

Chapter 4. Framework 3: Psychodynamics in Church Culture

Groups and Pathological Categories

Since the mid 1980's psychological explanations for organizational behaviour has flourished. Organizations as a whole have been described as 'neurotic' if they bear in their interpersonal patterns of operating the same, or, similar characteristics as individuals manifest who are diagnosed as 'neurotic', 'narcissistic' or even as 'schizoid' (Brown: 1997, 46-648). The theories of Freud, Kohut, Klein and Winnicott have been employed as constructs to describe the salient features of the neurotic organization or of groups within them (Kets De Vries & Miller: 1984, Hirschhorn:1988, Argyris:1990, Staw:1991, Diamond:1992, LaPierre:1993, Zaleznik: 1997, Gabriel: 1994, 1997, Sankowsky:1995, Brown: 1997, Sievers:1999). The same primal fears and fantasies that beset individuals are attributed as constraints upon the performance of whole organizations. Such theories either display a direct indebtedness to some form of developmental psychological reasoning or group paradoxical behaviour that is not apparent to the group members who become reactively enmeshed (Smith and Berg: 1987, Argyris: 1990). The shared interest in organization culture stems from their observation of groups or organizations that engage in thinking process that are counterproductive to the primary task or mission.

As with individual pathology, these groups display processes whereby they defend themselves from understanding the meaning or significance or their reality, usually because they assume that the conscious discovery of such knowledge would bring pain. As a result such groups in various degrees inhibit the sorts of analytical thinking that would bring learning and growth (Sievers: 1999, 89). There is also a corresponding body of literature devoted to the analysis of church communities from these psychodynamic perspectives

(Capps: 1990, Horan: 1997, Brynholf Lyon, 1999). This framework has not had the degree of popularity as the Family Systems approaches amongst those who analyse church life. This is largely due to both the variety of technical detail of such theories but also the fact that the application of such theories has been the province of professional organizational psychologists within the corporate industrial sector. The typical church consultant or denominational official would generally lack the competence or confidence to make diagnoses of leadership styles or leader follower relationships that carried the pejorative tone of neuroses or psychoses. This explains the popularity of more rational approaches in such quarters. The interdependence and tentativeness that characterises church-denomination relationships dampens any zeal for diagnosis of such a nature. This does not mean that such lenses should be dispensed with as solely the province of the secular specialist and context. One goal of this research is to discern the feasibility and utility of such a perspective for the interpretation of church cultures.

Churches as human systems have no immunity against neurotic forms of leadership regardless of their spiritual nature and ideological distinctives. As systems of potentially unhealthy interrelationships, they may also display the same dysfunctional symptoms as other organizations and have to undergo the same processes as others to become whole. If it could be demonstrated that it is at this preconscious level that the factors affecting the capacity of churches to become effective in their purposes are to be located, then some diagnostic insights would be imperative for the denominational level consultant. Even if they did not attempt the psychodynamic approach to change, at the very least they would be more aware of the potential impact of proposed interventions upon the psyche of the groups to whom they serve and be less likely to be frustrated by more structural approaches to change.

Psychodynamic approaches assume that the display, channelling, or, unleashing of emotions are the core processes in organizations that account for their success or failure in their particular missions. There is a divergence in viewpoints over whether emotions should be seen as outcomes and symptoms or, more the causes of dysfunctional patterns. The flexibility associated with a healthy 'learning organization' may not be a simple or dispassionate affair. An organization may not be able to permit mistakes and attempt to learn from them. It may involve a painful process for individuals, especially for the leaders within a group, to unlearn entrenched defensive and dysfunctional postures and to expose the sources of habitual resistances to the free exchange of ideas and learning (Argyris and Schon:1978, Argyris: 1990). According to this framework, such resistances stem from deep pre-conscious or primal anxieties within key leaders which find their way out into community expressions, especially the styles of relating between leaders and subordinates (Stapley:1996, 82, 93, Gabriel:1997, 315ff, Staw: 1990, 808). The leader may either be emotionally distorted by the prevailing culture or, exert such an influence upon the culture from their own neuroses.

The aim here is to see if individual psychological theories can provide helpful analogies for theorizing upon the patterns revealed in church culture analysis. One concern is to see if the data we have would indicate that it is appropriate to make inferences from micro models to macro behaviour. This is to suggest that an influential individual in a church community such as a long-term office-bearer, donor, or, pastor, can universalise their neuroses, thus aggregating these into the patterns of interaction in the whole church. This would be relevant to our churches due to the high degree of deliberate socializing of people in churches, whose explicit purpose often has to do with communal formation. Sometimes this comes in the form of membership introduction courses. Conversely, there is attrition over time of those members who do not wish to partake in the evolving culture.

Dysfunctional Group Processes and Early Development

We begin by outlining a form of 'object relations theory' that underlies the proposals of many of these writers. When applied to organizational culture this implies that the problems that we may have in adult organizational life, particularly with leaders, can be a form of regression to disturbances from the primal parent child period of infancy. The key thrust of the psychodynamic perspective parallels the attribution of individual dysfunction to unresolved issues from early developmental stages of infancy. Parallels have been drawn between patterns of group neurosis and these stages. Classical defensive behaviour processes have been a common concern of many organizational writers. These include phenomena such as splitting and projective identification (Smith and Berg: 1987: 68-70), repression, regression, denial and reactive formation (Kets de Vries and Miller: 1984, Kets de Vries: 2001). A growing number of writers in the recent decades have effectively built upon the theories of 'object relations' theorists such as Melanie Klein and especially Donald Winnicott (Hirschhorn: 1988, Stapley: 1996, Gabriel:1998, McCollom-Hampton:1999, Van Buskirk: 1999, Weiertier: 2001). Although coming from different starting points, both Klein and Winnicott have a strong confluence of ideas when it comes to understanding unhelpful group rigidities, particularly in the way they highlight the way followers symbolize, demonise or idolize both their leaders and organizations stems from primal, infantile sources.

