# Chapter 7: Cultural Cues in Narratives

The thrust of this chapter is to investigate the cultural patterns that make each church unique and in doing so determine the usefulness of the cultural lens for unearthing the essence of congregational renewal. Culture concerns the patterns of interaction between individuals and within the groups studied and the meanings the members of those cultures attach to them. The cultural lens is not so much a theory that can be verified but a method that illuminates the unique features of a group's shared experience. We are particularly keen to see what insights a cultural perspective gives about the nature of the cultural changes that have taken place within these communities. However, just as cultures themselves are unique, so the categories used for analysis may differ from one setting to the next. The data supplied from those who inhabit the culture must govern the analytical grids employed to understand the culture as a whole (Schein: 1985, 44). The focus cannot be determined in advance despite any historical similarities that these churches may share.

As noted earlier, the value of cultural typologies is they enable an observer to grasp something of the whole of a culture in relative simplicity and thereby discriminate between cultural types in terms of variables such as the focus of the leadership and the nature of the membership task. At the same time it is possible through hearing the stories shared of life within the selected churches to identify the unique values and assumptions underlying each culture. Other features that can be discerned within each narrative include evidence of the strength of the culture with respect to the uniformity of the values and the areas of the culture that hold dissenting values and viewpoints from the predominant or leadership group as well as the nature of change strategy employed by agents and the symbols and artefacts that are used to regulate or modify the culture. A cultural interpretation of each narrative follows.

### *Carinia Downs Circuit*

### *Pressure from Externals*

This church has been under some pressure over the years but not due to factors in the demographic shifts within the wider community so much as the pressure exerted from the denominational church in the regional centre. This has tended to result in Carinia Downs being a church with more of a legalistic and separatist climate than they may have preferred. A former pastor attempted to introduce a dance into the social roster of the church. Unfortunately an incident occurred during the evening with some uninvited guests. The upshot of this was that the pastor was warned at the regional meeting of the denominational elders and pastors that he would not be able to speak at the regional church youth camp "until he asked for forgiveness" (Harvey) and promised to curtail such activities in the future.

### Vague Recollections

It was remarkable the very few incidents or stories that were shared about the previous history of the church in contrast to the fulsome references to the current pastorate. Most incidents were passed over in a couple of sentences. Few pastors were mentioned by name and then, only in mediocre terms. The previous pastor to Graeme Mcleish was disparaged as 'a city boy'. One old timer recalled the immediate prior pastor saying …

'He had the cheek to ask me if I could cut his wood for him. Why can't he cut his own wood?' (Rob).

Another who was well loved during the eighties had a short pastorate by virtue of suffering a nervous breakdown related to a health crisis in his own family (Harvey). Even negative events were not elaborated by the tellers. Some families evidently left the church finding the

legalistic emphasis of the elders difficult to tolerate and a couple of families who wanted to see some more vitality in worship left for a charismatic church in the nearby regional centre in the middle of the 1980s (Bill). Impressions as to the underlying issues and details were vague. By and large, the church did not have a negative reputation in the community despite its separated mindset. It just kept to itself and had little relevance to the ebb and flow of wider community fluctuations. The paucity of vital recollections serves to define the model of the church here as typical of Becker's 'house of worship' model as the influence of the church was only upon its own members and there was little connection between the ministry of the church and its normal patterns of living.

The climate in the church was one of a stability that bordered upon stagnation with very little anticipation of growth or positive change. First impressions of the present pastor's wife are significant in this regard.

> Another impression I guess I had was a fairly staid country church where not a lot was happening. Probably reminded me a lot of the church I grew up in, but a lot less young people. And it was you know, one of the things that sticks in my mind is the number of membership hadn't changed for years, they hadn't had any baptisms for a long time and it just seemed to be a point of just plateau. ... You kind of had your impression that the Baptist church needed a bit of life. … It was kind of this impression that the church is pretty staid and needs a bit of life in it. We also had the impression that they didn't mix a lot within the community as a church, there just didn't seem to be a real positive flavour in the community of the church. (Lisa)

The church was 'doing well enough' to keep the circuit services going for the scattered devotees. None of the pastors seemed to have challenged this mental model of church.

Where there was little sense of purpose in mission and not a great deal ventured, there were few stories to tell and not a great deal of significance in the life of the church community in comparison to the pressing issues to do with rural survival in the world beyond the walls of the church. Longer-term members spent a great deal more time relating details of life events and personal crises that had no connection with the church when it came to the former era.

### Pillars of the Church

Another connection between context and church culture has to do with the power exerted by at least one of the elders. Two of the elders are successful crop farmers. One of the most dominant members father was responsible for building much of the infrastructure in the area including a cannery for citrus growers and holding dominant roles in the relevant associations. The father's reputation was one of a belligerent manager that was not to be taken lightly. He was known as 'the Squire' throughout the district (Gale). Such was his unofficial but very real influence. And likewise the son carried much of that stature into the church on the back of his economic credentials. This was evident in church meetings.

> When he (the son) spoke, even though he wasn't as nasty as his dad, it was as good as
> done. There wasn't a lot of democracy about it. (Gale).

No one would contradict these elders. There was a rational historical-cultural reason lying behind what a family systems lens would regard as 'fusion' or 'enmeshment'. Again, details of the actual behaviours of these church leaders were scarce, but there was simply a recollection shared by most that there were different levels of authority, influence and deference within the group and that a legalistic mentality accompanied this influence. Nonetheless the church was still regarded as being less formal, conservative or legalistic than the leading church in the district in the nearby regional centre.

### *Climate Change*

The paucity of stories and enthusiasm about their collective history therefore stands out in stark contrast to the description of the present period. All participants with the exception of those who have come into the church during the present pastorate speak of the contrast between the climate of the church of the past and the present. Individuals speak of the change in their own attitudes that have happened to soften the legalistic and separated mentality. The introduction of the Mcleish Family is uniformly attributed as the cause of this change.

> When I look back I think it was a bit like Jewish law in a sense, keeping the laws. Look I'm not saying, to me it felt very spiritual and I felt at that time probably it was the most spiritual church in the town and I still believe that. … Certainly the Mcleishes have made one heck of a difference. There's just so much, I've got to say it there's so much love and care in the place, you know. And it was always pretty good. I'm not saying it wasn't. But I don't know it just seems to be so much different now.
> (Harvey)

The major consequence has been that the church takes a less detached posture in relationship to the mainstream rural culture around them. This involves not only participation in organizations and societies but being equally open about their allegiance to the church and Christ. Examples were shared of members who once would not miss a church service out of a sense of duty, choosing instead to reciprocate hospitality from workmates on a Sunday out of a deliberate sense of ministry.

I believe I am out there with the community, non-Christian friends, people see me for what I am; a Christian. And I don't hide any of that I believe what I am supposed to be doing as a Christian. (Bill)

This climate is largely discerned through the uniquely open spaces and vital interchanges that occur in the Sunday morning worship services.

I think [it's] fairly relaxed and open, just in terms of when people come in. There is very much an atmosphere of isn't it nice to be here and when we do have, you know Graeme's preaching or someone is saying something up the front there is a freedom for people to respond from [where they are] sitting down which you don't get in a lot of churches and some people probably get a bit of a shock from that. But there is often a lot of laughter in the services, which makes; I don't know sometimes I think maybe it's a bit sacrilegious. I don't know. (Lisa)

The style and tone of worship tends to reflect the values of the members in this new era. The values of normalcy and relational warmth pervade the church especially when it meets for worship times.

I had the idea that a few people went to church and nobody else did. We have such a lot of people and we have quite a lot of what I call single men, which doesn't mean that they are not married, but they come to church by themselves and you always have this concept of church being a few little old ladies and especially lately the young people. And in that the church has changed. (Helen)

And this has become a value that transcends appreciation of the Pastoral family. Concern about the McLeishes eventual departure was universally shared by all who participated.

I have often though to myself what would I do if Graeme and Lisa left and we got some very stiff staid sort of a minister who only wanted to have the hymns out of the green book and all the rest of it. What would I do and where would I go? And would I stick with it, because you don't just walk out of a church because it's not what you want. But on the other hand it could lose all its, a lot of its attraction for me anyway, the joy of it. I just look forward to going to church. (Helen)

Decision-making was also a feature of the church whereby members were pleased to see that the church was able to sort out its differences and come to consensus. Even those who were adamantly opposed to recent major decisions such as the new building program were open to persuasion and could change their view when given the right information. Differences do not fester into dis-fellowship.

It is evident that any separated or legalistic spirit has left the church and in its place a significant culture change has taken place at the deepest level. Once known for its social distance and judgemental posture toward other churches, this church now is regarded well. Also it is known for showing hospitality to case after case of outcast from other Church circles. One such moving account is of the wife of a pastor, shunned by the other churches of the same denomination in the district after having courageously pressed charges against her pastor husband for molesting their teenage daughters (Howard, Graeme, Lisa). Lisa Mcleish shared the story and this outcome.

I think there are probably still, even within our church there might be one or two who don't quite know how to handle the situation. But on the whole she is very loved, very supported and very much apart of our church and probably one of the hardest working people with relationships. She loves people, cares about people. For someone who's

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come from a background like that, that part of her healing and reconstruction have actually created her to be such a caring person.  In a sense she projects that onto the church, so her caring, loving attitude she just sees that that's what the church is!  But I think in a lot of ways that's her response to what the church showed her.  Whether that's how everybody believes that but because that's what she received then that's what she would recognise the church as being.  (Lisa)

The transformation of Deaconess Helen Elvery is equally dramatic.  She came into the church very reluctantly and timidly on a friend's invitation.  For many weeks she left the services quickly to avoid contact.  Eventually she came to have a faith of her own.

Look she came along, she was baptised on a cold freezing morning at the lakes up there. … But she came along to bible study and she would hardly open her mouth.  Now she is doing a group with Graeme.  Look she gets up and she's even, has she done communion or part of it.  She is taking part in the service, she reads and oh fair dinkum nobody else knows.  I call her miracle but she knows and I know but fair dinkum if you want to see a change in a person, wow!  (Harvey)

Some members attested to the change in themselves brought about with such human tragedies from a judgemental posture to one of compassion (Howard).  By allowing themselves to be vulnerable and the recipients of the care of the members after a torrid former pastorate, the Mcleishes have set a cultural pattern that has permeated and encapsulated the culture of the church.  The church has become largely characterized by this virtue.

## Assumptions

The church therefore operates as an egalitarian family.  They have moved from a passive acceptance to an active posture in the community.  Rather than taking an aggressive

or a competitive stance they have found an appropriate niche within the churches. Relationships are collaborative and a collective mentality is still evident which has persisted from former eras.

The change of climate within the church Carinia Downs Circuit has uniformly been attributed to the influence of the Mcleishes and their various talents. This is not reducible to their age or the fact of their musical family, nor even their participation within the cultural organizations within the district. The church had young pastors before, including one who was active within the theatre guild and other organizations. But, somehow the Mcleishes have managed to enable the church to see these contacts as a natural outflow of their faith. In the past such contacts were shunned especially by the leading figures within the church. Many citations particularly from Graeme Mcleish himself show a propensity to comprehend the local culture and the rural mindset and to integrate this within the framework of a biblical faith. This resonance has been returned with an overwhelming generosity of spirit toward the pastor. He recalls the therapeutic impact of most aspects of this culture.

I was looking for a place that was 'peaceful'. I was looking for a place of healing. A place where people would accept us and uhm … I wouldn't have to try to hard and uhm, I felt this was a stable and easy going, community. … But I, I expected that people would come to faith. I had great confidence to expect that. Uhm ... I always had experienced that in every other pastorate I had been in since my first. Because people … do come to faith if you love people and the acceptance of what they are and that's what people do. And I also intended to missionary. That is, to learn the culture. I assumed I didn't know anything. So I started reading the Weekly Times and listening to the Country Hour. And uhm when I read up on rural ministry, there wasn't much about. (Graeme)

A critical aspect of Graeme's capacity to resonate authentically with the congregation shows up in his attitude to ministry both within and beyond the church. To this extent he has employed the change agency style of modelling the assumptions he wishes to develop within the congregation concerning the purpose of the church (Schein: 1990, 136). Correspondingly, he was determined not to retrace the steps or reinforce the mental models of classical evangelical teaching regarding salvation and sanctification, but build in a corrective more incarnational theological perspective. He sought to both study and show how these people in this rural context could flesh out their faith beyond the realms of church's interior life. This is also reflected in his weekly column in the local newspaper that had a decidedly non-churched audience in mind and avoids the clericalisms for which such columns can be known.

This concern for cultural resonance comes from a particular theological outlook on the place of the culture in God's scheme. The pastor's preaching here is a significant window into his assumptions and the course upon which he has consciously set the church. He has a 'gospel' that postures God's interest and focus not 'against culture' (Kraft: 1994, 104) but 'above yet through' the culture (Kraft: 1994. 114). As regards his preaching he shared the following among many insights into the presuppositions underlying his homiletic practice.

> I really preach the idea that uhm, … our job is to change the world and make it a better place. I don't believe we are to snatch people from the jaws of hell and prepare them for heaven. Uhm my pet hate song is 'this world is not my home, I'm just passing through'. The way I parody that is, we used to sing 'this world is not my home, I am just passing through, I won't be here that long, so I don't care what I do'. That's the theology that has prevailed in many places. … And I understand that kingdom eschatology stuff being not about pie in the sky when you die, but about what we are to

work towards is in our own communities.  When I read Isaiah 65 or 2 or 11 and all that, I see its about the here and now.  They're about racial equality, 'bout living with nature, about living with snakes and not killing them all, 'the asp shall lie down with the child'. I see that's a kingdom theology of the here and now.  …  I hope that comes out in my preaching and rubs through a bit.  …  The other thing I felt very strongly about is that …  I wanted to preach about things from Monday to Saturday and not things about the church.  I made a deliberate policy not to preach about the church.  I think that ministers live in the church and think about that all the time but their people don't think about it all the time.  My interest is that people live in the world and we should preach about that.  I don't always stick to that.  But that's what I attempt to.  I have comments that people say that the preaching is so much more relevant than what they're used to.   They don't particularly care 'what connection Timothy had with Epaphroditus'.

And speaking of the weekly newspaper column in 'The Courier' the same commitment to a kingdom of God in rural guise comes through strongly.

Writing the column in the local paper has been extremely … helpful.  There is a number of people in the church that first came to the church, uhm, because of that column.  My policy has been, now ministers have been writing columns in local papers for hundreds of years.  And the people in Carinia say, the other ministers cannot read through each other's column they are so boring!  How do you write a column that is interesting to people?  You've got to write something about what they care about and that doesn't preach at them.  I want a reader not a convert.  I try to write things that are topical and aren't full of God talk.  I never use Biblical references.  If I ever do I say 'the old Book' or something like that , or 'the wisdom of the ages says'.  I try to absolutely avoid all clichés.  And write about things that people can relate to, families, work etc.  Sort of everyday spirituality is what I write about.  … And , meet people all

over the place that tell me that they read it. It try to write about farming as often as possible; the family farm. I try to be pro farmer. I try to put a defence of uh good farming against industrial farming as they call it. I tried to make a stance there as a lot of farms are getting bigger around here. But I don't want to be painted as a 'Greeny' either, as that will lose my farm audience. And I have found that there is so much in the Bible that relates to farming and they've never heard a sermon on it. For example there's a verse in proverbs that says "Take care of your flocks, pay attention to your lambs" and then it says "For then your fields will be blessed and your servant girls will drink milk" etc. etc. uhm I stood up one day and said "No one ever speaks on this except as a parable of the church in which the flock is the church and carer is the minister. But this is for farmers." This is saying we have a responsibility before God to look after the livestock we have in our care. And I used the illustration of the old bloke in the church who uhm neglected his sheep and he went one day and most of them had died of fly strike in terrible agony. That is against God's word and you never hear of sermons on this. (Graeme)

Many other rich examples exemplify Graeme's hard work in attempting to contextualize the faith without distorting the message into an inculturated caricature.

