We are, in the words of Gandhi, 'being the change we wish to see'.

The utilisation of collaborative/dialogic approaches such as circle work is also useful because there are mechanisms within the processes themselves which deal effectively with the

dynamics of mimetic rivalry, enabling people of good will to move quickly into a productive space which preferences 'performance' over 'personalities'.[xvii]

Contemplative prayer

Thirdly, we would need to be exploring the leadership implications of the practice of contemplative prayer. I mentioned above the work of Adam Kahane and the necessary dance between 'power and love'.

In learning something about this dance in my own life, I have been greatly helped by the practice of contemplative prayer, through which I learn to notice when my internal defence mechanisms are being activated. The great teacher of contemplative prayer, Thomas Keating, calls these triggers, 'emotional programs for happiness'. These include the needs to fix, to control, to be right, to be impressive, to be liked. In the Australian Church the person doing some of the deepest work on theology and contemplative prayer is Sarah Bachelard.[xviii]

Spirited desire

When we reflect on collaboration, the corollary is to ask 'collaboration to what end'? Collaboration is not an end in itself. Collaboration is the by-product of labouring together towards a desirable 'gospel shaped/kingdom shaped' end.

Regardless of what intellectual constructs (theology of collaboration) we have about collaboration, or what embodied processes we use (circle work), unless there is inspired (in-spirited) passion, then nothing much is going to move or change.

I place this question within the 'heart' domain because it is related to *enthusiasm.* This is clearly the work of the Spirit. And where does the Spirit emerge? I think, at least in part, it emerges in story telling and story listening. Christians are people who tell stories, starting with the story of Jesus.

My colleague in the Uniting Church Ministry Training Centre in Parramatta, Dr Ian Robinson, talks about helping people to discover the relationship between 'nested' stories[xix]. These are 'THE story' (gospel/Jesus); 'OUR story' (church/tradition); and 'MY story' (my own experience and faith journey with God). When people recognise and articulate their own experience and connect the dots with the story of Jesus and the Church there is often a strong release of passion for mission. This isn't about technique. It becomes organic and natural. For example, how often do we hear people speaking passionately about their football club or their yoga group and enthusiastically inviting others to join them? Is there the same level of passion in the church? If not, why not?

The 'inner work' dimension of collaborative leadership requires self-insight and emotional intelligence. In selecting for leadership roles, one should select for self-insight and emotional intelligence as primary requirements. I am aware of a Dean in one Australian Cathedral who has taken this approach in the selection of a new organist. The selection committee resolved that it was more important to select someone who could get on with other people over and above the necessary technical competence in music.

Engaging in regular professional supervision/coaching is another effective way of developing 'inner work' capacity. I believe this should be a core part of clergy formation and be maintained throughout one's professional life in ministry leadership.

Summary

In this paper I've explored how our collaborative practice as Christian leaders, lay and ordained, could benefit from taking a wholistic approach using an epistemology of the human body, summarised as *'head, hands and heart'*.

I started by summarising some of Dr Stephen Pickard's work on the foundations for a theology of collaborative leadership. Dr Pickard asks:

> "what **understanding** of ministry is necessary for a fully collaborative **practice** to emerge?"

I have suggested that a complementary question is:

> "what **practice** of ministry is necessary for a fully collaborative **understanding** of ministry to emerge?"

I suggest that the practice of dialogical processes such as Open Space Technology and Talking Circles can give specific experiential form to the relational dynamics of genuine collaboration and mutuality which Dr Pickard advocates, as we live as 'members one of another'. I also propose that using these processes is an embodied form of learning which can teach us about the nature of collaboration (action learning).

Finally, I suggest that 'inner work' (the 'heart' domain) is crucially important in achieving effective collaboration, as we learn the dance between 'power and love'. This kind of internal capability needs to be formed more deeply and intentionally through professional supervision/coaching and the practice of contemplative prayer.

By integrating the above three areas of learning, *Head, Hands and Heart*, we should get better outcomes in the collaborative process of 'labouring with' rather than 'labouring over' or 'labouring under'.

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[i] In this paper I use 'collaborative ministry' and 'collaborative leadership' as interchangeable terms. This is for two reasons. First, it's not possible to have collaborative ministry without a collaborative approach by 'formal' (ordained) leaders. Secondly, I want to frame leadership as something broader than formal leadership. I like Parker J Palmer and Harrison Owen's view that we *all* lead, whenever we accept responsibility for doing something about what we care about (Passion plus Responsibility).