Unlike Freud, Klein saw that the preconscious fantasies induced powerful emotions. In the case of organizations the image of the organization itself could become merged with perceived 'bad objects' in the mind of the subject. This is the adult equivalent of the developmental tendency to be ambivalent about their own mother and coloured by their experience in infancy. On the one hand the child experiences the mother as good, protecting and nurturing and providing a secure environment. On the other there is the mother who also

withholds love, punishes and does not satisfy every wish, even being a 'bad object' in the form of one to be feared. Once they become prevalent in the organizational culture, negative feelings have the capacity to generate more negative feelings in self-reinforcing cycles (Lapierre: 1993, 27). Emotions themselves may drive political events such as the conflicts experienced in church or work based organizations.

The thrust of object relations theories is that the capacity for an individual to grow in cultural awareness and ego development comes from the most primitive of organisational environments, namely the infant's 'holding environment' in the arms of it's mother (Stapley:1996, 28 Van Buskirk:1999, 808f). With appropriate responsive care, the child has the capacity to develop through several stages. The earliest stage is typified by a lack of ability to differentiate self from environment and maximal dependence upon others. As the mother makes appropriate responses to the overtures of the infant, both in terms of their demands and tantrums the individual's capacity for 'object relating' or conceiving of others as discrete others or objects within their environment is developed. Such a holding environment is intrinsic to human development and incomprehensible without it (Van Buskirk: 1999, 808, Meissner: 1984, 138f).

The child and mother initially are not distinguishable in the infant's mind. But as appropriate and predictable responses from the mother persist the mother becomes 'introjected', both noticed and internalised within the mind of the infant. Such experiences give rise in the child's mind to their sense of identity as well as others being selves. It is also from out of this process that cultural awareness is born (Stapley: 1996). If not, the child cannot find her reflection in the mother's responses and they experience a terror of being

‘dropped’, even feeling they are ‘going to pieces’. This lays the foundation for distrust in other authority figures, including God (Meissner: 1984, 165).

Eventually the child becomes more able to cope with the mother’s absences. This is assisted through the comfort of ‘transitional objects’ such as their rug, toys, their own thumb. What is happening here is the child has gained the ability to symbolise the mother in their own mind and also to use other objects as symbolic substitutes. The transitional objects stand in for the absent comforter. They are transitional in the sense also of not being confused as the mother nor being totally abstracted as a symbol of her (Doehring: 1995, 106). Gradually the child is able to test and trust their environment sufficiently for healthy development to take place.

Not only is the child introjecting others into their symbolic life, they also, around 3-4 months old, enter a psychological position denoted as the paranoid-schizoid position. Here the child is able to distinguish the me-not me boundary and the mother is viewed as a separate being to whom she can relate. This can be a period of high anxiety where the individual symbolises the mother in ways that are both idealized or demonised as inadequate providers of comfort. Two processes or skills develop here in the infant: ‘splitting’ which allows infants to cope with fears associated with their survival to be separate painful feelings from the self and ‘projection’ whereby the infant learns to distance themselves from their own destructive feelings by disowning them and actively placing or symbolizing these into someone else. The aggressiveness associated with the mother is associated with desires in the child to injure the mother who does not meet all their demands on cue. The mother who can remain connected with the child without retaliating or caving in, while the child is doing her worst, gradually builds a deeper sense of the other, independent of the child’s wishes and

fears (Van Buskirk: 1999, 809). Parenting failure at his stage can amount to a regression to the primitive anxieties of the earlier state.

In later life, these regressive habits may again be drawn upon to cope with correspondingly stressful situations. Thus the paranoid schizoid adult is one who regresses to this fearful state under the stress of perceived threats in adulthood. This disturbing infantile period or position finds the child wanting, on the one hand to merge with the mother and be indistinguishable again from her in a narcissistic blissfulness, yet on the other hand to be a distinct self (McCollom-Hampton: 1999, 112, 121).

At the same time the child has an instinctive urge to integrate the whole person of the mother as a person with boundaries, synthesizing their positive and negative characteristics. 'Transitional objects' emerge which enables the child to cope as if at the breast due to the symbolic meaning they give to the transitional object. Here at around seven months an adequate holding environment enables the baby to develop their own capacity to resolve these unpleasant contradictory symbols themselves. This is referred to as the 'depressive position' as the child experiences depressive feelings of guilt for projecting malicious thoughts toward the carer. The carer is sensed as not only an object but as an object with emotions and feelings. Eventually, most of us have an adequate holding environment and develop a relatively integrated personality (Stapley: 1996, 33,34).

This affects the capacity to handle the anxieties of later life. The infant is developing a cultural awareness involving the skill to develop symbolic objects that fill the gap when the external environment is lacking and identity needs to be maintained. 'Transitional objects' supplied by the culture external to the individual will again support the individual as she

meets the world's challenges as did the bears, rugs and thumbs of early life (Van Buskirk: 1999, 811). The ability to find one's place within an imperfect environment comes from this space given for imagination to be played out. Neither adult nor child lives in isolation. Both possess the fundamental sense of being 'held' either securely or poorly within their environment.

The pertinence of this theory to organizational wellbeing stems from the fact that no one has a perfect holding environment. The same anxiety inducing features that occur within the maternal holding environment are replicated within an adult organizational structure. When the boundaries purposes or procedures of an organization are unreliable for the individual the threat that looms for him or her may rise disproportionately to its actual nature of the threat. Individuals can perceive that the organization does not provide sufficient reinforcement of their personal boundaries and distinct identity. The individual or whole groups may then regress into behaviour or feelings associated with, say, the 'paranoid schizoid' position. One organizational culture is distinguishable from the next depending upon how it is experienced as a holding environment.