I did a series on agricultural metaphors of the Bible and I talked about the yoke, and I talked about the harvest and about sowing. Before each one of those I read up the old history books about how they used to do it here, and what it meant here. I went interviewed old timers. I said "what was it like to do it first, or what was it like to drive a sixteen team yoke of horses?" And I could share that in a sermon, and that really struck home, because people's history runs deep here, and they love it. It's a sign of respecting them. (Graeme)

The match between pastor and church is universally welcomed by pastor and church family. So much so that when the family took study leave in the year 2002 the church although experiencing the hardship of severe drought secretly raised a $2000 gift as a token of their love for the Mcleish family. From Graeme's part despite his urban working class origins, there is much to suggest a convergence of values between himself and the church contribute to the capacity for the church to absorb the changes he has wrought.

> It suited me, I must admit. I'm not very cultivated I must admit. A lot of things about
> the country really suited me. Its just sheer serendipity. The same thing I did in the city
> created great dissension. But here they loved it. (Graeme)

This ministry is sufficient to satisfy his creative bent for over the last decade and into the present.

## The Cultural Surface: Artefacts

Two particular constructions emerge from the life of the church that are noteworthy. One is that the pastor involved the church in his first year in the construction of a purpose statement for the church. This was a large document that took several sessions with the keener members to construct. It was revised and shortened nearly a year later. However, it has since been lost from view and even the pastor had difficulty locating it. As such this formal construction of the espoused mission of the church has had nothing directly to do with the direction or decision making of the church in any functional sense.

Due to the upsurge in numbers and general optimism the church embarked upon a clever redevelopment of their property that almost doubled the seating capacity of the church. It involved switching the main worship area, a small sixty seat auditorium with the church

hall that abutted the rear of the auditorium and was separated by a small kitchen. Exterior toilets were also demolished and brought inside lifting the ambiance of the whole complex markedly. Within the auditorium a large kitchen and servery were constructed in the worship space to one side near the rear along with new office space for the pastor and equipment. This was primarily to facilitate the café' church ministry and other performance related services within the community. Remarkably although these renovations were well underway during the month when the first interviews took place, they did not rate any significant mention despite being the first major construction the church had embarked upon since 1961, the year when the church manse was constructed. While facilitating successful ministries of the church it would appear that it is the ministries and mood of the church itself that are the significant locus of meaning for this people. These artefacts then are purely pragmatic means to an end rather than symbolic of the life of the church.

## Other Paradoxes

On the other hand, it could well be that the successes that Graeme has brought have been paradoxically, self-defeating. In a curious irony since they have not had this sort of influence or missional success before the church is in unfamiliar territory. The members now depend upon Graeme to take the initiative. Consequently, initiative leadership is in short supply. It is as if the culture actually while reconstructing lives also tends to deskill in terms of the generation of leadership and initiative, the depth of sharing, the breadth of worship experience and in conflict resolution.

> But I think on the whole the love that they experience within the church and the
> acceptance, I think they would probably put a theological top on that and recognise it
> as God. There is certainly not that from most there's not that commitment of like
> church on Sunday. That is our biggest priority, just for a few but not a lot. It would be

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a priority if there was nothing else but it is not the same duty as it was in the past. You don't allow anything to happen on a Sunday so that you can go to church. Well probably most people in the church would come most of the time but every week there would be several away. … [We have] supporting loving people but you need more than that. Which is probably in one sense up to him to delegate the leadership to and give them opportunities to work on it but I think a lot of it does also come back to the fact of personality, whether you are a person who is prepared to take the leadership responsibility. Maybe it comes in the training, maybe we haven't really trained our leaders. We've just expected them to jump in. That's what the mood becomes, it's a joyful, happy we can laugh with each other. We don't have to be strait-laced but then sometimes you think well does that help us to focus on God but then you think well maybe it does. Maybe that's what God is wanting at the moment is to know that we can be that way. (Lisa)

Love can be demonstrated in pragmatic ways but real personal disclosure is rare despite the relaxation of formality. Likewise this mood also tends to deskill the church in handling irrational levels of conflict. One such case of an attack upon the pastor's wife and a dangerously neurotic member had to be suppressed for this reason. The pastoral couple believed the church simply would not be able to cope with such distress.

I don't know that the church knows really how to deal with conflict because I don't think conflict has ever really been perhaps aired. Or I don't think they have had a lot of conflict, certainly since we have been here. You get the underlying things occasionally, but strong conflict, or a poisonous situation I don't think they have really had to handle, wouldn't perhaps know how … I don't think there is an openness to handle conflict. Let's face it. Who of us like it? (Lisa)

This lack of conflict may not only be a sign of health but also a phenomenon peculiar to the culture. The pastor himself wondered if the rural mindset itself deep down acknowledges that in their vulnerable situation members are reluctant to risk alienating those whose economic generosity they may later have to depend upon. There is certainly evidence that this could have been the case once under the influence of "the Squire and son". In a situation where economic position is fragile to begin with, where options for change in one's lot are very limited, one would learn to be satisfied with less than ideal social arrangements as one has with the state of the local industry. Such a learned acquiescence to the powerful naturally leads to a resigning posture toward the dominant community leader, whether within or beyond the church.

### *A Narrative of Cultural Change*

As a narrative the Carinia Downs is a straightforward affair, not of a transformation so much as a full-blown development of existing culture. In a sense the reciprocation of care and concern of the congregation to the Mcleishes is a microcosm of deep-seated rural values. Having respected this culture and proven himself an authentic person, he has assisted church to be culturally reinforcing rather than counter cultural, the morale and enthusiasm for the church has increased and its place in the community has been affirmed. That this change is developmental does not mean that it is not significant. The church that once looked most like a 'house of worship' had moved dramatically toward becoming a 'leader' church with the intention to have a wide and respected influence in both local and ecclesial contexts.

In terms of Schneider's typology a simplified narrative could be that the church has moved from a

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(i)   *Weak Control Culture:* Visible in terms of the strict adherence to behaviour and belief codes, the subjection of former pastors to the regional church influence, and the rigid personalities within the church that reflected that position and a theology that reinforced separation from the wider community and other Christian groups. This however was resisted by the stronger characters in the church and resented by others who chose to leave at certain points in time when the controls became intolerable.  The lives of the members had to conform to the culture jarring ideals, such as bearing a bold witness and abstinence from the leisure pursuits of the surrounding culture.

(ii)  A *Strong 'Collaboration' Culture* has replaced this with a thankful relief at the removal of guilt and an affirming healing culture.  This is supported by an ideological broadening which removes the barriers to positive interaction in the wider culture and affirms the whole of the church's life as worship of Christ.

Schneider's 'possibility-personal' or 'cultivation' culture is another option to consider when locating Carinia Downs as a distinct organizational type.  But although there have been deliberate attempts to spur individuals into ministry responsibility, these have not been particularly successful.  The pastor himself is governed more by ideals rather than actual reality despite his 'missionary' approach to learn the existing culture.  He it is who has the vision to see the church as a catalyst in rural renewal.  This description could apply to him as a religious steward of a 'cultivation culture'.

> Religious stewards focus on catalysing and cultivating growth and development among their people.  They strive to help people fulfil their potential, particularly spiritual potential.  They focus on people's inspirations and aspirations, and herald ideals and higher-level purposes.  … This occurs both in the steward's own organization and with

outside constituents. … The culture is value centred. Values and the value of people hold sway. Self-expression is highly encouraged, indeed nourished. People are given every opportunity to be all that they can be, to be possibilizers. They identify strongly with their organization. … People know or believe something when there is a connection between what they value and reality; when what is espoused is put in to operation. (Schneider: 1994, 121,122).

In like manner, there has been no resistance to Graeme's broader, more incarnational presentation of the Kingdom of God. This would suggest that the pastor's style of change has been more one of 'absorption', to quote Bate's categories, achieved through an 'educative' approach of Graeme in the role of the change agent. New features and expressions have been brought alongside the old forms that have fallen away. This decline was largely as a result of these forms being alien to this culture. Therefore they had not been reinforced over time. The weakness of the control mechanisms has given way to a genuinely indigenous expression of the faith of the members.

Yet the drawback with this category is that there is no evidence that the members have willingly or consciously changed due to the acceptance of any new set of assumptions such as a redefinition of their gospel. The pastor has been involved in significant meaning-making endeavours, but the members at most simply assert that the preaching is "relevant", "good" or, "really encouraging" if they mention it at all.

The Schneider definition of the Collaboration Culture on the other hand tends to pick up upon the therapeutic superabundance that typifies the climate of Carinia Downs.

Synergy itself captures the content and process of this culture. When you take two chemicals and combine them and when you get 5 instead of 4, you have combined two actuals, two realities, by utilizing an organic or dynamic process. The content at issue here is not what might be or theory. It *is*. It is tangible. And, the process at issue here is not detached, it is involved. The dynamic process enables people to empower one another and deliver what is within each other in order to bring about something more. Harmony and cooperation are essential elements in this "can do" culture. The process is inherently win-win. (Schneider: 1994, 117f)

This description certainly resonates with the narrative of Carinia Downs revitalization, with the pastor as the catalyst supplying the religious legitimation for the church to release its loving capacities within and beyond its boundaries and to express these in modes more indigenous to their real rural temper. The only detractor in choosing this culture as a better type for Carinia Downs is that this change does not have a sense of being people driven. The renewal has been largely through a leader led removal of the confines of abstract theological and stultifying pietistic concerns and his blasé disregard for the power of the dominant figures in the congregation. Nonetheless, the result certainly has been a synergistic superabundance. It is appropriate to view the church as more typically a 'collaboration culture' than any other.

It is also noticeable that the pastor and others are aware, particularly in the light of the steady growth of numbers, that they cannot bear the weight of responsibility alone. Nor can they rely upon the individuals as they are in their present state to take up more initiative. The pastor has strategic and missional plans at foot now that the church is in good spirits. Thus we could be seeing the early stages of a 'cultivation' culture emerge. At present however, while the pastor focuses on the fields ahead, the people focus on the flock. It will remain to be seen here whether the frustrations the Pastor has experienced in the attempt to move the

church in the direction of 'possibilities' domain and its implied missional ideals, is eventually a sufficient impetus to move the pastor to other potential fields.

## *Ivy Street*

So the view through the shop window would be new and bright, colourful, but don't change the engine room. Don't … don't upset the balance of what this place is. And… I'll give you an idea of how that worked. I had a deacon come up to me after… … I reckon it was four years I'd been here, and he came up to me one time. And he said, "I think it's probably time I let you know… you've probably noticed that I've opposed you on everything." And I said, "Yeah, I noticed that." He said, "I made a decision when you first came that I would oppose everything you proposed. Just so that you didn't get the idea that this was going to be easy. (Clive)

"Nobody ever leaves Ivy Street!" they said when I was appointed, that I was the last hope of the church, which of course is nonsense. (James)

This church has such a long and settled history for over fifty years that it had developed a particularly strong culture. Unfortunately this culture was often abusive and self-defeating to the point of negatively affecting their viability. There was an overwhelming sense of self regard that the church viewed themselves as a 'Leader' church having more than their share of local civic leaders in their membership and a tradition of influence within the denomination. Their wider influence was somewhat more limited to cross cultural mission support overseas than in their own region. The culture comprised the values and attitudes of a homogenous, ageing and demographically conservative group who had seen the devastating impact of a change-agent with contemporising aspirations bring the church to critical levels of functioning. They had survived for five years since and were reinforced in their assumptions

by their resistance to anything resembling the leadership of James Glover, the pastor during the split, and the absence of any dissenting voices.   Therefore most of the observations shared below focus upon the rich accounts of this controlling culture and the surface evidence of it as well as the role of the major change agent, the present pastor Clive Crowe.   A close examination of the reports reveals the precarious fortune that the church had in the peculiar strengths of the pastor in such a culture with well-forged powers of resistance to change.

### *Climate*

After the church split in the late eighties the church halved in membership size, then began to decline further.   The aging pastor Ray Fleet having attempted to foster a warm relationship with all segments of the church realized that drastic change was needed.   He believed that "Unless Ivy Street got back on its feet, it would die" (David).   The majority of the members were senior citizens.

One could get the impression that the church had largely embraced the positive value of change from the fact that it was attempting to be friendly to young people and new comers and was attempting to recommence a youth group and drop in centre for youth at the church premises during school holidays.   But by and large this does not transfer into a willingness to address the patterns of behaviour that negated the impact of such a positive initiative.   The recognition that change was needed for organizational survival does not necessarily translate into a willingness to embrace even modest changes.   Clive Crowe summarized the most prized values as he arrived at the church.

Safety first!   Protecting!   There was an overwhelming sense of protecting their past.
And protecting what the church was.   It was abundantly clear to me, even when I came

to the committee that called me, I remember saying, "Please understand, that I am not someone who will just keep the wheels turning over. I don't mind if you want someone to do that, it's not me." And they said, "No, we're ready for change" and "We're open" and all that kind of stuff. But I don't think they had any idea what that meant. I think change to them meant… in fact I'm sure of this, what they actually wanted from me, as I found out, was the church would remain the same, but I would provide a more lively, colourful… ah…front man. (Clive)

The expectation of the leading figures was for 'developmental' change at best in order to remain the same in a changing era.

Distrust and suspicion filters through the narrative of the former Ivy Street. This is graphically portrayed at the interview of the present pastor when over three-dozen members were on the interview panel to represent the interests of their own particular group, and this in a church of around seventy active members. Most respondents recollect this occasion. Clive Crowe interpreted this as an underlying distrust saying in other words "We won't trust… we won't trust a smaller group of people" due to the fractured church fellowship where many vested interests competed unproductively. The church could be described as a series of sub cultures each with its own rivalry and separate life.

We begin by identifying some of the pressures that shape the culture from external sources, share some indicators of the surface culture, the artefacts and structures and then unearth evidence of the values and assumptions that undergird the culture in the directions in which it ended up.

### *External Pressures*

There are two major roles the external culture has in affecting the difficulties of introducing change in Ivy Street culture. The strength of the internal culture underlines the dominant narrative features in the stories shared about Ivy Street. Oppressive leadership styles played upon relative social locations and personal vulnerabilities.