[ii] I am thinking of people I know who labour all week in what they deeply feel called to as a Christian vocation (e.g. as a nurse, teacher, lay Chaplain, lawyer, business person, parent, carer), who are then asked to perform multiple additional tasks in keeping the church functioning (morning tea roster, reading roster, intercessions roster, musician, parish counsellor, pastoral visitor, etc). While we might say, 'well a person could just say 'no', it's also true that communities exert enormous, largely unconscious, peer-group pressures on people to 'do their bit'. Recovering, promoting and celebrating a lay 'theology of work as ministry' seems hugely under developed to me. Bishop Brian Farran referred to this as 'ministry *from* the church', in distinction from 'ministry *to* the church' or 'ministry *in* the church'

[iii] Pickard, S. Theological Foundations for Collaborative Ministry (London: Routledge, 2009)

iv Murdoch University, Western Australia

v No doubt there are many individual parishes and clergy experimenting with the meaning of collaborative ministry/leadership, although it can be hard do this alone in an Anglican context because of systemic and cultural factors which mitigate against collaboration.

vi Something I am not doing in this paper but I think is very important to consider is how our assumptions about the nature of ministry directly correlates ministry formation. Does our ecclesiology become self-reinforcing because of the way we train people (and visa versa)? For example, how does taking a person out of their previous occupation in order to do four years of full time training affect their view of ministry? And what assumptions about ministry cause us to continue to stick with current formation program designs? By way of illustration of an alternative, I can think of an Anglican priest who grew a community from six people to a hundred people while working another job. She could only do this by reviewing the nature of her ministry, the ministry of the whole church, and the relationship between both. If this is possible, then does it mean we need to always be training students in full time programs in preparation for an expectation of life-long stipendiary ministry? To be brutal about it, is there any sense in which the church might have become a pseudo employment agency for clergy? (this question was posed by a senior member of the clergy at a national 'Living Stones' conference).

vii Few people want to admit that they are not a collaborative leader. The only way I can write like this is that I can now clearly see that my own approach to leadership had to undergo a reformation, and continues to do so. I'm hoping that I'm applying everything here to myself. I have written a much longer reflection on how I got into this journey at https://www.michaeljohnwood.com/articles-by-michael-wood

viii I don't think the reason I've stated was the only reason for this happening but I speculate it was key contributor. Subsequently, when Bishop Farran became Bishop of Newcastle, these learnings were applied in a very conscientious and intentional approach. A lot of focus was put on discerning, calling and resourcing whole teams, including the whole team studying and working together over a significant period of time. This was rendered slightly easier in the Diocese of Newcastle because they were not facing the same challenges of huge distances and remote communities which existed in the Goldfields. Also, the Goldfields and Wheatbelt populations contracted even more rapidly than Bishop Farran had originally predicted. We learned that there comes a point when communities become so small and fragile that it's just not possible to discern and raise up a ministry team. What was originally intended as the appointment of local ministry 'teams' ended up being 'local ministry priests' who despite doing incredibly creative incarnational work, was difficult to sustain on their own while also holding down their other work as farmers. This also tended to attract all kinds of criticism within the church that a 'second grade' class of clergy was being created, which I personally found disparaging and patronising towards these highly motivated, theologically reflective and resourceful people. The learning, though, was that it's important to discern local teams while communities still have strength. I am also aware that Bishop John Harrower (and Ministry Development Officer Paul Cavanough, in the Anglican Diocese of Tasmania. (c.2005) tried to address some of the symbolic and liturgical factors by ordaining and commissioning clergy/lay teams in a single service, often in the local community hall in rural locations itself instead of the Cathedral, thereby retaining the value of Anglican ordained orders but sending a very strong symbolic message about collaborative ministry. It's also worth remembering that a Bishop has considerable choice is the way he/she chooses to issue clergy licenses in order to match clergy to context.

ix A description of Open Space Technology can be found in my article, 'The Practice of Peace' at: https://www.michaeljohnwood.com/articles-by-michael-wood

x http://www.margaretwheatley.com/articles/Leadership-in-Age-of-Complexity.pdf

xi Dr Neil Preston: What may be the 10 Conditions for Collaboration to Emerge? https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/paper-13-what-may-10-conditions-collaboration-emerge-neil-preston/

xii There is an interesting resonance between priest as 'conversation host' and 'presider at the Eucharist'.

xiii Part of the role of a host in any circle-based conversation is to articulate the boundary conditions of 'what is up for grabs and what isn't' in relation to the convening theme. I am suggesting that naming and/or helping people explore such boundary conditions is part of the 'distinctive' ministry of the ordained leader. This is usually shaped in terms of the core principles and/or founding narrative/story (core purpose = the reason we exist as a community). Similarly, in extreme or chaotic situations the boundary conditions may need to be drawn fairly tightly. There may not be shared understanding or agreement on this in the circle, meaning that some significant listening work needs to be done before progress can be made. Such listening to each other is what models 'power-with' rather than power-over ('talking *at* people') or power under (ignoring the difficult conversation because it's too hard). Within such careful listening and robust speaking, there can the mutual 'affecting' of each other which Paul refers to in Romans 12:5.