The culture of an organization, then, is an inter-psycho phenomenon. Group members internalise the holding environment of the organization, including the symbolizing of the objects they regard as comprising the social character of the individual. This is a fantasy making process akin to using the work of the organization as a transitional object. The culture of the organization is produced in the minds of the members as a shared illusion as if they have a common 'skin'. On the one hand, the group is invested with a role, namely, to provide them with a sense of continuity, consistency and meaning. On the other hand the organization can provide a defence against the experience of doubt, uncertainty or guilt. When the

organization fails in these roles the real task of the organization - its mission - will be subverted.

Van Buskirk (1999) maintains that an adequate organizational culture must provide four features. Firstly the culture must provide opportunities to merge through rituals for membership induction and welcoming that allow the individual to identify with the organization. Secondly, the culture must enhance the 'me-not-me' boundaries through the clarity of role descriptions, apportioning responsibilities and reward systems. Then to enable the individual to derive a sense of individual significance the organization must supply opportunities for creativity allowing the individual to invest value in the organizational culture. Lastly a healthy organization must supply stability for moving on as opposed to chaos or disruptive changes that undermine trust. Security and concentrated imagination also happen if people expect the institution to remain dependable even if they leave. Hence, there is a lot more happening in the adult world of work and enterprise than merely the rational creation of wealth or dispensing of services. Likewise the climate and mood of the organization is not necessarily a product of deliberate efforts to enhance worker morale, but reflect how the surface manifestations of the culture are resonating with the preconscious needs and aspirations of the participants.

The leader of an organization or the group itself can both perform the symbolic function that the infant places in earlier holding environments. Leadership plays a critical role in organizational health and mission effectiveness. Leaders are not just functionally effective in such a viewpoint, but play a developmental role in the unconscious life of their groups. They become enmeshed in the group's emotional processes no matter how competent the leader is at their work. Able leadership can stabilize the experience of its members primarily

through enabling their group's members to have a basic trust in their environment (Van Buskirk: 1999, 808). In particular, this is achieved through regulating transactions across its boundaries and clarifying the organization's primary task (Hirschhorn, 1999, 5f). This has the result of reinforcing the individual's sense of personal boundaries. If leadership neglects this role they will induce distress analogous to culture shock (Stapley: 1996, 110). Moreover the granting of a reliable role space that encourages the use of the member's imaginative processes is analogous to the provision of a transitional object for the child that assists it to attend to its own anxieties.

As with the mother of the infant, so it is with the leader of the organization. Their ability to make reality based assessments and not to be caught up in the prevailing fantasy aids the capacity of the individual in the organization to constructively respond to perceived challenges within their environment. The leader who responds to the emotional state of the organizational culture alone will induce dependency upon themselves rather than creative independence. So the leader becomes a symbol to his/her followers of the long sought after and never attainable state of final independence. Even a leader with megalomaniacal tendencies who is perceived to have complete mastery of their environment will reactivate the followers' dormant tendency toward idealization. They can be ascribed powers that persons under their jurisdiction, expected of their primal caretakers. Such regression can set up attachments and a hoped for omnipotence even when the leader deals in atrocities and manifests aggression (Kets De Vries: 1995, 71).

Regression in Groups

There are two directions in which psychodynamic interest in work groups has progressed. One focuses upon psychologically damaging or regressive groups and the other

focuses upon the leader-follower relationships, particularly those where charismatic leadership is concerned. Wilf Bion developed his theory through work with impaired therapeutic groups. Like the object relations theorists Bion places great emphasis on early infant experiences especially in dysfunctional groups that resist their main purpose for assembling. In his ground breaking work, *Experiences in Groups* (1961) he made the astounding observation that phenomena which are usually associated with severe borderline or schizophrenic conditions within individuals, actually may characterize the behaviour of whole groups whether such conditions existed within individual group members or not. Whereas healthy groups have a capacity to manage emotions via healthy exchanges with their environment, unhealthy groups tend to 'regress' under stressful conditions. It is less certain whether these basic assumptions can pervade larger organizations such as whole church communities. This remains to be seen. He outlined three particular forms of 'basic assumption groups'. This construct in turn forms the basis of organizational diagnosis for recent analysts involved in the rejuvenation of organizations and consultants working in the organizational psychological field (Kets De Vries: 1984, Hirschorn:1988, Staw:1991, Diamond:1992, Lapiere:1993, Sankowsky: 1995, Gabriel: 1998, Sievers: 1999).

Bion emphasised the strength of the assumptions that group members have concerning their leaders. Such assumptions about the leader's role can be so strong that the group members project unrealistic expectations upon the leader and thereby subvert their own work as a group. Bion distinguishes between two levels of group activity: that of the sophisticated or 'work group', 'W', that attends to its core tasks and enables learning and development to take place in social reality; and other groups that live out "[basic assumptions]" which are unconscious and debilitating for the task. There are three common "basic assumptions". These become apparent in small group work as if they are the real goals of the group. The

groups do better at their unconscious neurotic tasks than at their espoused reason for convening. The basic assumptions are ‘flight or fight’ group, denoted (*baF*), the ‘dependency’ group, denoted (*baD*) and the ‘pairing group (*baP*).

Such features may be apparent to the leader of the group, but exist beneath the conscious perceptions of the members. These phenomena also take time to emerge in the group (Bion: 1961, 53) but Bion would suggest that the group perceives its central role as one of fighting, sexuality or helplessness. Moreover, individuals are coopted into key roles to represent the unconscious wishes of the whole group. These defensive techniques are directly related to the anxieties of primal ego development still residing to some extent in the psyches of adult members. An adequate group leader’s or, consultant’s role would be to alert the group to this *ba* activity making it possible for conscious choices and learning to take place.