> It stems back from an era, where ... and this is the whole control technique, where people are made to feel special, simply because they are allowed to be here. It was almost like to belong to Ivy Street was a privilege. Ah… now you go back even ten years earlier and that was the kind of thing that was ah… you know, "You're an Ivy Street person" And so, the division, in a sense, between… for instance… even your 'ordinary people' in the congregation and your 'leadership' were great. Because they were… they were 'our respected and revered leaders'! … Because a lot of people here thought that to leave here or to 'betray this place' is just unforgivable. This was Ivy Street! Um, the leaders were wealthy, powerful, men of enormous control in their business worlds, managers, directors, millionaires… Um, and used that kind of… their standover kind of stuff. That was obviously big in that era, where once you got into that upper echelon of management, you were the management and the workers were the workers. (Clive)

The culture of control is an out of place transference from the business world into the fellowship of the church.

Other respondents revealed that there were quite a few folk who had actually found Ivy Street a haven from very abusive local independent churches and did not have the personal esteem to withstand the intimidation of the Ivy Street leadership (Monty). This also

explains the fact that many visitors found the 'rank and file' member quite warm and accepting while the culture of leadership was coercive and distant (Joyce, Amy).

Secondly, during the late seventies and early eighties a distinct and widespread shift was occurring across the external culture of the denomination's churches. In particular worship forms had become less formal and music had shifted toward more contemporary styles. Yet in the mid eighties the style at Ivy Street was a perpetuation of the post war period, its heyday. This isolated the church from the potential new-comer who was accustomed to the common contemporary church. It was inevitable that the range of values across the population of the church broadened as the more new members actually formally joined themselves to the church. But it is the coming of the present pastor that results in a groundswell of new values emerging and the original members realise that change is increasingly unavoidable.

## The Cultural Surface: Artefacts And Rituals

By the mid eighties key domains in the church's life served as battlefields in which the agents of change either won or lost ground in the struggle for cultural supremacy. The first and the most contested domain for cultural control is the aptly titled 'Officers' Court'. The contest began with the form of the agenda.

> You never discussed anything. You argued … over jots and tittles. See, if the result was a fait accompli, the only thing to argue was minutia. So we'd spend so much time… they were classics… I can still see it now… You'd argue about jots and tittles and then a guy like Adam Keith, who was one of 'the greats'. At the same time, in almost every meeting, he'd explode, and say, "You know, I'm sick and tired of sitting around here and listening to all this nonsense..." There was almost like a ritual. …

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It's a dance!  And he would feel better then, 'cause he'd said his piece.  Then he'd shut

up again, and then they'd go on.  And it was just month after month, the same kind of

ritual.  And at the end of the meeting, they'd all go out…. As soon as they'd walk out

the door, they'd revert back to… buddies!  (Clive)

This ritual resurfaced in church business meetings and the same characters followed their

assigned script, one pointing out the legal implications of minutia, another supplying an

obscure Bible reference, another frustrated one becoming hostile.  Very little time was spent

discussing the central issues of the ministry or mission of the church. Instead the following

indicates the agenda.

Well, for a start, the secretary would read out, word for word, every word of the

previous meeting.  Like, it was unbelievable.  That would go, sometimes, for twenty-

five minutes.  And that happened for the first three years I was here.  Every deacons'

meeting and every members' meeting, because that was the constitutional requirement.

And so everybody would sit there absolutely, you know, asleep.  And then, there'd be

this interesting exercise of "Do we accept the minutes?".  So you'd have people who

would challenge things, just to assert, you know, "I'm here… and "I think that

should've been 'the' instead of 'and' "… "I don't think we actually meant that

'we'…".  And so you would find yourself, purportedly trying to get the minutes right.

But, in actual fact, it was like a pecking order.  It was just re-establishing who… who's

who.  (Clive)

Curiously, this ritual is of critical importance to these figures despite the fact that many were

people of significant influence in their weekday vocations.  The meetings agendas do not

marshal a movement toward effective ministry for the very reason that this is not the purpose

that the main actors had for them.  But for Clive to assume that effective decisions would be

made in that locale was to work at cross-purposes to the real purpose of the officers' court. It was purely a static judiciary; an effective court where the game of the social ordering of power and privilege was played out resulting in both winners and losers.

Stability was also preserved through the control of the ministries associated with worship itself. Some formerly powerful figures still bemoan the structural changes that have taken place and interpret the loss of these rituals as signifying administrative slackness.

Ah… the leadership is faceless. Um, instead of… at communion, instead of your leadership with deacons and elders sitting out the front, as they once did, and people saw those men of… they had to front up, it was almost compulsory to be there, in those seats, to fill those seats – and their families. So you had this flow of everybody knew the secretary, treasurer, elders, deacons… they were sitting up there… they were the men! (Reg)

Changes in the composition signalled that the ethos of the whole church was changing and therefore those with an interest in maintaining cultural stability resorted to hostility to restore the equilibrium. This reflects how deeply they interpreted the changes as significantly compromising their core values in either James Glover's or Clive Crowe's ministries though they were a decade apart. The depth of anxiety revealed in the sending of anonymous letters during the James Glover era (James, David). James Glover would mention these 'silly letters' from the pulpit. But this did little to ease the polarizing of opinion about him. This signifies the degree of distress these members were experiencing, a distress compounded by pastor Glover's response. The upshot was that every minor and justifiable change to order was resisted and resented publicly as when during the winter months when evening service

numbers dwindled, he had the worshipers huddle together in the choir stalls. But this 'just was not done!' (James).

The various cliques and fragments of subcultures with Ivy Street provided ready networks to advance or retard these changes. James Glover himself knew how his actions were being interpreted, but persisted in formal changes since his motives revolved around a value of freedom of expression. This value was important for him, but obviously alien to the strong figures within the church. It was interpreted as a theological or spiritual shift toward the charismatic movement at its zenith in the form of the 'Signs and Wonders' movement of those days.

> But, behind the scenes, there was all sorts of things, um…, […] there were… there were anonymous letters and there were phone calls and there were all sorts of things done. … At the same time, there were, I believe that it was right for people to freely express themselves in worship particularly those who came from non-church backgrounds. Um, the tradition was that we always started with the choir singing the doxology or something, finished up with a threefold amen and it was that very hymn-sandwich pattern. So I introduced, with the deacons' permission, I never did anything just off my own bat, a number of avenues. We'd have some Scripture in Song choruses, if people wanted to clap, they could. And we got to the stage where, because the charismatic movement was quite strong at that stage, if people wanted to raise their hands, they could. Ah, if people wanted to be prayed for, then we'd look into that. We didn't just have a call for people to come and be prayed for... But this built up a picture that I was charismatic and the church was going charismatic, which was totally false. (James)

James Glover's motives did not communicate as loudly as the retroactive symbolizing of his associations that the members made of his innovations in worship and his association with the charismatic members (David). Not surprisingly, the same assumptions were still alive and resistant to the changes wrought by pastor Clive, ten years on. Many recollections of the transitions touched upon the area of worship and the influential choir. Some members were infuriated at the sight of Clive Crowe clapping to a song during a service and left never to return and assumed that the "pastor was going down the charismatic track again" (Amy).

A distinct clash of values emerged. Although these were played in the worship space they represented a clash of a whole archetype of values and attitudes to church. While the pastor would attempt to introduce up-beat music into the worship, it could not be performed adequately upon the pipe organ. At the same time the choir was rehashing old material in an uninspiring manner (Amy, Clive). The choir itself and the posture it displayed in worship also signified a message that was contradictory to the spirit of the Gospel that Pastor Clive wanted to see in the church and the desire to reach the emerging adult generation. This was not just a matter of a clash of musical styles but a confrontation with the power exerted by the people within it over the whole church.

> The choir was another one of those groups who had immense power. 'Cause what would happen was … they sat out the front of the church, they would look at what was going on, they were the people who ... any issue in the church was known to the choir. Like, it was just classic 'secret society'. You know? Um. And when I came to it one day and said, "I'm going to dismantle the choir". Like, it was just almost like I'd declared that Jesus was not the Son of God. You know? It was unbelievable. Unbelievable. … But in the end, that worked itself through to a point where, you know, I was able to come back and say "Do you understand that the issue here is not whether

we have an old persons' choir or not.  The issue is, as a choir, you are … you've lost

sight of what you were ever supposed to be there for."  (Clive)

When Clive Crowe removed the choir stalls and the senior choir from regular performances and then began a separate worship service according to the tastes of the era, it was a major signal that these values were recognizably incompatible.  The dwindling traditional service members were melded back into contested space the early service.  There was a discernable change of form along with a whole new mood of joy and acceptance into a fresh 'archetype'.  This implied the culture had finally changed irrevocably (Hinnings, Thibault, et.al.: 1996, 890f).  Privilege, control and traditionalism had been dissolved despite the focus of conflict being upon the fear of charismatic elements 'creeping into the worship'.

All these issues kept coming up and even dress codes, you know.  "You're letting the place go to rack and ruin." "You're turning it into a circus."  Um …  all of that. … That was a major, major issue.  And I remember a few of them saying that to me, they said, "When we came back into the mainstream church, we felt like we were coming to a new church!"  Because, all of a sudden … all of a sudden, they felt like they were coming to someone else's church.  Whereas up until then, they had always held the absolute sway." (Clive)

To this day, there are people who partake in the church'ss life that are still quite critical of the worship "given half a chance" (Joyce, Clive).  Whatever the domain or the particular sub-structure, the same theme came through.  Clive Crowe was attempting to change a cultural archetype that was an expression of the need to control and to conserve.  Stories of critical confrontations such as between the pastor and the choir or the pastor and the deaconesses are milestones in the narrative of culture change.

They [the choir] were practising one night.  Most of these things, in the end, came down to points where I just had to, in the end, confront whatever it was.  When it was the choir, I went out there one time … and I just said, ah… "I know this is not going to be popular."  I said, ah… "You know that basically I love all of you."  I said, "You're wonderful people" I said… and this is five or six years down the track.  I said, "But I no longer think the choir has a ministry."  And boy, the shat hit the fin I can tell you.  It was ah… it was not good.  But it was the right time, because, apart from the initial kind of thing…  Interestingly enough, I found out afterwards that most of them were thinking that anyhow.  But you see I had one of the ladies said … , who was one of the shakers and movers, said to me, she actually came and said to me, "You've got no idea how grateful… that you came in.  'cause none us could've said that to Maurine."  She had such a control over… none of them could've said it.  And she said, "All of us know that our time's up."  So that was just the choir.  We had to do that with the deaconesses.  I went to the deaconesses and said, "From the next church meeting there will be no deaconesses."  That was awful.  They… they were… they were terrible.  Because they felt they had control of it. (Clive)

The deaconesses were noted more for their ingestion and injection of rumours than for genuine pastoral assistance.  Consequently, confrontations that curtail the influence of powerful figures in these ministries have longer-term significance for culture change.

### *Cultural Change Strategy*

As noted the present pastor's change strategy is quite obvious.  One can note in his detailed reflections that he intentionally affects culture change by setting up alternative patterns of interaction in the key domains where the culture of control was entrenched; the worship services, the choir, the diaconate and the church meetings.  Clive stressed that change

itself was not his immediate response on entering the church. He made every effort to use persuasion and be conciliatory. But having experienced much frustration and believing also that he had earned some leverage through his pastoral faithfulness, he set about initiating justifiable changes. Likewise the values that had been expressed as essential to the church were constantly frustrated by a strong adherence to perpetuating the church as it had been in the Max Grover heyday.

In recounting stories of change, a common theme is to refer to this changing culture as gaining 'momentum'. First however came the deliberate attempt to decouple the existing leadership (Bate: 1994, 154) and then to recruit new leaders who could import a fresh mind set. He firstly persuades, then confronts and then ignores the legalistic use of leadership structures of the existing brokers of power. He realized that any proposal would be so dissected or diverted by the deacons in session that virtually no constructive progress could be made. He then made the critical move of informing the deacons that he 'would bypass their meetings'. This way trial changes could occur and they would be able to see what it was they were being asked to support (Clive). He would press on regardless of their declarations. This would not have been possible if he was not confident of his standing as a genuinely valued pastor within the ranks of the wider church membership. At the same time, Clive's initiatives encouraged other new and formerly passive members to become deacons and the power balance in the 'Officer's Court' shifted (Clive).

> Well, in the end, I… probably around about that point, I started making some pretty wholesale changes. Not necessarily asking, but in a sense, taking more of an assertive leadership role, where I felt I had enough respect in the place after five years. Where people knew my character. So that they knew that I wasn't just a fly-by-night who was going to come in and do my own thing. Ah… I had a greater support on leadership and

at deacon level. I had people in a variety of areas of the church, now, who wanted to work together and who no longer saw ministry as a power thing but saw it as a servant thing. So all of a sudden, the ethos of the place is different. 'Cause nobody's worried about treading on each other's toes anymore, we are working together. … We still have a very strong element of people who were almost demanding the old, traditional type church. Strangely enough, most of these people talked openly about "outreach" and "mission" and "reaching our generation", but they refused to allow a church that would accommodate virtually anybody under sixty. So their verbalising was totally inconsistent with their willingness to allow the church to open up a bit. (Clive)

We see here that the opponents shared many of Clive's values but worked from assumptions that had become too deeply entrenched to resurface them rationally. The different worlds of Ivy Street in the Grover and Crowe eras reflect attempts at construction of social environments in line with totally different cognitive styles. The church moved from a bureaucratic sensing/thinking organization to a much more organic adaptive or intuitive/feeling type (Schein: 1988, 159f). This is reflected both in interpersonal transactions of leaders and members and the tone and content of worship as well as the focus of Clive's preaching. A key indicator of this too is the criticism from former members as well that the church has become administratively slack and that, despite Clives' clearly evident exposition, that his preaching is not "Biblical".

As noted already, Clive's change strategy involved a calculated separation of the various groups according to the worship services. This was announced as a solution since the former powerful group would not concede any formal changes. Clive revealed that this was not just motivated by the desire to appease parties, but involved the prediction that the traditional opposition would collapse if left to their own devices because what was left within

that group was "the very things that had led to stuckness in the first place" (Clive). After nine months elapsed, as predicted, the group had all but petered out to a couple of dozen with very little energy to continue. The moment was grasped again and in a spirit of concern Clive announced to them that their late service would not continue. He was not just interested in their disempowerment, but hoped also to see a change of attitude from this aging group. Later he found out that quite a few of these members had wanted the early service to be folded up anyway. So, he affirmed his love for them and yet pressed the point that it was time "to pass the baton" since they had enjoyed "seventy years of doing things their own way" (Clive).

As noted above, the members who returned to the early service, now the sole morning worship service, perceived that the church itself felt as if it had changed despite the familiar faces that were found there. It is significant also that the pastor did not assume that the worship battle implied that the culture had changed irrevocably.

> Momentum had built up. And I remember, up until about the sixth year here, people were always saying, "If you leave now, we'll go backwards. We're going backwards." And I felt that too. I thought, "we're on the verge of something here… but there's enough control to tip us backwards if we don't." And I reckon, into about our seventh year, I think we put all that behind us. Where the leadership itself, right across the board, virtually said, "We are never, ever going back to that." (Clive)

Long term members could also discern that the "Grover era is finally dead" (David) and the church was evolving into a new cultural identity.

The Bate change strategy categories are not adequate here to adequately define this approach identified above. Clive Crowe describes the first period of his present ministry in

terms of a 'conciliative' approach (Bate: 1994, 180-185) attempting to minimize opposition by accommodation. But these prove fruitless in the face of the strong culture of intimidation and status consciousness.