xiv Kahane. A., *Power and Love: A Theory and Practice of Social Change* (SF: Berrett Koeller, 2010); also Kahane A., *Collaborating with the Enemy: How to Work with People You Don t Agree with or Like or Trust* (SF: Berrett Koeller, 2017); For a fuller exploration of the dynamics of conversational dialogue, see Wood, B., "Achieving sustainable employee engagement: How to achieve high performance and wellbeing through relatedness" in Sparks,P (ed.), in *Emerging Trends in Leadership and Strategy* (Sydney: Trend Business Publishing, 2014)

xv Rene Girard was a French American thinker who did ground breaking work on the roots of culture, religion and violence. For an eight-minute introduction to some of Girard's key ideas see the talk by Rev'd Dr Scott Cowdell at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lJddydBXojM. Many more resources about the theological implications of Girard can be found at the Raven Foundation: www.ravenfoundation.org . Mimetic (Imitative) Rivalry is what occurs when two or more people desire the same thing. It could be a physical thing or something intangible like recognition, advancement, being right, being in control. This leads to competition and conflict. According to Girard, when a whole community becomes enmeshed in such conflict, it re-stabilises itself through the arbitrary selection of a victim (scapegoat). The community finds peace/unity by uniting against a common enemy. Jesus himself was such a scapegoat (the scapegoat to end all scapegoating).

xvi As mentioned earlier, collaboration is an emergent property of a group when certain conditions exist. Consultation, when done well, might be part of a collaborative process. But consultation can also simply be an exercise in coercive power (ie I listen to you and then do what I want *to* you, rather than *with* you). To tell the difference, it's worth asking myself, 'do I already know what the desirable answer is here?' If the answer is yes, then it's likely I am not acting collaboratively.

xvii See paper by Michael Wood, *Open Space and Mimesis: "Why does Open Space Technology work as a practice of peace, viewed through the lens of Rene Girard's theories about human culture?"*. Workshop at Colloquium on Religion and Violence, Melbourne, 13-17th July 2016. Contact author for a copy.

xviii See Sarah Bachelard's thoughtful and challenging piece: *The Ego-Driven Church: On the Perils of Christian Activism*: http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2017/12/19/4782549.htm

xviii http://makesyouwonder.yolasite.com/

Inner Work: Dancing Between Power and Love

"Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anaemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love." (Martin Luther King)

Power (*with love*)	**Love (*with power*)**
(in service of a creative purpose) ASSERT - INTENTION	(in service of a creative purpose) ENGAGE - KENOSIS
Is relational and unifying – it acknowledges the interests of others while also firmly and calmly holding to a position in order to realise an outcome Power 'to' realise a purpose Power 'with' others Deconstructs systems which deny and suppress people's humanity	A drive to unite the fractured and separated – to bring together: Helping another to become more complete Relational behaviours through which another arises as a legitimate other in co-existence with oneself (*a 'thou' instead of an object – Martin Buber –Jewish Philosopher*) Love is the one power that awakens the ego to the existence of something outside itself *(Robert Johnson – Analytical Psychologist)* Love is to open ourselves (mind, heart, will) *(Otto Scharmer – Leadership Theorist – MIT)*
Reactive opposite (need to be in control/achieve)	*Reactive opposite* (need to be liked/have harmony)
power without love	**love without power**
Domination Oppression Control freak Valuing myself *over* others More likely to occur when we deny or cut ourselves off from relationships Divisive	Sidelining of lone voices as trouble-makers Failure to speak up (powerfully) for the marginalised A unity that suppresses different thoughts and experiences in the interests of an artificial unity. 'There can be no genuine agreement unless each adheres to the testimony of his [her] experience and steadfastly maintains his hold on reality' (Solomon Asch) 'Hidden beneath the surface of counterfeit 'love without power' is a self-deceiving and self-serving 'power without love'

> *Because we tend to imitate our model/obstacle, we need to consciously monitor our own internal reactions and oscillate between 'healthy' power and love.*

Based on Adam Kahane: *Power and Love*. See also: Brett Wood "*Achieving sustainable employee engagement – how to achieve high performance and wellbeing through relatedness*", in *Sparks, P (Ed). Emerging Trends in Leadership and Strategy (Trend Business Publishing, 2014)*