In reality the leader may work against this. The roles played by leaders may unwittingly be from time to time those assigned to them by the group. A ‘fight/flight’ group requires a ‘fight/flight’ leader. Such a leader will tend to lead the group away from other occupations to a preoccupation with an enemy or a flight from other necessary tasks. Moreover, the individual within such groups also becomes a secondary consideration to the group pathology (Bion: 1961, 55). Groups will be dissatisfied with leaders who attempt to subvert the prevailing psychological culture. The group mentality cannot conceive of them as fulfilling their duty to the group. Furthermore groups usually have developed a sophisticated means of group inter-communication to express their mentality and enforce compliance upon the individual group member and ‘would-be’ task leader.

By contrast, when the 'pairing' basic assumption is in effect, the work of the whole group is relegated to a pair of individuals. Sometimes this is sensed by a prevailing mood where sexuality is the dominant emotion. Or, there is an assumption that people have come together for the main purpose of preserving or regenerating the group. Regardless of gender, discussion breaks out between two members and the rest allow them to dominate the agenda. Much discussion is wasted on why others are not present and those who are receive praise regardless of achievement (Bion: 1961, 54). The real work that the couple may have wished to achieve is hamstrung by the group assumption that determines that their involvement with each other is the group goal.

Later writers use the term 'pairing' of groups that display an unreal optimism or magical hope in the capacity of the leaders (Hirschhorn:1988, 60, Kets De Vries:1984, 52). This ultimately affects their capacity to attend to their responsibilities for the main group project or task. Some have extended this assumption to include groups that believe that eventually a messianic figure or ideal leader, will surface that will solve all the problems of the group without them having to contribute anything of their own ingenuity or, initiative. They look forward to a magical future era in which they will be delivered from their struggles and fears. The predominant emotions are manic-like forms of hope, faith, and utopianism. Paradoxically this promotes a polar form of group 'stuckness' between hopes falsely raised and then, just as quickly, hopes cruelly dashed. Eventually when a 'flesh and blood' leader does arise, they are vulnerable to the phantasies of the group. They can only fail the group's unrealistic expectations leading to disillusionment as strong as was the manic hope. The manic emotions are actually a defence against the depression and serious analysis of situation and consequences of group behaviour (Gemmil & Oakley: 1992, 118).

The third of Bion's 'basic assumptions'; 'dependency' is particularly dangerous for leaders who cannot discern that the group's seeming compliance with them has nothing to do with task achievement but dependency upon the leader itself has become the task for which the group has convened. Individuals who do not wish to develop beyond having their security needs met are attracted to this group (Bion: 1961, 89). The paradoxical arrangement of group devotion to the leader is met with the same degree of unwillingness to follow any constructive lead they give. In church organizations one might see this manifested in unreasonable demands that the main pastor be in direct personal contact through visitation with every member despite the size of the church making this a physical impossibility.

Bion observed within 'fight-flight' cultures that he as leader would be told of one or other persons within or beyond the group who were attempting to sabotage him or the group. This equated with the unconscious collusive desire of the group to require a leader to be about conflict even if there was none. The group had to have something to fight or to run away from. If such a real enemy cannot be found, then the next best thing is for the group to get a paranoid leader for whom enemies are always obvious (Bion: 1961, 59). This may explain why some groups select leaders, or in our case pastors to lead them whom they know to be emotionally aggressive. An individual whose basic mentality and feelings correspond to the basic assumption can end up controlling such groups. The hostile individual finds a group mentality affirming his/her predilections and these are communicated with great subtlety. Fearlessness becomes the supreme virtue of a leader in such a group (Bion:1961, 70). A leader in such a group can find him or herself, impotent to change such a situation. Such a theory may explain why it is that some church communities fail to change and seem to live in entrenched conflict over long periods of time. Similarly a church group may bemoan the

feistiness of one pastor, but on his leaving resist the peace-making attempts of the replacement.

Alternately, a leader may find him or herself valued overly highly by the group. This high estimation is due not so much to leadership skill but that their leadership has a corresponding 'valency', or a style that corresponds to the prevailing basic assumption (Bion: 1961: 64). In the dependency group, in particular, the basic assumption of the group is that an 'external object', the leader exists primarily to provide security for the immature organization. Individuals whose needs monopolise the attention of the leader are censured and made to feel guilty for taking more than their fair share of attention. Any benefits that accrue to the group are felt to come from the leader alone (Bion: 1961, 66). Paradoxically the group tends to be disappointed in any real work that the leader manages to do within the group. Leadership insights are sifted and only those aspects that fit in with established canons of belief are adhered to. Such groups act as if it would be an infringement of some significant principle if they actually did achieve any significant work. Such groups demand then that the leader be a magician and the materials, information or resources needed to accomplish the task are denied her or him.¹

¹ Curiously, Bion actually likens the culture of the 'basic assumption' group as if they are a religious cult (Bion: 1961, 74f) as there is a stifling of independent thought, heresy hunting of dissenting views, reactive rebellion as a result and rationalization of the imposition of censorship of rational attempts at argument. It makes life stressful for the participant as the member has to reconcile the demands of reality in every day life with those demanded by their group. Life in the group places the individual within it in an unbearable tension of choosing either to identify with the culture wholeheartedly but then be persecuted by the arid interpretations of the group. Yet if the member identifies with their own intellectual insights, they are persecuted by their own internal objects. The group will always reward the member's acquiescence to the objectives of the 'basic assumption. Independence means a total repudiation of the basic assumption. Group vitality means a complete submergence within it ! (Bion: 1961:78-79)

Bion's distinctions have been elaborated upon by theorists analysing leadership charisma, along with others who investigate the ascription of roles or stereotyping within groups. These two issues are related to Bion's focus upon group dysfunction as they seek to understand how individuals allow themselves or others to be dis-empowered in the reality of work groups by ascribing roles, virtues and vices to others within their own preconscious worlds. Moreover, these ascriptions happen at the level of the whole group not only the individual (Gemmil and Oakley: 1992, Sankowsky: 1995, Gabriel: 1997, Kets De Vries: 1999, Weierter: 2001). Others address the task behaviour of groups (Hirschhorn: 1988, 1999, Lapierre: 1993) or the ascription of roles and stereotyping of individuals within organizations (Moxnes: 1998, Kets De Vries, 1990).