> One of the things I've found difficult to comprehend was if only they knew how far I felt I was going to… to embrace where they were, without unnecessarily offending, so that I could gently bring them, you know, away from that. 'Cause I didn't just come in and go wham, bam… I think leaving things like they were, for five years, in those meetings, was… Someone else would've come in and, maybe in the first six months and said "This is atrocious. We're just not…" And yet at the same time, they would accuse me of being destructive, of wanting to come in and destroy the place and, you know, "You're all gung-ho! and "You just ah…" and I thought, "If only you knew…", you know, "What I've had to put up with five years". … It's not a revolution at all. Like in five years, they had a world war. And all I'm trying to do is to wait for the right kind of moments, the right times, 'til I think they've got a full understanding of what I'm actually trying to do. (Clive).

Pastor Crowe eventually aimed to affect the direction of change by concentrating upon the actions of positive ministry performance and formalizing this later rather than the other way around (Bate: 1994, 188). He came to a point where he was not worried about obtaining legitimation for changes first. Instead he believed that performance would alter cultural directions. But then as evident in the citations above, the pastor's role is notably 'assertive', not only 'corrosive' (Bate: 1994, 187). He deliberately intended to remove certain patterns and rituals and structures from the earth of the church culture. There is a significant component of the 'aggressive' approach but not in the sense that it is the antithesis of "not wanting people to think for themselves" as this style usually implied. But there are some striking similarities. He has a sense of urgency that legitimates deviant behaviour normally

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not tolerated from pastor figures. Bate describes these leaders as "Messianic" inasmuch as they wish to change [the world] "not for his own self-will or self-satisfaction, but in order to fulfil the mission assigned to him by God" (Bate: 1994, 177). This too is an overstatement despite the extreme personal investment by this pastor in the process of change. Nonetheless, he does sense the pastoral need to seize the initiative in order to promote the change. He realized as Bate warns, that developmental or consensual approaches in the end would not alter the foundations of this culture sufficiently.

> But I don't believe you can impact a culture if you haven't got a strong overriding sense of belief that that is right. Because otherwise, it becomes a consensus thing and consensus doesn't change. Consensus modifies. And it modifies your culture, whereas this needed a new culture. (Clive)

And this conscious calculation that a transformational type of change was required reflects a conviction that the changes are needed for organizational survival. Bate is very close to the mark when he identifies this agent's mentality as one of 'rebellion' rather than 'revolution'.

> Rebellion is a cultural act whereas revolution is a political act. Unlike the revolutionary, the rebel's primary focus of concern is not power but cultural innovation: his theory is that to bring about a new form of organization and new patterns of though and behaviour, there has to be a modal discontinuity (Peckham, 1970:274) - a violation of traditional perceptual forms and expectancies. … the rebel works against the existing social structure not by revolution but by behaving as if the structure did not exist. (Bate: 1994, 178).

This matches Clive Crowe's own preference for transformational level change:

A modification would've left room for fostering old habits. And so, at some point, we were always asking that God would bring in a new culture, a new ethos. (Clive)

The interpretation of that new ethos was not uniformly positive. The higher degree of humanness and the lowering of bureaucratic attitudes that Clive promoted is interpreted by the long time members as administratively sloppy and non-Baptist. They perceive the pastor's keenness to be more inclusive as lowering the boundaries of the church and loss of essential Baptist Values. This speaks of deeper issues to do with the source of the core values of the various segments of the church.

### *Values and Assumptions*

As noted earlier, a recurring theme in the stories shared is that Clive is a strong pastor and preacher, and regardless of the changes he has brought he has the respect even of his traditionalist opponents. We note that the attitude toward Clive is not so much age related as stage related. Those who came to the church in its former peak period under Max Grover generally do not appreciate the changes associated with Clive's era.

Even though there would be quite a few of the older people in the congregation who would think Clive is a radical, who think he is a one-man show, um, and there would be quite a few criticisms on that, "He's just, you know, trail-blazed his way, irrespective, hasn't considered other people". Now that is not necessarily the case, but that is how some would view it. Um, that they still have a deep respect for him, because he… they see him as a man of the Word. And nothing will dissuade them from that. They will sit there unhappily, enduring the beat of the drum, and will have their little whinges around, um, but because they still see Clive as a man of God, irrespective of all of his 'sideline fluffies', they will stick with him. (Joyce)

Such attitudes are prevalent in some of the faithful members from the former diaconate. It was evident that in these criticisms the values of the long-standing members he represents are revealed. Unlike the pastors this member appreciated, Clive Crowe is not a stickler for traditional Baptist polity and he repeatedly is in breach of a core value of 'predictability' and good business practice.

> He's… he doesn't preach every Sunday… he's not consistently… shares the pulpit with almost anyone, whereas previously, only the pulpit would only be shared with… it was very jealously guarded. But he doesn't … he seems to let anybody, oh … have a turn … and not even be there to see they did the right thing. I understood that the rules were that you would never vacate the platform until the new speaker came. You were always in control. You've got a congregation, therefore you keep it under control until you hand it over. But that doesn't happen now, it's sort of… very loose. Ah, he has favourites and he's not a visitor. Ah, and he tries many things. He's not predictable. I could think he could change the order of a service at the last moment. He's got loose administration, and that, you pay a price for that. It's not tight. And we're now paying a price for that, I think … and we've really got loose administration. Tight administration allows you to go away and do things like you're doing now and the place goes on. Loose administration means that you're… it sort of depends. (Reg)

That is, even while the pastor is appreciated as being both a "larrikin" (Reg) an aspect that refers to his 'rebellious' approach to culture change, the differences between Clive and those like Reginald Simpson lie at the level of assumptions. The fundamental difference being the bureaucratic need to control and predict things, colliding with an assumption that people need to be treated graciously. It is most likely that the model of church in Clive's mind most closely resembles the 'Community' model coalescing around shared values and democracy

rather than a task oriented mission.  One senses that this model is devolved in opposition to the existing 'leader' model built on impersonality and control of the present.

These may have roots in divergent ecclesiological assumptions concerning the purpose of the church.  Sometimes Clive's critics attempt to find a Biblical justification to critique his pastoral style.  Because church meetings are disciplined and focus upon issues without the grandstanding of former cultures, Clive is called a 'dictator' (Reg).  The move away from having everything determined by congregational meetings, actually empowered the dominant individuals.  But this avenue for shaping the culture has been removed along with the focus upon administrative trivia.  The attempted Biblical rebuttal below also suggests that Clive and his supporters have successfully shifted the basis rhetoric away from the supposed denominational distinctives onto more evangelical logic.

> People have left.  And the attitude seems to be to those, well, "If you want to go, go.
> So what?"  Doesn't matter whether they've been there 10, 20 or 30 years.  And that's a
> difficult one.  Whereas ah…the lost sheep story is, you get the last of them… all other
> 99… you try and show that.   … If administration gets in the way of the wind of the
> Spirit it's a bad thing.  But if it is so loose and the finances are uncontrolled and the
> ministers don't get paid, then they will get upset!  (Reg)

We note here also that the inclusive culture that has replaced the bureaucratic structure of the past is also related to theological perspectives.

> I think the theological emphasis then on God, on Jesus as God's Son, rather than… not
> rather than - and not on the Father, God… and on the present and not on the second
> coming.  So perhaps, yeah, the emphasis has been a bit out.  Yeah, I know that Jesus is
> the Way the Truth and the Life, yes.  But where is the Fatherhood of God?  (Reg.)

It is not difficult to detect here a well-worn dichotomy between the arguments of the critics and current culture managers, both asserting their own form of radicalism. One advocates a return to familiar and fixed denominational practices versus the latter advocating an inclusive, flexible and interpersonal expression of the Gospel. The friction suggests that there is a difference between the older generation of members and the new since Clive has come at the assumption level as to which ethical principles are primary and most absolute. The Ivy Street version of Baptist protocols, so intensely reinforced positively in impersonality of the Grover era, have been moved aside by a communitarian view of the present with its tolerance of the unknown and the willingness to live with a sense of cultural open-endedness.

That there has been significant tension over Clive's ministry from the traditional members results from not so much an informed articulated awareness of his ecclesiology as an interpretation of his behaviour. His behaviour violates that assumed to be proper for a pastor patterned on the pastors of the past. But this is not the whole story. These same church members actually do appreciate other aspects of his ministry. Although there is a difference at the core level of assumptions, the shared community space is not the site of a simple and outright values clash but an overlap as well.

In conclusion, there has been a significant culture change here that was attested to through the conflict and resistance to pastor Clive, even though the values they espoused on the surface regarding the mission of the church and its theology are not that dissimilar. However, at the level of assumptions one can see that the church has moved from a fairly coherent paradigm of an institution affirming bureaucratic control type culture to a person affirming culture. The coherence of each phase is seen in the correlation between the theological emphasis on the authority of God contrasted with the intimacy with the Son via

the Spirit. Social distance is matched by theological transcendence. The greatest friction point is not that the church meetings have disappeared, but have become focussed on effective dialogue around the ministry of the church rather the power posturing of the controlling figures. The shared value of ministry to a new generation now has a possibility of realization.

### Schneider Culture Type

In terms of the nature of power and authority, the approach to decision-making, the forms of organization and the management style of the office prior to the split and beyond, Ivy Street bears the essential hallmarks of Schneider's (1994) 'Control' culture. Not only is the church marked by ideological and political conservatism but also the managerial climate reflected in the style of those who lead the church in Max Grover's shadow. They are concerned to maintain the traditions and their power over and through the key structures of worship, deacons court and members meetings. Thus they expect that the pastor will fulfil a function analogous to their 'employee' and maintaining the pursuits of the organization and following their directives (Bate: 1994, 106). Predictable order, stability, theological conservatism, overseas missions and relational distance are far more important values and concerns than redemptive impact and empathetic humaneness. There was a time when people who had been in the church for decades "did not know the names of [others'] children!". There were scandals that were kept from surfacing as well (Clive). Such matters are incentive to foster the culture of control even further. But these things have changed in recent times. Even in times of personal opposition towards him, Clive remains a pastor to the opponent.

As Clive Crowe and his growing support base are able to manipulate the symbols of cultural renewal in the mood of leaders meetings and worship services a new culture is established. Contrary to the critiques of the remnants of the control culture era, Clive's pastorate has seen the emergence within the church of an ethos of a more 'personal' culture.

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He sees the greatest change occurred through "breaking down the culture of control within the leadership."

There are some aspects of both the 'Collaboration' culture and the 'Cultivation' culture that compare favourably to the analysis shared above. The decision-making processes certainly have an 'actuality' flavour to them being people-driven, organic and informal (Schneider: 1994, 117). There is a sense in which the pastoral style of Clive Crowe tends to be more 'nurse' like, responding to the immediate needs of the member than a deliberate system building approach. Both criticisms and values of those within the church reveal this.

This could be another source of friction within the church. A focus group survey of new comers into the church performed two years ago, comprising members who had entered the church within the previous two years, also shows that many were grateful that the church did not lay expectations upon them, they could convalesce until motivated to take up ministry responsibility. Another church discussion night for members to hear each other in mid 2003 came to the same consensus that it was time now for more to actually contribute to the ministry of the church rather than simply enjoy the benefits. Overall the members reveal a belief that the church meets people where they are rather than laying expectations upon them to make a substantial contribution to the ministry. For this reason, the church would best be located at the 'actuality-personal' quadrant rather than be described as a 'possibility-personal' culture.

Recently the church has realized in the face of the endless pastoral need that is met by the pastoral team that a more generative structure is needed to develop a greater base of skills throughout the membership. Major discussions between myself and the church over the last two years have lead to a formal adoption of a structure of ministry that involves a greater

number of people taking responsibility for governance, administration and pastoral care where such roles were less specified under the existing eldership and diaconate structure. Ironically, long-term members in the church meetings have interpreted this as a 'bureaucratic' response wanting to see pastoral care with preaching as the sole responsibility of the minister rather than the whole 'body'. However the leadership team has decided it needs to set the pastors free to coach and train others in ministry skills. It could well be the case that given these frictions at a values level and the contradiction between the espoused values of the newer generation of members and their actual behaviours that some of the resistance towards Clive Crowe's ministry from older members simply reflects the fact that the church has also moved from a coherent and strong culture, to a weaker more transitional arrangement.

Discussion of the fundamental directions of the mission of the church beyond its walls and within the limits of its own community now have surfaced on the agenda of the leaders meetings. In this sense it will be interesting to see if the 'possibility' dynamic can replace the contentment with 'being accepted', a strong theme in the shared values of both old and new, with the more futuristic 'possibility' value of the cultivation of growth both personal and organizational. Up until now, the strength of the church's ministries, pulpit, worship and youth ministries have attracted the discerning member and those exiting bruising encounters in other churches. Now as their worship attendance approaches the seating capacity and decisions regarding further staffing and structure are foisted upon the church it is being made to address the issues of its fundamental directions and therefore the adequacy of its core values.

### A Narrative of Culture Change

Due to the long history of Ivy Street and the survival of the culture proven both in its peak period, or 'golden era', and through adversity the cultural values being significantly entrenched the narrative of the church can be comprehensively covered in most regards through the culture lens. Thus at the risk of redundancy the Ivy Street narrative could be told as follows:

(i)   *Proud Control Culture Era*:  The strong managerialism resulting in an impersonal and protective approach to leadership, decision making and authority sees the church reach its zenith in the sixties and perpetuate itself through to the late eighties through key official and unofficial dominant figures until the resignation of the unsuccessful change agent James Glover.

(ii)   *Control Culture in Decline:* Through the fracturing of the fellowship on James Glover's resignation an increasingly paranoid and protective group of leaders gains control.  Ray Fleet's developments encourage a few progressive folk to join and stay in the church despite its skewed distribution toward the seniors' bracket.

(iii)   *Collaboration Culture in Opposition to Control Culture:*  Pastor Clive Crowe's introduction brings values that resonate sufficiently with some core values to be accepted as legitimate pastoral leadership.  However his concern for cultural relevance in the wider context and the keenness to address pressing actualities through open political processes runs headlong into entrenched deference patterns and formal rituals that contradict the espoused values of the church.  Despite formal agreement about theological views, there is a clash at the level of assumptions that takes five to six years to work through as Schein expected (Schein: 1990, 114). This collaboration culture becomes established through the manipulation of the former symbols of status and control and the corresponding

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appeal to deeper values, the establishment of new leadership and new worship formats. These are cemented by a new membership influx for whom the values of predictability and preservation mean very little.

(iv) *Innovation of Cultivation Culture:* As the church has grown in complexity and competence it has become evident to the leadership that they must now develop capacities to generate the value of personal growth in ministry skilfulness and outreach initiative. Structures are being put in place for this training and releasing process to become an essential component of the culture.

## Red Hill Regional Church

### Climate

The climate of an organization refers more to the conscious features of an organization that can be espoused by its members and which are subject to a certain degree of control by those in leadership (Dennison: 1994, 624). These features, while arising out of the shared values are more temporary than those of culture which is less conscious and more abiding. At Red Hill the fortunes of the church are suspended between two equally dominant and gifted pastoral personalities Clarie Friedman and David Ross. The climate of the church over time is defined by power struggles and feistiness of the dominating figures both of pastors and the subsequent reactivity of others. Both aim to create a culture in strict conformity with their own vision of the ideal evangelistic church but their strategies are quite distinct. Clarie attempted to control the church through close contact with each member whereas David uses the political processes of the church to gain sufficient legitimation for granting the power for change into the hands of the staff and directors of various ministries. Both pastors assume that the strength of the church resides in a strong or uniform culture, where all aspects and departments cohere within foundational principles and commitments. For Clarie Friedman

this strength is vested in adherence to a dogmatic position doctrinally. For David Ross it is vested in a firm commitment to a mission and a process for enhancing growth. But the desire to induce conformity and uniformity pervades the ambition of both men.