Extensions of Bion's Theory to Organizational Cultures

The four major types of groups identified by Wilf Bion have been verified by others in much larger organizational settings. These theorists have a more dynamic view of the 'basic assumption' groups or neurotic cultures as fluid temporary 'positions'. Lapierre (1993: 26, 27) maintains that just as the infant learns to deal with anxiety through distinct phases, healthy groups are typified by the ability to move between the basic 'positions' according to the need of the moment, or, to manipulate the psychological culture for productive ends (McCollum-Hampton: 1999, 124). The 'Autistic Contiguous' position, can be viewed then as a period of time when the group needs dictate a need to feel surface to surface contact, to be held and bound through repetitive processes and predictability. The 'Paranoid Schizoid' position handles the environmental threats through encouraging the sorts of imaginative interpretations of reality that would be more typical of this developmental phase. That is imagination and fantasy and the corresponding expression of emotion are given a license but for productive ends. The 'Depressive' position is marked by reflexive introspection and respect for the

sensitivities of others. The positions apply both to the mood of the leaders of Groups as much to group experience as well.

By inference, group pathology is the experience of becoming destructively stuck or fixated with one of these positions. The position becomes the prevailing cultural assumption or the personality of the group and the group as it were, collapses into the position. 'Autistic' cultures crave the need to be 'held' and become bound up in rigid policies and routines and tend to make knee jerk responses to their environments rather than taking necessary risks to exploit opportunities. Groups caught in 'paranoid schizoidal' positions become locked in a paralysing fear and uncontrollable strong emotions and may induce 'wishful' or magical thinking rather than constructive strategic response to the perceived threat. Groups caught in a 'Depressive' position display a lack of aliveness and settle for isolation from real life. By contrast a healthy group has the capacity to cap the 'schizoidal' tendencies with an appropriate degree of the 'depressive' position and be grounded upon 'autistic' firm boundaries beneath them.

These positions in turn with the prevailing anxiety response mechanisms can, hypothetically, combine with the range of defensive strategies to create many diverse permutations of psychological culture within organizations. Kets de Vries and Miller (1984: 22 - 42, 2001: 144 - 186) narrowed these down to five 'gestalts' or styles of life within organizations they define as 'neurotic'. Whereas Klein assumed that the leader was immaterial in the birth of this culture Kets De Vries holds that usually there is a leader whose own neuroticism matches and determines the culture of the group. These clusters of behaviour patterns and styles remain stable over years. According to Kets De Vries, these complexes of strategy and style result in the following identifiable neurotic 'constellations'.

The first of these cultures is termed the 'Paranoid' organizations. These display a mood of suspicion regarding people both within the organization and without. The information system of the organization is hijacked for control. Therefore decisions tend to involve too much consultation and strategies are reactive rather than responsive to opportunities. A primary emphasis is placed on organizational intelligence gathering and control to identify potential internal and external threats. Paranoia effects decision making as such leaders stereotype people and issues and are therefore unable to perceive nuances. Decision-making becomes rigid and reactive (Kets De Vries 2001:53). Internal morale declines naturally over time and energies are diversified around individual selfish concerns. The leadership may be easily offended and responds in anger especially to those who speak their mind and thereby rob their organization of the sorts of perceptions and correctives that could prevent major dislocation. In extreme schizoid modes such cultures display features of rage and hate to the extent that members of them become so fixated in fight or flight as to channel energies into inappropriate and disruptive acts of aggression that threaten the very existence of the group. Beneath the surface organizational system sub groups are forming firm boundaries with little empathetic capacity regarding the feelings or needs of other members of other factions. Others have noted a similar phenomenon where individuals with a high commitment to the group use splitting and projective identification, take up antisocial activities and unethical sabotage out of a fixation with the group ideal they have made their mantra (Scwhartz: 1987).

A second constellation is termed the 'Compulsive' Organizations. Such groups are wed to ritual and formalized procedures. This group displays fixations with non-productive work as if stuck in Klein's 'autistic' position. Observable behaviour includes features like

cumbersome decision-making where decisions are swamped with unnecessary detail and documentation and new strategies cannot break through. These groups only have a secure future as long as the environment doesn't change. The leadership displays a distinct lack of imagination and inflexibility. They effectively rob subordinates of any sense of initiative, responsibility and enthusiasm. Over time the only people that such cultures accumulate are bureaucratic types who love to follow rules and fear taking initiative on their own, let alone allow participative decision making (Kets De Vries 2001:160). They end up producing their quota of quality irrelevance.

'Dramatic' Organizations, by contrast, have venturesome and dangerously uninhibited leaders who have a need for grandiosity. The leader cannot help but meddle in routine and decisions are based upon hunches. As a result organizational development is neglected and the organization is too primitive to deal with the detail of its environment. Such leaders are superficially warm and charming, yet they often lack sincerity empathy and consideration for others, exploiting people for their own gain (Kets De Vries: 2001,145). These organizations however have the sorts of subordinates who idealize their leaders and who are easily manipulated, flattered by a few words of praise and devastated by reprimands.