The variation in climate in the church at a particular time thus reflects the unique qualities of leadership style and the priorities of the pastors in the various eras. There has always been an exit of various groups who could not accept the total implications of the pastor's style.

> The interesting thing I have found, right through it's course of history, the church has lost people. But one thing I have thought interesting is the people we used to lose before David's time tended to be the more radical thinkers, they felt quite repressed both through Doug's and Clarie's ministry. Clarie was very much anti-charismatic. Those people found they couldn't stay any longer. That's not the reason everybody left of course but there was that strong element, whereas the folk who left when David came tended to be the more conservative element. They couldn't hack the changes. It's all happening too fast and this is not their church anymore. (Sandra)

The shifting population of the church is reflected in a corresponding shift in underlying perspectives. Such a tendency to react to the pastor tends to reinforce the prevailing mood of the church around the pastor's priorities. However, what these broad descriptors 'conservative' and 'radical' actually mean need to be informed by the details conveyed in specific instances and stories and are relative to the avowedly conservative evangelical family-focussed Red Hill church culture.

### *Assumptions About Change*

In the stories of change some members tend to focus upon the visible changes in worship style as critical indicators of change and the reason for division over the recent pastorate. The pastor focuses on structural changes in leadership policies as the critical changes. The strength of the culture in the current period can be seen from the coalescence of assumptions and the corresponding political actions of pastor and leaders at the surface of the culture. David Ross utilizes the political process as supplying the freedom of choice of an evangelical 'clientele' to decide upon their source of spiritual nourishment. Therefore, he assumes that no particular member can be expected to be a 'permanent fixture' in the church. He willingly diverts newcomers to other churches in the area that are a better match with visitors' tastes than Red Hill. This is a rational calculation that the present pastor has been willing to make for the sake of the effectiveness of the church.

The mandate for change according to Pastor Ross comes from the very nature of the culture. Unethical aspects needed confronting and he was willing to attend to these. And his response to these aspects is to alter the structures of leadership to tighten the reins of accountability of all parties involved.

> That's why you must change structure. Whether you like it or not every church has got
>
> it. There is structure there that is causing the problems they are now having. And so
>
> you've got your head in the sand if you don't think so. There is that culture, … culture,
>
> structure, same thing. So we had a culture of keeping everything in the dark, we have a
>
> culture of secrecy here. We have the culture of gossip. You don't go and talk to
>
> anybody about it. We have the culture of non-confrontation. … We have the culture of
>
> "There's no right or wrong. We've got to keep everybody happy." They had an
>
> awesome, a very dynamic personality leader, that's where its growth came, who was in

control of everything.  And so there was a fear of leadership, okay … and a fear of

being burnt by leadership.  (David)


This refers to the form of leadership that bordered on abuse by pastor Clarie and conflict

avoidance by the leaders.  The present pastor saw the means of renewal as best achieved

through open, politically legitimated structure change.  He thought that if he could get the

group to identify it's shared goals and values, then have these certified by vote of the

members, the culture would be changed at that point.  All that would be needed was an

alignment of the ministry systems to conform to the emerging consensus.  Once the consensus

had been articulated it could be defended against the resistance of dissenting traditional

interests since it was a principle of the church that all abide by a majority decision whether

one is in favour of it or not.  By identifying culture with structure, the leaders assume that if

forums and decision-making structures could be devised, the culture would be changed. This

is a form of "cultural imperialism" (Hawkins: 1997, 425) which, although introduced via

democratic processes, underplays the nature of culture.  It is a deeper structure than the wishes

espoused momentarily, being forged through the well-worn ruts of shared history (Dennison:

1996, 622).  A change in structure does not imply a change in meaning or assumptions that

underlay the espoused shared values.


### *Strategic Assumptions*

If a foundational assumption here is that culture change is achieved once structures are

legitimated, then resistance to structural change is assumed to represent an unethical negative

force.  Five strong supporting assumptions of the current leadership therefore stand out in the

story of culture change at Red Hill.  These are all to do with gaining the corporate

legitimation for the pastor and leaders to be change agents.

Firstly, the undergirding legitimation comes from the consensus exercise that clarified the purpose of the church. Secondly, The ultimate strategy for preserving the churches existence is to reach the unchurched through an attractional church model. It is assumed that the church can only be faithful in its mission if people come into the church plant proper rather than the church having a ministry inside the cultural structures and spaces beyond the churches specified worship times and spaces. A corollary of this assumption is that a successful church is assumed to be an attractive numerically growing church. Thirdly, this in turn requires and therefore justifies 'management by objectives' approach by the legitimated leadership over the whole church ministry organization. This in turn necessitates a density of competent leaders and a structure for multiplying these as the only way of sustaining change and growth. And, lastly, these leaders earn the right to lead by being demonstrably accountable to a policy governance board and by being held accountable for pre-arranged and quantifiable results. There have been discussions regarding just how it is possible to quantify the health and success of the church in numerical terms by the leadership team. Numerical success, the end, is evidence of God's blessing the means of success, the empowering structure. A flood of requests for baptisms and a bulging evening youth service is "pretty hard to argue with" (David). The same mentality was present prior to the present pastor. It underscored the early resignation of the previous pastor, Douglas Walker. He was considered a failed leader despite his personal qualities due to a failure to induce church growth. For this reason it was said "We knew that for that guy his time was up"(Len). Critics can be silenced by visible evidence that this overall strategy is right.

Secondly, while the church has been 'reengineered' to appeal to the outsider (Len), the vast majority of citations refer to revising the internal workings of the church as a precursor to

this desired external impact. Although there is not a public debate about these assumptions the culture still has a diversity of opinions about the veracity of such logic. However the resistance to change may have to do with core values or assumptions that are perceived to be under threat by the new 'hard nosed' ethos of effectiveness pervading the church as a new conscious mentality. The church had grown from its infancy through the years of its first generation of families with a large emphasis on church based teenage sports teams and Sunday school as an extended family beyond the home. Such family values don't necessarily resonate with the new vision of Red Hill becoming a regional church, especially so given that these values had proven effective in establishing the last peak period of the church.

> But I think David's come in with a very clear sense of strategy about how the church is going to move into the future. There's a fairly clear vision that the church is going to be a regional church. It's going to serve the people within a half an hour of where we are etcetera. He has a very strong commitment to reaching out to the lost and so the church has got to change to be accommodating of people that are coming in. The music has got to be updated and stuff like that. So he's coming with some fairly strong parameters. … See I am not sure that the vision for the regional church really was necessarily the ideal. I think part of the stress was that people still wanted to have a family, a local community church. (Neville)

Ironically, it is this core valuing of family life that keeps this representative of the recently marginalized at the church. Neville now is a coordinator of the traditional service that appeals to the likes of the older and more 'conservative' supporters of Clarie Friedman's legacy. Yet as a parent, he can value the modernization of the services to appeal to a new generation.

> If you've got teenagers like we have to have these kids with such a strong Christian youth group, it's a great thing. We would have to be very careful about any decisions we made in terms of how it would affect our children and we've now moved my wife's parents down and we've got them involved in the traditional service. So we have two generations one either side that are sort of … (Neville)

Consequently his view of the change process was that it was too hasty and that the leadership should have attempted to appeal to "some shared transcendent value" in a 'conciliative' manner (Neville). The family church of Clarie Friedman's era was just as much in favour of evangelism. But this value was achieved without the disruption of traditional Baptist worship order through Clarie's direct visitation work and the home hospitality of his wife and capitalized through the evening Gospel services. Clarie would be present at the church's sporting competitions and invite people to special services where they would be impressed by his winsome tones. The down side of this approach was that while numbers of new members were attracted, there were not processes to grow these fledgling Christians in faith toward interdependence.

Like individuals, this cultural dynamic forged through experience of effective growth leads to values that in time become its basic underlying assumptions. Such assumptions do not easily give way to logic or disconfirming evidence (Schein: 1990, 115). Hence, Doug Walker a disciple of the contemporary church or 'seeker sensitive' movement, attempted unsuccessfully, and not too skilfully, to change the preaching function of the morning service into an evangelistic event or to use it to entreat the saints in their evangelistic responsibilities. Later, Russel Norris attempted to swing the pendulum back even further away from the non-member but lacked the skills to make the morning worship the teaching moment for exposition of classical Reformed doctrine.

## Growing Resonance of Leadership and Member's Values

The new leadership implicitly believes that the church culture must resonate with the non-member in style, particularly in musical tastes, for the outsider to come. This assumption therefore implies a high value is placed upon marketing the church services and ministries to potential religious 'seekers'. At the same time, the philosophy of the leadership and the responsibilities of the members are continually stressed in the sermons. Such values were foreign to the former Red Hill and were resisted by former opinion leaders. But with the successful attraction of new members to the outward display of purposeful values, joining the church implies that this style and values underlying it find continual reinforcement. To join is to adhere at the level of the system and the values it enshrines.

In particular, the new culture has attempted among other things, to induce a particular value to do with the perception of leadership as a good. This is an attempt to consciously reverse the suspicion of leadership that had evolved under Clarie's dominating tenure. This was attempted again by structural methods. This involved the restructuring of the whole leadership and a step away from the traditional office bearers elders and deacons, to a governance board structure, a trustee role for lay leaders, like the Carver model found within secular not–for-profit organizations (Carver: 1998, 1999). This in turn requires the 'C.E.O.' of the organization, here the senior pastor, to be held accountability to various policies and quantitative results. Although David is "in two minds" about this process others are convinced that it is both necessary and possible to reframe ministry targets quantitatively (Len). This desire to measure and quantify the ministry is certainly a high value for the new members of the governance board. It included 'vital signs' determined by the pastor such as attendance figures, numbers of Baptisms, numbers of people involved in ministry, numbers in training courses and of course financial giving. This is a work in process.

> If David chooses to measure extra things, that's fine. He can do that but we are trying
>
> to get to the stage where the board says these are the things we want to see, once we do
>
> that we can then demand of David numeric goals for the next ministry year. (Len)

An assumption underlying such approaches is that in the normal state of affairs these statistical measures should be improving and that these will be the result of the effectiveness of the Senior Pastor as 'CEO' of this not-for-profit organization.

Such values of the pastor resonate with important segments of the population of the church, in particular the businessmen and self employed tradespersons that comprise a large segment of the membership who were particularly negative toward Russel Norris' disregard for numerical success preferring his value of doctrinal purity. For these people 'bottom lines' and growth focus is an every day reality. The pastor recognized that although there are a variety of values within the church, he made a conscious choice to affirm the values of the group that was both in the ascendency at the time and most likely to be able to become the foundation of a new church. Russel Norris had communicated a subtle assumption that those who "had money were unspiritual" (David).

Such values alienated these wealthier member and business-person who had resourced the ministries of the church but lost their incentive to do so in the light of this value. Consequently, there is now a strongly visible perspective that money is an essential resource to achieve the structural reforms required. This happens by both fund raising and cost cutting as in a corporate setting. All this culminates in the annual "Vision Dinner" which is directly calculated to raise membership giving. This is required to support the staff size required to sustain the membership skill base, so that the mission to progress in linear fashion. Pastor Ross related some of the cost saving measures that he put in place by the purchase of new

plant and equipment. He criticised the mentality of his predecessor who putting up with the constant repair bill on worn items. As a result, some of the wealthier members have again become very generous donors giving directly to the cost of replacement of aging plant and equipment. His unashamed reference to finances in messages and the vision dinner is a distinctive change from the previous pastorates.

### *Assumptions about Humanity*

This type of incident is not uncommon of late as the purposes and strategies of the church are made clear to all and fruit has begun to be produced in quantifiable terms. They also reveal the pastor's 'theory Y' understanding of human nature.

> You see I think people want to be challenged, I think people want to be committed. I think people want to serve and it's the leadership that is bucking it. You know, I think our problem is we tend to think people don't want to, we've got to push them, we've got to cajole them, we've got to shove them, but no! I think it's the other. We've got to lead them, open up the doors, open up the structure so they can do it. We've got to change our thinking. (David)

This optimistic mentality is what drives this pastor to make strategic choices as to the means by which cultural change is best achieved. He deliberately puts the long-term viability of the mission of the church ahead of general and inclusive individualistic pastoral considerations.

> But, I realised if people didn't see something happening I would lose a whole group of people, good folk who were waiting to see "Is it same old, same old or is something new going to happen?" And some people would say "Are you going to bow to the grey suits, so nothing is going to change here?" And so I had to weigh up who, … the

bottom line is you are going to lose somebody and you've got to decide who you are going to lose. I am sorry but that's just the way it is. So I can leave it as it is and keep the people who are happy with the way it is, who were probably complaining the most, or, I can change to win this other majority, who probably won't complain. They will just quietly leave. And so I decided which group I was going to lead. (David)

This 'cost-benefit' analysis is quite deliberate and assumes that there is no possibility that a consensus of values will be possible let alone a re-examination of underlying assumptions. The worshipper is viewed as a religious analogue to a consumer who has to have their basic demands met in the market of church services and programs. The changes are pragmatically justified in the light of the decisive perspective of the impact of appeasing the values that will enhance 'market share' rather than from deeper theological considerations. The obvious assumption again is that a successful church is a larger church. David claims that this consideration justified the changes of worship style to a 'contemporary' pattern. In other words, the culture change was predicted to occur by changing the composition of the membership rather than converting the existing members person by person, value by value. This attitude lies behind the many references from the pastors, staff and board-leaders as to the intention to clarify the mission, values and structure of the church, particularly ratifying the authority of the pastor in the key role of reengineering structural change.

### Assumptions Regarding Structure Induced Change

This section is interesting inasmuch as it shows the private thinking particularly of the present pastor that underlies the major thrusts of change in the church. This rational process of decision making regarding structure, mission values and objectives has primarily a

pragmatic justification in the mind of the pastor which in turn is justified by the church's evangelistic priorities.

> We're called to build the church and I've got to do whatever is necessary to build the church so that means leadership and that means change and really trying to develop the culture of change here, that change is here to stay. And the only thing that is sacred is our mission, all structure, everything can change. If it doesn't fit it changes. We've got to review and fine it. So I am saying this worship is great but that's not saying it will be the same three years from now, this year's ministry is great, it's the trying to get the difference between what I call form and function. So we've got to be clear on our function, what are we here for, the form can change to the function. So the function is 'worship' but the form can vary. (David)

A side-benefit of the process of defining the mission and values was that it screens out unwanted 'market diversity'. This includes people whose particular brand of orthodoxy would be detrimental to the fulfilment of the church purposes. The wide acceptance of this homogenizing strategy has been assisted by the lessons learned through the largely negative results from Russel Norris' attempt to set up the church upon an alien theological foundation and the influx of Presbyterian members that came during his brief pastorate (Sandra). Whether in leadership or membership, the 'Vision and Values' prevent the church culture being swamped with an outside influence that has little time for the contemporising purpose in the name of 'evangelism'. Likewise, Pastor Ross assumes structural engineering is a way of 're-freezing' the changes so as to prevent subversion by the former values.