An almost complete opposite to this is the Depressive Organization. These act as if jammed in the depressive emotional position exhibiting an extreme conservatism while seeing themselves as impotent to change their culture or context. Leaders tend to take up a solely care-taker role. They have closest resemblance to Bion's dependency groups where followers exhibit an unhealthy degree of blind faith in the leader(s). These have a sense of helplessness and reluctance for any member within them to take on themselves the mantle of leadership (Hirschhorn: 1988, 59, 60). This dependency assumption impairs the real work on the core

tasks of the group or organization. The essential aim of such a body is to "covertly attain security through establishing a fantasy that members of a group are coming together to be nurtured and protected by a leader" (Gemmil & Oakley, 1992: 118). Paradoxically, by attributing omniscience and/or omnipotence to the leader of the group, the members are correspondingly dis-empowered, deskilled or divorced from their own critical thinking capacities. This deskilling is the very source of the reason why the leader's effectiveness is limited and eventually a reinforcement of the 'stuckness' of the group. Either no information or the wrong type of information is collected and strategic thinking is never addressed. These organizations, can only survive while there is a particular demand for their distinct offering. The leader style sets a climate of lethargy and negativity and this becomes modelled by second tier leaders. It promotes an avoidant culture typified by an extreme conservatism, insularity and purposelessness. Strategy then is never considered and so no significant change occurs.

Then, lastly there are 'Schizoid Organizations' that are also known as 'Detached groups'. These often take on features like their founders, or, leaders, who see people serving within their organizations as usually disappointing. Such leaders have a style that therefore causes them to avoid contact with others and so true leadership is delegated by default to second tier managers who themselves, are very unclear about both their authority and responsibilities (Kets De Vries: 2001, 155). The organization then has the mood of a political battlefield. Leaders daydream or live vicariously through subordinate risk takers for the lack of compensations in life. The decision-making is erratic and vested interest groups ingratiate themselves with the leader. Consequently the organization moves around the current pet projects of the leaders without addressing the longer-term direction of the organization. 'Turf-battles' thwart collaboration around the central mission of the group as a

result. All these constellations may become typical of the interrelationships within organizations and do not dissolve of their own accord over time. It will be critical for this investigation to see whether these neurotic models or others like them can adequately describe the limiting features of church cultures.

These neurotic cultures tend to be defended or sustained by the classic resistance patterns. Hence, theorists adopting this type of lens would therefore be very cautious about suggesting that change of this culture is straightforward as if the particular group has been together for a significant time it is likely that it comprises those who have invested in the prevailing fantasy that holds the group together as significantly as a shared set of conscious values.

Charisma and Leadership Induced Culture

An alternative psychodynamic research focus has sought to bring the same preconscious framework to illuminate the nature of leader follower loyalty and relationships. The power inherent in such a style is not due to the office they hold so much as the behaviour they exhibit when in office. The charisma refers to the capacity of the leader to motivate followers, change attitudes and attempt actions which they would otherwise not have attempted (Conger and Kanungo: 1992, 640). As such the concept is value neutral and the ethics of this mode depend upon the resulting impacts of the style upon the freedom, growth and dignity of the charismatic vision (Howell: 1992, 50,51). There is general agreement among the theorists that the locus of charismatic leadership is relationally based (Conger and Kanungo: 1987, 640, Zaleznik, 1993, Kets De Vries, 1995). The charisma, is not found solely in the leader and his/her personal qualities, but rather is found in the interplay between the

leader's attributes and the needs, beliefs, values and perceptions of his/her followers (Gemmil and Oakley: 1992, 116ff).

This construction attributes the power of a leader's charisma to preconscious needs within the follower. As such the relationship between the charismatic leader and the follower can have a collusive quality that is played out in repetitive and recognizable ways (Kets De Vries, 1999, 748). Many times these psychological transactions are not health inducing or freeing and are even described by these theorists as manipulative or unethical (Kets De Vries: 1995, Swogger: 1999). The reason for this is that subordinates and leaders are being used to satisfy through the partner, leader or subordinate their own preconscious emotional needs through the process of projective identification rather than truly serving the espoused purpose of the relationship. This identification may not be born of objective measures of another's superior intellect, strength or ability but of a neurotic kind born of a hatred of anxiety and a striving for power against a sense of helplessness or feelings of insignificance (Kets De Vries: 1995, 58) Such persons also tend to have an uncanny awareness of the sense of personal deficiency and insecurity in others they manipulate (Swogger: 1999, 241f).

Charismatic leadership may reflect either from abundant self confidence associated with healthy child rearing or, from its opposite resulting in deep feelings of powerlessness. Domagalski (1999: 837f) stresses that the destructive aspects of leader behaviour are defensive reactions to repressed hostility derived from harsh disciplinarian caretakers. For these latter types, power is an issue in later life corresponding to a constructive versus a destructive form of 'narcissism'. These later sort of people are particularly susceptible to a frequently delicate psychological equilibrium (Kets De Vries, 1995: 70,71). At the same time such a driven soul with their assertive disregard for risk may become a symbol to followers of

their long desired regression to a final state of independence as the leader appears to have mastery over their environment. The followers are ascribing to the leader the magical powers they once expected of their caregivers in the past. Attachment and omnipotence mutually reinforce each other. An emotional contagion easily results. Those who are more interdependent personalities, who mimic powerful others, or, who do not have a high capacity for monitoring their own emotional responses, are more vulnerable to the advances of such persons (Domagalski:1999, 839). This phenomenon even explains the 'identification with the aggressor' where followers who have witnessed aggressive or terrorizing tendencies of the charismatic leader upon subordinates will, nonetheless, be drawn to them for protection. Moreover the paranoid leader has the capacity to shift the burden of their guilt or organizational failure onto others, so as to keep up the delusion of righteousness. Such leaders thrive off chaos as they need to search for an enemy and develop group cohesion by sharing in the euphoria and triumph. Some may even create their own crises if paranoid tendencies in the leader become dominant (Kets De Vries 1999, 76, 77). The possibility of this creating a downward spiral for their organization is obvious and a realistic identification of the motives underlying such behaviour patterns is not easily attained.

Weierter (2001: 93-98) broadens the notion of the charismatic relationship to include the charismatic organization, or, more pertinently, to describe the types of charisma made possible by an organization. Since Weber, charisma has been viewed as a destroyer of the tradition and creator of the new order. Weierter argues that a necessary condition for a charismatic relationship to emerge is that potential members recognize within an organization some profound connection between the organization and a central feature of their own existence. The organization must also provide a means by which this profundity can be realized by the individual. Without these two features the charismatic relationship will not

eventuate.² Weierter believes these forms can be discerned in organizational culture via the stories shared of member aspirations. Thus the data that is most vital for this type of study stems from the follower who is really using the organization for their own existential ends rather than isolating the style of the leader.

A recent extreme example of this type of approach steps beyond just the notion of charisma in relationships to that of organizations attributing psychic 'roles' or, scripts to organizational participants. Moxnes (1999) extends the notion that the group determines other group roles, not only to the role of the leader. The group supplies a whole range of roles akin to the typical characters from within the mythic structure of many western fairy tales. Using Jungian categories, Moxnes presumes that the patterning of family is our first organizational template that persists with us into adult organizational experience. Thus, the group structure in which we find ourselves in organizations such as churches actually reflects the typical patterning of the human psyche. This patterning determines the group structure to the point that the internalised group roles determine externalised personality factors (Moxnes: 1999, 1439). He sees that anxiety that comes from the ambivalence of having to handle good and bad aspects of objects is often dealt with by defensive manoeuvres such as splitting, and projection. A group will apportion twin sets of roles along two domains. One is the hierarchical domain of dominance - submission; that is some will lead and others will be subservient, and the other is of value opposites; good – bad. Some people are virtually 'canonised' as 'saints' while others are 'demonised' as 'black sheep' within the group. Moxnes postulates that such tendencies lay behind the internal structure of many traditional

² So Weiertier identifies three sorts of idealizing that provide for this self expression: the 'self-promoting', enabling the expression of one's own values and the overcoming of others', the 'self-creating' enabling the overcoming of a meaningless existence, and the 'self-idealizing' overcoming the limitations of one's present self image.

western fairy tales and supplies a whole list of character roles from 'King' to 'Impostor', 'Queen' to 'Witch', 'Hero' or 'Fool'.

Two particular roles are critical in the case of the typical churches we have chosen to study. These are Moxnes two 'transformational' roles. These come about in organizational life through new comers who have come into 'the family' having gone out into the world to fulfil their destiny much like role of the incoming pastor who normally comes from outside the community. These are the 'Winner' and the 'Clown'. The 'Winner' makes the most salutary contribution to the society. They come from outside the family and take the place of the Father or Son. This is the one who is remembered in family folk-lore and adored fondly. The Clown or Fool is the complete opposite; pitiable, wretched and anything but the master of the situation. The clown loses any pedestal with which he or she has entered the organization. The clown is the opposite of the Almighty, whether an active villain or passive victim of circumstances. Usually they are pompous individuals who make grandiose claims. As opposed to heroes, the family eventually struggles to remember their name or any redeeming features.

The relevance of such a theory to community dynamics is that these roles are deterministic, stifling the possibility of change of status. Yet they are also unconscious and pervasive, stemming from inherited archetypes that go unchallenged. Instead of keeping the whole group distracted from its primary task, these roles may negatively stereotype some individuals frustrating their desire to make a contribution relative to their gifts, while equally the contribution of others may be overly valued by the role they perform within the group. Both aspects severely weaken organizational performance.

Organizational Stories and Diagnosing Neurosis and Health

As regards diagnosis, these psychodynamic theorists trust the story telling artistry of the organizational participants to provide faithful expositions of the prevailing charisma contagion or collusive relationship. Prevailing organizational ‘myths’ which can act as personal psychodramas enfolded by the CEO and into which other executives are drawn (Zaleznik: 1993, 179). Such myths serve as cohesion points for the organization and are defended from sabotage by rational investigation. In church cultures this phenomenon could explain the persistence of follower loyalty in the face of the public discovery of pastoral misdemeanour. The person of a leader symbolises the preservation of a mythology that is a legacy of past leadership and is used to maintain the esteem of the organization and legitimate the leader as a ‘hero’ figure. This reduces the stress stemming from the feelings of impotence in much of organizational life. The danger of this phenomena is that such myth making can replace rational observation and evaluation of the organization and its environment and produces a ‘totemistic community’, to use anthropological terms (Zaleznik: 1993, 184). That is, the key leadership attempt to cohere the community or organization around the preservation of myths to do with the achievements, or the perceptions of the powers of former ‘great leaders’ to the detriment of rational observation about the benefits and opportunities facing the organization in the present. People in such cultures lower down the hierarchy can find it exceedingly difficult to break out of the prevailing stereotypical myth particularly to do with the leader or have their creative and rational suggestions quashed.

Gabriel (1990, 1998) has suggested that a pre-conscious attribution of roles can be discerned from the actual stories people share about their organizations. If it is the case that as members tell their stories, they project unhealthy potentials onto their leaders that are quite

disproportionate to the behaviour of the leader recalled in the story, then the leader has taken on some primal significance quite apart from their actual role relationship with the subordinate. They are being viewed perhaps as a primal substitute for a mother or father figure. The leader is being used by the follower as a 'transitional object' to handle their own anxieties. Leaders themselves may unwittingly confirm or confute these phantasmic projections due to their own regressive tendencies. Hence, organizational stories need to be weighed for their pre-conscious content. Leaders may in fact be being viewed as primal substitutes for a mother figure or a Freudian father substitute. The mother figure fuels the narcissistic tendency in the follower to want to be affirmed and rewarded for who they are rather than what they achieve, while the primal Father arouses both fear and loyalty, jealousy and suspicion (Gabriel: 1997, 316f). The leader then, functions for the follower-subordinate as an intermediary negotiating between the individual and their particular fantasy or illusion. Follower fantasies about their leaders rotate around four axes (Gabriel: 1990, 336). These include the degree to which the leader is perceived as caring or uncaring, approachable or distant, omnipotent or impotent, messianic or fraudulent within the mind of the follower. The leader also may be variously perceived as messianic by some followers, unapproachable by others and so on. As leaders act out their roles they are in the very process of confirming or disconfirming the fantasies accorded them due to their human limitations. Organizational research therefore needs not only to collect such stories but assess them for their impact upon organizational realism and functioning.