> That's what we don't tend to put in, we don't change the structure so our old structure takes us back to whatever we ... If we don't change the structure the structure will bend us. If we don't straighten the back we might get a new body but the old will bend

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it back to where it was.  And so if you change the face you've got to change the structure to hold up that new face and I think that's what I have learnt and people, in an organization whether you like or not the church once you get over a couple of families is an organization and so you've got to start treating it as an organization.  I think that's the trouble.  We want relationship, but I am running an organization not just a family! And I think that's where we struggle we've got to realise we are running an organization and that needs to have structure, accountability lines and all that for it to run smoothly.  And then in the end that, people don't see that.  But they enjoy this as its running smoothly here. Members meetings are going well.  Deacons meetings are not long.  Ministry happens.  But underneath is 'organization'. (David)

It is striking to note that the struggle here is over a fundamental metaphor that can capture the essence of the church and its fundamental directions.  The pastor is quite conscious that the metaphor of organization is incompatible with the metaphor of family and that this change of identity is critical for mission achievement.  As suggested recently therefore the role of identity formation is a critical function of senior management.  This is a deliberate realization that there is a plurality of mental models within the church but a toleration of only one by the constructors of the new culture.  Organizational identity formation depends upon the effective garnering of power and legitimation of authority (Pratt and Foreman: 2000, 142f).  It is not surprising then either that this uniformalising process and the radical organizational alignment that goes with it is also legitimated by recourse to New Testament images of the charismata of leadership.  David Ross sees this as a corrective to the former ministry paradigm that over-emphasised teaching and pastoring but neglected that 'the gifts of administration and leadership are also needed by the body, lest it become 'a caring blob' and 'suffer structural collapse' (David).

There is a constant appeal to logic over emotion through much of this type of material. Since the church endorsed the fundamental direction of the church which implied their becoming a large regional one, the shift to a church 'management by objectives' and 'policy governance' approaches follow as a matter of necessity. Along with this is an implicit structural assumption that requires the Senior Pastor to be given the rights of a general manager in being able to enforce compliance. Critical in David Ross' thinking is that to run a church as an effective organization, the senior pastor must have sufficient political power to align the organization with its espoused values. Realistically he expects dissent in the face of such a culture change, but assumes that consensus in the political forum of the church planning meetings terminates the legitimacy of dissent! Such was the case with the subjugation of the role of the Brigades leader under the youth pastor. But this is not about the desire to accumulate power for himself or his staff. It is believed to be an objective necessity for the role of administrating the church and moving it in coherent forward directions. The implication of a dispassionate application of this mandate is breathtaking in its simplicity.

There will be some who stand up against you, in the end we have set an organisational structure, we have put somebody in authority and they were not willing to play ball. So are we a team or are we individuals, are we committed to the mission or are we not? And the church has voted in the board and the church has voted in these leaders and this person is not willing to work at least reasonably with that or co-operate with those leaders. … And I guess as a leader what I am trying to say is no this is not a personal issue with me. I've got to say what is good for the church and I have had to force myself "What's the mission, vision and values?" "What's good for the church, not what's good for me?" "What's good for the church long term?" And so is this behaviour. If I allow this behaviour to keep happening in this leader is that good for the church? If I allow this anti feeling is that good for the church? If I allow this

gossip to keep going is that good for the church. And I guess to try and make decisions on that basis because it [resistance] will come from people. (David)

The same logic in a higher key can be seen to come from the long-term leaders too.

Structure brings stability and morale improves. Refine them, which is just a continuous improvement type process. In this case we're sort of adopted the direction, the organization, cash, tracking, overall evaluation and refinement. In implementing that the first cab off the rank obviously is 'direction'. We've had senior pastors in the past promote certain mission and vision type statements. Clarie certainly was a directional leader. He had his idea of where he was going. I would be confident that if you asked anyone on the diaconate at that stage "What's the direction of this church?" you would've got very diverse answers. He would've had the idea but nobody else would've understood and owned what he would've said. Some of them might have had similarities but there would be a diversity. Doug had his ideas and mission statement but no one owned them really. Then David's come on board. ... So they are actually documented. They are agreed. They are written into our handbook. They are there. We can change them if we want. ... So it's stabilised I guess the culture of the organization. (Len)

The pastor is not so naïve as to expect that the political shift implied that the culture would change immediately. A time factor is expected. But a strict adherence to the principles and processes would eventually align the whole organization and generate across the board efficiencies. This uniformity would provide the stability that in turn would provide a platform for firmer commitment from the member.

Oh yeah, the way you do ministry from the top affects how everybody else does it; how the youth ministry has a structure, so it just flows down, so we are expecting all leaders to lead the same, … evaluation, refinement and then set goals and set their plans for the next year. Now it's not happening everywhere. But it's a huge change. I'm the new guy on the block, it's only been 3 ½ years, it's different to starting a new church and everybody comes in is on board. You are actually 'turning the ship around'. (David)

It is assumed that a strong culture is good for the church in all circumstances and would necessarily lead to effective fulfilment of purposes. A strong emphasis on specifying mission, vision and especially upon values has had at least a dual role. On the one hand it tended to liberate positive forces for change in its own right. Morale was sparked up as a result of identifying their mission in the light of God's cosmic scheme. But then also the articulation of vision and values provides the 'interpretive schemes' through which the actions of members in the congregation may be interpreted by the 'dominant elites' here, the leadership team. They have the privileged interpretation as they also possess the capacity to develop congruence between their interpretation and the structural form of the church (Hinnings, et al: 1996, 903). This congruence also includes the deliberate process for the socialization of new members.

### Level of Change: Development vs. Transformation

At the level of cultural assumptions we can see then that the metaphors used to express these rationales are discordant with the notions of family and pastoral care are mechanistic in nature. We should not be too hasty though in seeing these as imported into the church culture by the pastor. A number of people made comments to the effect that the notion of defining mission and setting directions had been attempted in the past and that in many ways the

church now was ending up on a trajectory that began around the era of Pastor Clarie's departure. In the past the leaders knew they needed role descriptions but found these issues too difficult to deal with and they languished between meetings (Len.) The new handbook outlining the structure came into effect seven years and one week from the meeting that resulted in the departure of Clarie Friedman during which a draft of missional goals was begun in earnest. It is as if the present pastor has had the strategic 'know-how' to bring these issues into the heart of the political structures of the church if not the heart of the culture itself. In this sense the type of change that has occurred could be viewed more as a first order 'developmental' rather than second order 'transformational' one for this sub group, if not for other devotees of Clarie's ministry.

> He's built on sort of what has happened and crises have happened. But the church has always been heading in that direction if that makes sense. Now I don't know whether that's just because of the people that we have had or I guess God has had his hand in it there somewhere pushing us along. But I would say that we've been building to this for a while and I am hoping that will build further from there. (Len)

The discussion between the deacons and elders after Clarie's surprise resignation set a new trajectory for the church. The leadership had to define some directions prior to appointing Doug. Clarification of values is seen as a means of clarification of boundaries and an automatic culture change mechanism. These viewpoints then imply that if there were any alien values they were those enshrined particularly in the interim period of Russel Norris' ministry and reinforced by the influx of those whose connection with the church was only at the level of a shared Reformed dogmatic perspective with Russell. Likewise before him, it would imply that Clarie had stifled the expression of these values and assumptions due to his personal style and strong control agenda.

However, others would see that there has been a definitive cultural change that has occurred at a rapid rate and is of a more 'transformational type' as there has been 'a total culture change' (Larry). It would certainly appear that a segment of those who have left over stylistic differences did so out of a sense that the changes in worship and processes signified a change to values or assumptions that were incompatible with the past. Also, the fact that the church in the mind of the pastor is to be constructed upon the mental model of an organization rather than a family would certainly be felt as a discernable climate change. In terms of the balance of values and the actual people who choose to attend rather than leave, there has been a homogenizing of the values base that underlies the culture as a result of the deliberate surfacing and tying down of the values and mission of the church. This would lead one to conclude that this church has undergone a transformational rather than developmental change. The fact was that until David Ross came the notions of a well-managed organization may have been the view of some of the leaders but they neither had the will or perhaps the capacity to strategically disseminate these values pervasively through the church. A change of pastorate and a crisis of despondency provided the opportunity for the political framework to be in place so that this constellation of values could gain supremacy.

### Integration of Assumptions and Spirituality

Intricately tied up with these values is a set of subtle assumptions concerning the role of God behind such issues. A certain inference repeatedly arose as members made value statements in favour of the new pastor. The discerning of the voice or will of God constantly came in connection with making organizational or structural adjustments of the churches internal systems. For instance the introduction of organizational objectives and governance structures are justified theologically even if after the fact, as a form of natural theology.

I believe the Old Testament concept is all of life is spiritual and all truth is God's truth and if it is truth it is truth no matter who discovers it or where it is used and if someone who is not a believer discovers a truth and uses it he discovers the law of aerodynamics it doesn't really matter whether he is an atheist or not that's the law created by God and if he gets in line with that law he will enjoy flight and I can as a believer say that law is not true and never enjoy flight. (David)

Others have an even more direct sense of encounter with God. The former administrator and the former visitation pastor in Clarie's era both are supportive of the cultural change and related stories of how they discerned God's hand in the very process of coming to a consensus on values. It was noticeable also that at these points as with the pastor, Len became visibly emotional, to the point of tears, at the time of recounting these experiences. Likewise, the pastor himself became visibly emotional at the recollection of the recent generosity of the congregation in their financial commitments. Similarly, Len Griffiths, was moved to tears at the recollection of God's provision of a consultant to lead the leadership through the new governance structure. Len recounted a moment of illumination dawning upon him while on his morning walk during a period in which the leadership had run out of ideas as to what form of leadership governance structure would suit their needs. "If I learnt anything from this I think in a sense God wants you there because then he can work." (Len) The feelings of frustration were all a part of a sovereign over-ruling.

Similarly, the very process of rational consensual decision making at the retreat for the leaders of ministry had a sense of God's enabling presence. A long list of possible mission goals had been compiled.

We were struggling with our mission statement and someone said "Well lets break for a while and then we will come back. We broke and then we came back and prayed. And then it just fell into place. So I believe it was from God. And I think that for any church, that is significant because if you know it has come from God and not just a whole lot of people getting together to think up their own ideas. You know you are going in the right direction. (Cyril)

With such a sense of 'confirmation' he strove more clearly to move the pastor to investigate a 'Carver consultant' to help shape the new structure of governance. The fact that the consultant came through a different more affordable organization, a major cost saving, was confirmation of God's hand in directing the church in this structural direction. In summary, although a rational pragmatic floods the many references to structural renewal rationales, this is not assumed to be the work of human initiative alone. The presence of God is integral to the change process through these very ideas and ideals and supplies a sense of righteousness to all the efforts to induce change. In short, this would indicate that spirituality is the servant of prior strategic and organizational assumptions rather than the converse.

### *Cultural Dynamics: Connections between Artefacts & Assumptions*

One characteristic of the present pastorate is that there has been an abundance of artefacts generated from within the culture with the intention of conveying and reinforcing the new culture of the successful, missional, leader led, organizational church. This has begun in minor areas such as the insistence by David Ross on staff dress codes, the replacement of malfunctioning office equipment, the hosts at the services including their colour coordinated T shirts, the total refurbishment of the foyer including a series of striking displays from the recent Vision Dinner, itself a new feature of church culture and faith. Even the average

committed member is encouraged to carry a personalized greeting card to give to friends and acquaintances. The church handbook is an exhaustive account of the production process of the mission, values, vision and so forth.

The pastor intentionally sees these straightforwardly and humanly as a positive reinforcement of the culture, seeing the committed use of the humanly constructed artefacts as directly symbolic of a commitment to the divine mission. As already mentioned, the pastor expects the focus sheets that have to be filled in by ministry leaders as a key way to sustain continuous organizational improvement.

The pastor also believes that the new governance structure is something that will instil a healthier climate of trust within this culture that was notable for its level of suspicion. As noted earlier, the degree of change that he envisaged required this change of structure primarily to give him the legal authority to direct the changes and restructuring. The options were clear to him; "work for the leaders as an employee", or, be the leader of the organization himself. Although congregationalism may have been tacitly valued, he was ensuring that it could not be used as an impediment for structural change. His options were either to be like his forebear Clarie, to be a coercive power broker within the congregational system, or, if not, he would need a mandate which would empower him for making and enshrining structural change that empowered him. The alternatives are expressed in a black and white rationale.

> The bottom line is Do we believe in the gift of leadership? And that's probably where
> Carver comes in, the concept of Carver is, well we started off with what we call the
> 'Circle of Empowerment' which was more the members role is to empower the board.
> The board's role is to empower the senior pastor and the senior pastor empowers his

Staff.  The staff empowers the ministers which we see as every member and minister and then again the members empower the board.  So it's a process of empowerment, an upward spiral.  And so there needs to be a trust level and then the leaders also need to prove that trust too so they are given more trust.  So it's a growth of trust over a period of time.  (David)

However, as an artefact of the changing culture, for some at least, it represents a secularisation of the churches politics, a governing by policy and systems rather than pastoral interaction with the whole body.  There are still those for whom the artefact does not symbolize their particular core values.

I think David's primary mindset to situations which are social situations tends to be a 'problem solving' rather than the 'put myself in the other people shoes'.  So his first reaction is "Okay, according to our system, people are complaining, … not enough community.  We need a small group pastor to run small groups."  And I would agree with a lot of those strategies.  I think they work.  But there is a personal element that just has not materialized. (Neville)

The various artefacts in the new era typify every aspect of the new cultural realities. The attitudes toward the artefacts are related to the attitudes that people have toward the new values.  It is therefore difficult to separate these out from citations that reveal the core values and assumptions of the various groups.  Those who resist the new directions resist the imposition of new structures, record systems, goal setting along with the forms of worship designed to allure the unchurched.   The leadership believes that many of these forms should not be issues if people agree about the underlying purposes of the church.  Forms are dispensable, but necessary if the functions of the mission are to be activated successfully (David).

However artefacts still have to go through the 'retroactive symbolization process' (Hatch: 1993, 666) whereby the recipients interpret and selectively interpret symbolic significance to these forms, symbols that are not in control of the makers. Some of these new forms were interpreted in ways that were never intended by the leadership. There is an ambiguity in the interpretation of the 'Vision Dinner' concept. Here again, the member turns out to the event, a catered three course meal, professionally developed visual production and pays twenty dollars to hear the pastor recall the high points of the previous twelve months and the goals of the next period. The opportunity to show one's commitment is provided in financial pledge slips. Some have 'found them a bit mercenary' but 'anyone in business would have such figures available' (Len).

> Unfortunately again the more traditional people I think sort of look at as "Okay this is
> the time that David's got his hand out. David, as the pastor has his hand out again!"
> sort of stuff. I think some people feel we're a little too … 'corporate'. (Len)

This artefact that is intentionally inspirational is paradoxically confirmation to others that essential core values are being lost in the transition.

## *Cultural Change Strategy*

There are quite a few conflicting indicators of the means by which the culture has been changed by the recent agents. David's approach that begins the process is akin to Bate's 'conciliative' approach (Bate:1996, 181f). This is also consistent with the traditional Baptist process of consensus making and is perhaps therefore constraining his options at the point of culture entry. Some initially accepted the legitimacy of this early foundation work yet have

misgivings later.  Such work means that 'it became so much easier then to make decisions' rather than be at the whim of competing 'agendas' (Cyril).

The implication of this approach at this stage is a perceived lack of power on the part of the pastor and that this is actually a means of reduction of resistance and a means of ensuring some form of cultural continuity.  The process certainly from these times does match Bate's description of a "simultaneous construction and deconstruction", of "getting new brickwork up before taking the scaffolding down" (Bate: 1996: 183).

There is also evidence of an 'indoctrinative' or 'educative' approach (Bate: 1996, 192).  There is an attempt as has been shown in the review processes to instigate a uniform way of thinking throughout the church organization.  The act of writing mission and value statements and enshrining them in a handbook is an attempt to exert the dominance of 'one world view over the rest' and the hope is that with the unstated "meta direction", the actual direction of the church will result in new processes and performance.  Every new member is given an introductory course where these values are made clear.  This approach did not bring forth an automatic acceptance of the new directions.

For David Ross the key locus for the indoctrinate process was in the minds of the leaders.  Education is the key to a changing perspective that would then be expected to permeate the whole organization via the political mandate.  Leaders themselves commented on the pastor's continual insistence on reading leadership material and attendance at conferences (Len, Cyril).

But at the point of resistance from some of the ministry leaders such as the craft and brigades groups, the political mandate from the church's adoption of the values and mission

statement results in a switch to some aspects that resemble his 'aggressive' approach. The very fact that the pastor has set the church structures up to measure progress towards the decided goals indicates that the purpose would not be 'conciliative' as they do have an historic mission to perform (Bate: 1996, 181). This is not so much that the pastor did not want people to think for themselves. But once there was a consensus the time for thinking was over. Resistance could justifiably be handled coercively. This coercion takes the form of the democratic backing of the directions passed. We see here the fact that rational evaluation and consensus-based change can be as coercive as hierarchical direction. The focus shifted patently to organizational alignment with the espoused directions of those committed enough to attend the initial values clarification meetings. The test case was the confrontation with the Brigades who were out of step both with the new procedures. Members describe this as a "showdown" (Natalie). After the best part of a year of explaining the requirements and waiting for changes the leadership 'grasped the nettle' of removing their endorsement of these persons as ministry leaders (Gary). The upshot was the vindictive backlash orchestrated by the main leader Elsie Crocket. This was a critical moment for the process of change. David himself recollects that he felt that the whole process of change to the regional model and all that involved structurally would be undone if they weakened at that point.

> You live with it for the rest of your life. It is sort of like Joshua going to the promised land and he made a compromise with a couple of tribes and they were a thorn in their flesh for the rest of the time, and so that was a fairly crucial and it tends to come from the most difficult [people]. (David)

There is a strong resonance here with the 'aggressive approach' pushed as far as the congregational form of the church permitted.

The ultimate ambition of such an approach is to establish a strong integrated culture in which there exists a single source of authority and a single focus of loyalty-a form of cultural hegemony. (Bate: 1996, 173).

As Bate predicted, the reaction and segmentation that followed, were to be expected. The purpose of the process was not to be oppressive but to jolt the church organization back into a fruitful growth phase. It is clear also that the pastor and leaders could distinguish between types of factions that their uniformitarian approach was creating. Those who refused the structuring of ministry and who engaged in unethical corrosive communication were met with strong symbolic force of a demotion. Those affected told others they "had been sacked" (Shane, Natalie). Their exit reinforced the caricature of the pastors and leaders as business like and non-pastoral. But those who represented merely an 'orthogonal' faction (Bate: 1996, 175), who believed in the dominant culture but retained their own separate values, were granted a certain leniency. This can be seen in this description of the issue of worship style in which long-standing members were given their own service.

It was the purpose. Okay so in the end I said "Our purpose is to reach everybody and if you're not happy about this service you're are not going to invite, lets design a service that you're passionate about. … And there was a big push about having a sort of compromise. I said "Compromise is only good for insiders you know. (David)

Paradoxically, the church's drive to pursue contemporary mission was being subverted by an over zealous application of the strategy of appeasing majority tastes. However for the pastor this was not so much a compromise as an application of the deeper value of reaching 'the outsider'. This is not a return to a 'conciliative' approach as the term 'insiders' reveals where the boundary of conciliation ends. This implies recognition that the culture, which had been

established two years after the major structural change, was now secure and not threatened by such formal variations. Likewise in the message 'Preparing to Cross the Jordan' from late 2003, the pastor's self identification with the Biblical figure of Joshua and the need for the people of God to support him and 'his leaders' has a definite ring not only of a heroic characterization, but of the 'messianic' (Bate: 1996, 177). This is not a leader who wants to change the status quo for mere self-satisfying motives but that the church is portrayed analogously as poised precariously at the boundary of God's "promised land". The successful negotiation of change and fund raising to make it a reality is a mission assigned by God, no less.

## Schneider Cultural Type

There is sufficient data to suggest that for all the congregational governance and lack of specific explicit direction of the time, the Clarie Friedman era postured the church as a collaboration culture. That is along Schneider's domains, there was not an emphasis of changing the church nor of developing the potentials within it so much as preserving the distinctives of its values and mentality through extensive personal contact of the pastor and his wife. It was an "actuality-personal" culture (Schneider: 1994, 117). The pastor was focused upon the immediate, real and pastoral matters. Judgements as to what was needed tended to be ad hoc and dynamic. Relationships between the leader, the deacons and the church member were paramount.

We can see here though that for all the display of personal attention, this does not ensure that the culture was caring. Underlying this "actuality-personality" plot is an intentionally controlling dis-empowerment. Authority for ministry is entirely conditional on compliance with the pastor's whims and spiritual foibles. Debate and dissent are pushed to the margins by a pastor that lectures his leaders and pursues deviants beyond the church

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boundaries. The diversity and synergy that should typify such a culture (Schneider: 1994, 118) certainly are missing here. Under a 'cover story' of congregational participation lie clear elements of control. This story demonstrates the inadequacy of thinking cultural climate can be totally grasped by constitutional structures.

And yet this period does not present every key ingredient of the 'actuality-impersonal' or 'control' culture. While discipline and defensiveness are present (Schneider: 1994, 116) there is neither the expected sense of task orientation nor a clear statement of rules to which the members must conform. The 'rules of engagement' were stored within Clarie's mind and were discovered by the unwary at accidental points of violation. There is little systematic articulation of goals. This is surely an advance signal that the ethical and psychological dimensions of culture are not ensured by its cultural type. Collaboration happens at a variety of levels and for a multiplicity of motives, including fear and dependency. Cultural patterns are serving deeper masters than the forgotten historical sources of familiar habits.

Secondly, the culture that persists into the next two pastorates, or Doug Walker and the interim 'team leadership' of Russell Norris, is not so much the 'cover story' but the oppressive, secretive and self interested elements underlying it. Doug finds himself outflanked by Russell's personal ministry and high contact with the membership, a continuation in the mode of Clarie, as much as his ideological commitments and theologically articulate presence.

Likewise, a straightforward classification of the present pastorate is also not a simple matter. The pastor bases the support he has from the leadership on his measurable "results" as would be the case were the culture a 'competence' type. This could easily be wrongly caricatured as a 'control' culture as he is not evaluated in terms of his intrinsic personal value.

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The concern for objectifying measurements and evaluation benchmarks are typical of a management style aiming to keep the culture from diffusing or regressing away from the central growth purposes typical of a bureaucratic culture. By the same token, there are strong strains in the pastor's own attitudes revealing the 'possibility-impersonal' or 'competence' culture through an attempt to create a church with a 'best practice' approach to systematized ministry. 'Excellence' and 'success' are regular ideals that have seen the artefacts around the office and church plant develop significantly. Colourful banners adorn the foyer spelling out the major departments and functions of the culture. Impressively dressed ushers assist the worshipper at all services to find a seat, the coffee shop or crèche. A distinct shift in values may be seen from those associated with 'personal-actuality' culture periods to the present. As noted above, office staff had been appointed to help out members in financial difficulty or with pastoral needs.

> I turned up to the office and there's a lady playing solitaire on the computer all day and I'm thinking they've all got issues and problems. So some of those people left the church later, we tried to do it nicely and little by little. … I realised that these people are here for their needs, not for the church's needs. The church needs an efficient organization at certain things. And so what I did was I put on two secretaries and in the end one realised that the other, they couldn't be even … because I didn't know which was best. And slowly one rose to the occasion who is now my administrative pastor. (David)

In the past year, the pastor in charge of worship, a son of long term significant members and deacons, although significantly competent as a musician and aware of technological issues in production, has been 'encouraged to move on' into his own performance career due to his lack of ability in managerial areas to do with following through on planning and developing

the team under him.  Therefore, both at different phases in the renewal of the culture and at various levels of the organization, distinct cultures and leadership approaches are at work. Therefore, it follows that there are different perceptions and characterizations of this leadership depending on the vantage point of the subject within the culture.

Statements from the pastor such as this one would tend to indicate that the motivations of Pastor Ross have much to do with bringing the congregation to its full potential through a systematic generation of a greater density of leadership capacity across all the ministries.

> The reality is you'll always need a leader.  I am now totally convinced everything rises and falls on leadership.  Whether you like it or not, you can fight it or not, everything rises and falls on leadership; every ministry, every church.  And we've got to recruit and train leaders so that's why the first line on every position focus sheet of every pastor in the church is recruit, train and motivate lay ministers for your area.  (David)

While the culture has the appearance at the surface in the membership level of being a cultivation culture, this reference would also tend to confirm the 'impersonality' aspect in that the leadership is not valued in and of itself, but as a resource for the development and renewal of the congregation as an effective organization achieving organizational ends.  No doubt therefore the culture of Red Hill has "an intense and high-strung ethos" (Schneider: 1994, 119) where the advancement toward potential achievement is measured in quantitative and detached objective verification particularly to do with financial position.  If this succeeds in the long term, the congregation would become not so much a lively community as living verification of the church management 'best practice'; a strong 'competence' culture ideal.

Since the power issues were resolved, the pastor and current leadership team share the outlook of a 'possibility' culture as they all have a forward looking focus.  Positively inclined

members also notice that relationships are important at the level of the staff and governance board, even if not as apparent to the average member. Again, a simple stereotyping of the culture is not possible.

> I think that we are very fortunate in that our board is very forward thinking. It's not just a group of older people who sort of are looking after the church that we've got. They are a group of people who are forward looking and sort of looking at what we could be. … I sort of had in my mind before that David was sort of *the* leader. And he would sort of 'rule the roost' and the board. I was quite surprised that something came up … and they basically said "No David. You can't do that you know." And that was it. And I thought Ooh!" … Yeah, they are all friends in that too, there wasn't an argument about it. It was just taken "No that's not the way we want to go". … It is not like a boys club or anything like that. As far as I could see all the people on the board were very forward thinking, had the church's future direction at heart, not for themselves. (Sandra)

Being 'possibility' focussed in the sense of Schneider's future orientation variable, does not demand a hierarchical structuring of power relationships but can coexist with a real team climate where people are heard and valued as whole beings rather than just as resources for the organization. It is easy for the mind to confuse the variable of 'possibility' with 'impersonality'. And it is quite possible that some of the reaction against the directions in which David Ross has taken the church could be a result of the sense of culture change being misinterpreted as the later. This situation demonstrates the distinction between them.

## A Narrative of Cultural Change

As a narrative Red Hill Regional church most likely moves through three major phases since the halcyon days of Pastor Clarie Friedman.

(i) *Strong Control Culture:* Although Clarie maintained a strong evangelistic emphasis and interpersonal contact, the church functioned at its best when Clarie's perspectives remained unchallenged. This was a 'family' or patriarchy church in Becker's terms.

(ii) *Weak Control Culture:* The intervening period of Russell Norris ministry saw similar means employed to produce a doctrinal uniformity through a high emphasis on pastoral contact and waiting prayer. The fact that many left during this period shows that these highly cognitive values were not shared or effective in building a coherent culture.

(iii) *Weak Collaboration Culture:* Initially as Rev. Ross arrives, he activates the political legitimation process of the church to clarify directions and key leadership jurisdictions. Not all however are committed to the collaborative process as it threatens the control they presently exert through interpersonal means.

(iv) *Strong Competence Culture:* Through boundary maintenance, goal setting and continuous improvement mentality the leadership attempts to build a regional church, particularly one that appeals to the typical young adult and family from the area, but not necessarily to a range of current church members, particularly those from non evangelistic church backgrounds. At last the church membership appears to resonate with the challenges that are implicitly part of the 'competence' culture response.

## Conclusion: The Promise of an Organizational Culture Perspective

The cultural lens identifies the most vital aspects of a shared social experience inside a particular church.  It is necessarily an abstraction from the complexity of reality, supplying a static set of 'snapshots' at particular points in time rather than capturing the fluidity of changing community realities.   The culture lens does not detect the degree of emotionality associated with conflicts surrounding cultural changes either in the period of intra cultural conflicts or in the establishment of a new culture.   This highlights the need for a psychodynamic perspective to supplement the objectifying rationality that characterises this framework.

The cultural lens does enable one to note connections and correlations between the beliefs, values, assumptions and the behaviours of the group and to assess the strength of the culture on the basis of narrative style data.  Above all the lens enables a reader of church narratives to make comparisons between these unique cultures without being swamped by the intricacies of the various plots.  These comparisons then can operate as the source for useful theoretical proposals.

There are some striking features nonetheless that stand out across these stories. Firstly, wherever there is a positive cultural change in terms of some combination of numerical growth, rising morale or cessation of conflict, there is an associated change at the symbolic level of the culture.  This is most evident in four areas these being the style of and emphasis placed upon worship, the emotional tone of church business meetings and board meetings of office bearers, the physical condition and size of the worship premises, and the production of handbooks, constitutions and church promotional advertising.

To be able to affect all these is indeed to have changed from one situation to another more positive in terms of growth and mission fulfilment. While these are also issues over which much tension, suspicion and conflict rages, the resulting change in these four factors is indicative of the fact of change rather than a direct cause of culture change itself. They are ways in which the change is 'frozen' in place deliberately as well as indicators of a new preferable equilibrium of those presently in leadership. Changes in the worship both provoke change by exacerbating conflict in all but Carinia downs as well as indicating a shift in power of the new elites.

If one asks what exactly is the nature of the change, or what its agents actually affect, then one firstly notices that these instances were just as likely to be of developmental as of a transformational order of changes. That is to say, it would appear to be truer to the experience of these participants that the change removed alien or oppressive contradictions of the values and assumptions of the people as much as it is a conversion to, or introduction of new elements. The following table presents the opportunity for comparison across the churches. Our two churches that were not expounded above are included below by way of comparison.

| 1. Church and Main Plot. | 2. Leader Relationship To Decline Period | 3. Leader Relationship To Renewal Period | 4. Bates Change Agency Type | 5. Schneider Culture type Decline Period | 6. Schneider Culture type Renewal Period | 7. Emerging Culture type & Strength | 8. Order of Change | 9. Intentional Cultural Vision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Carinia Downs: Missional Pastor, Unleashes Compassion | Null | Catalytic | Conciliative & Educative | Weak Control<br><br>House of Worship | Strong Collaboration<br><br>- | (Cultivation recognized)<br><br>'Leader Church' | Developmental In Expressive Sense | Pluri-culture<br><br>'Leader Church' |
| Ivy Street: Coercive Tradition meets Stubborn Liberator | Determinative | Determinative | Conciliative, then Aggressive | Strong Control<br><br>Leader Church | Collaboration<br><br>– | Cultivation<br><br>Community | Transformational | Pluri-Culture<br><br>(Leader Church) |
| Red Hill: Dominated Family now Managed Organization | Determinative | Catalytic Then Determinative | Conciliative, Aggressive then Educative | Strong Control<br><br>Family | Collaboration To Weak Competence<br><br>Family | Competence<br><br>Leader | Transformational | Uni-Culture<br><br>Leader |
| Petersham: Cognitive Control to Empowering Encounter | Determinative | Catalytic | Conciliative & Educative | (Strong) Weak Control<br><br>('Community') | Strong Collaboration<br><br>- | Cultivation,<br><br>(Leader) | Developmental In Expressive Sense | Uni-culture<br><br>(Leader) |
| Forrest Hills: Imported Polarity over charismatic movement to Reconciled Consensus | Null | Catalytic | Conciliative (Aggressive) Educative | Weak Control<br><br>Mixed Church | Strong Collaboration<br><br>- | Collaboration<br><br>Mixed Church | Developmental in Formative sense. | Pluri-culture |

This table admittedly pushes the data into discrete categories which obscures somewhat the complexity that is the culture of each church. Nevertheless, it allows one to notice correlations between cultural change phenomenon that otherwise could be lost in the details and thereby form the basis of the generation of some theories.

Firstly, beginning with column's two and three, I have introduced four categories to distinguish between the cultural change role played by the outlook of the main protagonist in change, usually the new senior pastor. The co-relationship between pastor's ideology, vision and values and the order of change can feasibly be one of four types. These relationships can be distinguished in the following ways. They are:

(a) *'Reinforcing':* If the new change agents' values or outlook is actually induced by, or, strengthened by the culture change happening around them rather than the other way around. The pastor assists the solidification of the culture by reinforcing shared viewpoints and values already emerging in the current within the culture.

(b) *'Null'*: There is no appreciable connection between the change agents' vision or values and the structure of the culture, or, if there were no discernable theological convictions articulated by either party as to assume there was any such connection.

(c) *'Catalytic':* The perspective and values of the change agents' prompt, or, trigger the incorporation of new values, structures or symbols, which revitalize the existing culture, though not necessarily in total accordance with the agent's personal vision and values, and

(d) *'Determinative'*: The beliefs of the change agents appear to determine the actual patterns of interaction and structures within the culture, transforming it in an appreciable way.

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The stories shared show that the perspectives of the pastor, their theology and core values have a pronounced affect upon the culture that develops in the renewal period of a church life. They are at least catalytic if not in fact shared by the people and able to be articulated in a cohesive ideology. All the significant agents of change who were shown to be responsible for changing the power arrangements and the structures within the particular church, were able to articulate some theological justification for their ministry that had a direct bearing on the directions in which the changes proceeded. The more 'determinative' the ideology underlying the inherited culture, the stronger the change agent's theology or ideology needed to be to determine the direction of the church. At the same time where the impact of a pastor is catalytic, one also finds a groundswell of opinion already moving in that direction as was the case at Carinia Downs,[1] and at Red Hill where the businessmen in the church were longing for a managerial approach to ministry. In such cases the Senior Pastor's role is still critical for inducing both the occasions and means by which those forces for change could be amplified into surface expressions.

There is a strong theme in all but Ivy Street of a concerted attempt by the pastors at some stage in the change process to induce such change at a more pervasive level within the church through 'educative' processes, whether that be via their preaching strength as in Carinia Downs and especially in Red Hill, or, through a systematized induction process for new members as with Forrest Hills, Petersham and also Red Hill. Ivy Street is different in this respect that the pastor's own pastoral and preaching strengths have been sufficient to induce change through inducing an influx of many people into the church who share the tastes and preferences in the style of the church and its worship. But no evidence was produced that he had in some way articulated into the culture a clear theological vision that was informing

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[1] At Petersham, new members of the Diaconate had begun a process of redrafting the church constitution to bring it into line with usual Baptist congregational polity.

his agenda apart from a resistance toward dehumanising aspects within the status quo and an emphasis on grace and acceptance of others. This could be due to the fact that as broadly evangelical churches these communities traditionally have a high view of the preaching ministry. We note in that case that at Red Hill this ministry was even coopted for the purpose of apologizing for the culture change process itself in the keynote sermon to do with the 'death of Moses' or his functional equivalent, Clarie Friedman.

As regards column 4 and the type of change agency then, it can be seen that the common assumption, namely, that effective change requires confrontation to ensure uniformity, is too simplistic.[2]  If this is taken into consideration, then it can be said that effective change in these churches can be delivered without the recourse to aggressive tactics when there is not a strong cohesive ideology undergirding the values, assumptions and surface structures.  Some degree of aggression was only required when the preceding cultural configuration was determined by the ideology and values of existing leaders.   Their resistance was delivered in a way that explicitly aimed to undermine the change process fundamentally at Ivy Street and Red Hill.

In column 5 we can discern the phenomenon that these churches in decline were all located in the vicinity of a 'control' culture whether 'strongly' entrenched or weakened by new unmanageable sections of the culture.   The combination of 'actuality' and 'impersonality' has no power to withstand a drift from the churches in either energy or membership.  Not surprisingly the weak Control culture correlates with the lack of clarity or

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[2] In Petersham the major aggressive aspects of the change agency were delivered to the church in a conflict and decline period via the intervention of the denominational superintendent and the former pastor's negative review that resulted in the pastors eventual resignation. The culture while still being a 'control' type had been also weakened through the changing composition of the church, from a rural to semi rural to urban congregation. The influx of new faces and simultaneous departure of supporters of the pastor resulted in a change of personnel not a personal change.  The change agent pastor has to contend with those opportunistic leaders who saw the pastoral vacancy as their moment for ascendency, rather than resistance from the old culture.

the churches core values and assumptions during that decline period. The strong cultures are those uniform cultures, which are structurally aligned with their ideological heartbeat.

In harmony with this suggestion is the fact that an aggressive approach to change is associated with the combination of strong control or 'actuality-impersonality' culture type, and where the leadership ideological position is determinative of the culture. [3] All other major personnel issues were resolved in a conciliative, interpersonal manner, and former offending persons also reinstated to particular leadership roles.

In moving to column 6, a new culture emerges in each church, none of which are 'control' cultures. The cultural features of 'impersonality' mixed with 'actuality' do not have any association with renewal as Bate forecasted (Bate, 1996: 88f) but can only entrench decline. Culture is an inherently conserving phenomenon, strong culture even more so. It is remarkable then, that most of these cultures initially made great strides toward change through moving into a 'Collaborative' framework. The means of change then is also the destination of the change itself! This may, as with the case of Petersham, be submerged under a concerted conscious attempt to refound the church upon 'Baptist' or, congregational governance principles. But this is certainly not the case at Red Hill[4]. The new leadership there was determined to remove some of the key congregational structures, markers traditionally associated with Baptist life. Ultimately however, in each case there is a shift toward the 'personal' domain in culture type, shown in encouraging an expression of talents at

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[3] Forrest Hills looks like an exception, in that well beyond the initial change process the new change agent Pastor had to confront a couple of individuals about their uncharitable attitudes within ministry that were having a counterproductive impact. This strong action resulted in the removal of these leaders from their ministry. However such action was criticised by the other leaders despite their agreement with the outcome, as it is out of kilter with the 'conciliative' culture and the inclusive mood of acceptance that had become a core value.

[4] Nor was this the case at Forrest Hills where their leadership was much more enamoured with the power over structures from the charismatic movements with whom they had always identified rather than Baptist congregationalism.

Carinia, congregational discernment processes at Petersham, reconciling dialogue at Forrest Hills, and the fostering of familial warmth and acceptance at Ivy Street.

However, if one moves across to column 7, one can see that 'collaborative' mood alone does not seem to sustain the valued aspects of the new culture and a 'possibility' dimension has to be added to structure the change. This would appear to be the case in all situations even Red Hill where, as the church has grown to accept the 'impersonality' aspect of the culture, the very governance structure of the church attempts to reinforce this unambiguously. The church becomes firstly a financial support base for professional ministry then a body in ministry itself. Here the 'personality' domain is subverted and supplanted by systemic processes which intentionally distance the pastor from the member and enshrine him as a manager of more quantifiable outputs. It will be interesting to see if the church can satisfy the personality aspect through the systematic proliferation of small groups alone. The distinct sense is that some of the agents' aggressiveness in bringing about the change is now enshrined in an emphasis on 'competence', developing an excellent organization, rather than cultivating the potential within the people as would be the case in a 'cultivation' culture. The difference between these cultures is in definition of the member as at least one of the valued ends of the church, in and of themselves, or, as the necessary means to the end of the organization; the dream of becoming a successful regional church, their 'Jordan River' crossing. The other churches would tend to put the lie to the assumption that impersonality is necessary for the sustenance of significant change. However, dramatic change does appear to require a focus upon new content: the future state of the church and fundamental directions as to where it is heading. We note however, that the introduction of a future focus by leaders need not imply a 'management by objectives' approach to be transformative.

As our attention shifts to column eight, regarding the level or order of change, the choices are fewer and therefore the judgements are crude. Nonetheless it is arguable that where a leader's ideology or vision has a catalytic effect upon the culture, column 3, that the order of change is 'developmental'. This is to be expected in the sense that the teaching, preaching or leading of the new pastor releases potentialities within the church that were suppressed by the ideology of elites who are replaced or who exit the church. The leader's attitudes are catalytic encouragements for the alignment of pre-existing core values and assumptions. When the leader has a far more determinative impact upon the church's whole ethos, it becomes more difficult to recognize the culture that develops as a linear projection from the past culture. Sometimes values polarities resolved themselves by the narrowing of the spectrum of polar opposites as opponents and protagonists moved out of a church. The pastor's impact then was more one of consolidating the consensus of the remainder of the people. But this still is not a transformation to a recognizable culture so much as the reconditioning of the existing one. This is brought about through reconciling dialogue rather than enforcement of leadership preferences. Red Hill is also a case in point in that, as like the first two churches, the pastor is able to exploit the pre-existing vision of the leaders from seven years earlier, his major contribution being the supply of a change strategy to implement their embryonic vision of a well-managed organization and protecting the vision against destructive dissent. Yet the essence of the culture that has now been produced goes beyond these proactive purposes. Now there is a strong emphasis upon continuous improvement. Staff and members are extended annually to the limits so as to materialize the dream of the Regional church that still lies ahead. The strong spiritual theme of 'exodus' would suggest that the culture has changed at a second order level of transformation. When one compares column 8 to column 5 and 6, one may conclude that the level and depth of change can be

transformational whether one or both aspects of 'possibility-actuality' and the 'personal-impersonality' domains undergoes revision.

While still considering the level of change as to whether it is more developmental or transformational, Bate's distinction between whether the change was the kind and size that was anticipated or, sought after makes an insightful comparison possible.

|  | 1st. Order Change Outcome | 2nd Order Change Outcome |
|---|---|---|
| 1st. Order Aim | **Anticipated Development**<br><br>Forrest Hills. | **Over - Achievement**<br><br>Carinia Downs.<br><br>Petersham. |
| 2nd Order Aim | **Under-Achievement**<br>(Red Hill) | **Anticipated Achievement**<br>Ivy Street.<br><br>(Red Hill) |

This discrimination allows us to conclude with one exception, that transformative achievements are possible above and beyond expectations without the intention that the pastor would aim to do anything more than serve the internal needs of the culture. The difficult church to locate in such a schema is Red Hill. To the extent that the pastor had wanted to grow a Regional church, this has not quite happened, and the homogenisation of the mission and values has been and still is resisted in some quarters, despite the renewed period of growth and consolidation. To the extent that the church has a new accountability structure, growth is visible and financial and physical commitment is soaring amongst those who do own the vision of the regional church, the purposes of the change agent have been achieved.

Despite the desire for uniformity in values, plurality of views persists. Therefore the rating given to a particular culture really depends upon which segments of the culture are in focus. The final choice would rest on whether the change agent viewed the less persuaded segments as temporary aberrations on the way to a uni-culture, or viewed plurality as inevitable.

Finally, these church cultures can be differentiated according to the intention of the leadership of the church to consciously give expression to a range of perspectives and values, or if they attempt to form and firm a culture through adherence to a more limited range of interests whereby plurality is censured by some means or other. It is clear that despite 'personal' dimension that is evident within all these 'collaborative' or 'cultivation' types, some pastors have attempted to limit the definition allowable values and interests through the use of constitutional change as is the case of Red Hill and Petersham.[5] Others have resolved not to homogenize the values but respect the plurality of values stemming from a multiplicity of members' origins. Carinia Downs now accept members on the basis of the Baptism of one's heritage.[6] Ivy Street leadership also is criticised by stalwarts who sense that the culture is now less Baptist and pluri-form in values. These churches all have found their own ways to come to terms with the rival outlooks and origins of various members to a greater or lesser extent. This is not to say they are 'value free' cultures. They have their constitutions and shared beliefs, but where possible allow the member to have a greater degree of choice and

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[5] At Petersham the new constitution moved the church in both directions, removing the long term influence of the doctrines of the Bible Cult that had dominated through successive generations of pastors. Yet at the same time it firmed the boundaries of formal membership to be open to those baptised as adults alone. However, once in membership, the member had many more rights to speak, vote and dissent by virtue of the dialogical process infused in a new church meeting formats.

[6] The other church, 'Forrest Hills' has both changed its name and shifted its processes further away from traditional Baptist congregational polity towards a leader led model. Forrest Hills, and yet another sample church, 'Petersham', like Red Hill, has installed processes to clarify the acceptable definition of faith and practice and thereby structured the church towards 'closed' membership. This is their reaction to a confusing set of boundaries and symbols to do with membership that had persisted. Curiously, at Petersham such features have had a positive galvanizing effect even encouraging those who are excluded by the closed membership criteria to now 'come into the fold' on the basis of a more restrictive definition of what members entails.

not prescribe a solitary structure or values set for all members. Inclusivity, or exclusivity may accompany either a dysfunctional era or one associated with growth and renewal. Whatever was the case the new era always affects the boundaries of the church in a direction opposite to the prevailing practice as a necessary remedy for strengthening the emerging culture against the conserving forces of resistance.

We have thereby isolated a couple of strong distinctions in the style of change agency and its impact. The feature of pastoral personal style is the isolated issue that determines the friction experienced by those who aim to induce significant change, and also whether this change is perceptibly transformational or developmental. What is happening within the members, their own internal beliefs, censures and controls, determines the ease by which significant change is achieved. Magnitude of change has to do with the degree of internal stress within the subjects of these narratives of change. It is not sufficient to notice surface structural change if one is to come to grips with the ferocity of the resistance or the morale of the supportive. This again, calls for some understanding of culture at a level of the psyche of the individual and the group. To this we now turn as our narratives are read in the light of a psychological framework.