Changing a Neurotic Culture

One thing these authors share, despite the variety of ways that they conceive of group dysfunction, is a healthy respect for how difficult it may be for change to be induced by interventions into the group culture. The capacity to change such situation relies upon the

skill of an interventionist to glean from the story telling of many participants in the organization the recurring themes that indicate such process have become the culture.

Some take a lateral approach. They advocate that the interventionist exploit the natural tendencies of each position as a means to pursue organizational tasks. The basic assumption *baF* could be utilized at least to foster group loyalty, *baD* for strengthening a submission to authority and *baP* to recognize special pairings or a recognition of supportive relationships (McCollom-Hampton: 1999, 124). One cannot resolve such situations by superimposing rational efficiency methods or restructuring without dealing with the prevailing 'basic assumption' or 'group think' adopted by the organizational members (Zalezenik: 1993, 27). The purpose of such listening is to work backwards from the symptoms to the root causes in terms of a leadership neurosis or a shared group fantasy. The intervention chosen relies upon the explanatory power for the prevailing themes emerging from the particular group.

Some theorists do not hold out a great deal of hope for the transformation of groups with a neurotic culture. Intervention often involves a trade off between what is optimal as opposed to what is feasible. In secular contexts this takes the form of devising a plan of implementation to circumscribe the influence of the damaging few within the group. This may in fact force them to address critical root problems of a type of problem or fantasy that operates within the group. According to Zalezenik, (1993: 194), the only way forward to more freeing cultures is via the crisis of engagement with outside forces resulting in the removal of leadership and the entry of new leadership that is not subject to the same stereotyping of the prevailing mythology. Alternatively change agents could engage in rational adjustment and directly address how the prevailing mythology and archaic symbols,

while comforting and stabilizing, are likely to lead to organizational demise (Zalezenik: 1993, 189).

Another option for the interventionist is to facilitate a group in working through a grief process. An interventionist can expect to be met with hostility at some point in the process. However, the key issue for the change agent is not to reinforce the prevailing fantasy. This would be the case for instance if one made the decisions for a dependency group or becoming politically polarized within a culture with a history of projection. The purpose of an intervening process is to move the group through to a new level of insight. According to Kets De Vries and Miller (1984: 167-182) this involves four steps in sequence. These are firstly, 'confrontation' or, clarifying the issues and forms of resistance in a group forum, secondly, 'interpretation' or seeking out the origins of the transference or neuroses within the leader's history of development, followed by 'resistance identification' where by the occasions and forms of resistance are discerned. And, lastly the step of 'working through' is analogous to the stages of healthy mourning phases. But again, these stages may not be traversed and they do not hold out any sense of guaranteed success as the fearful may subvert the process at any point or find the next agenda item too fearful to face (Kets de Vries & Miller:1984, 168-184).

Applications of Psychological Perspectives to Church Cultures

As noted earlier, there is no particular theoretical reasoning that would suggest that the church cultures are immune from the dynamics that feature in secular groupings and organizations. There is one particular difference however. In a secular organizational context, provided the change agent can survive the inevitable attempt to subvert the process, they have the options and often the legitimate power to ascertain who should change, be reassigned, or even who would leave the organization. The church context simply does not

permit a consultant or external authority to take such measures on behalf of the community. This obviously has repercussions for the entrenching of neurotic patterns in such autonomous groups as these 'free-church' communities over the long term. In the churches in this population the pastor does not possess executive authority to dissolve membership or override constitutions but is usually in the employ of an elected board or of the whole membership. Because of this feature, the underlying dynamics of church cultures and the need to protect the image leaders have of themselves could be even more intensively a feature of free church culture due to the fact that the capacity of the leader to exercise their gifts and compel a following are dependent on the followers' joint recognition of his or her charisms and competences. Such recognition is also overlaid with object representations of the pastor and leaders that are complicated by the way the member perceives their own God objects. While godly traits and gifts are hopefully discernable within the moral characteristics of the pastoral persona, it is likely, given the idealization of church and particularly pastor, that the following they enjoy or frustrations they experience also partially stem from projections of unconscious fantasies and or aspirations within many of their followers.

And not only are the leaders vulnerable to idealisations and projections of their members. The idealization of churches as institutions may also stem from regressive tendencies. Churches can easily become idealized given their connection within the Kingdom of God (Hirschhorn: 1988, 179). Church communities may be envisaged just as much as other forms of organization as located somewhere along a continuum from unhealthy low to an unhealthy high self esteem or 'narcissism' (Brown: 1997, 646-648). An overly high pride in one's church or organization may in fact hide either a high level of fear that militates against proactive engagement with their environment. The church as an organizational object

representation could fill an equivalent space to returning the individual's aspirations to the early narcissistic stages of infancy.

Such a perspective then leads one to adopt a healthy degree of scepticism about accounts of churches that have risen again from a period of pain or demise. While some pastors may hope to, and actually do motivate commitment to their churches by idealizing the church or having grandiose visions of its future, they may in fact be only managing the inner splitting tendency and anxiety of the followers who fear the ambivalence of dealing face to face with less than perfect church fellowships or their seeming impotence to effect their mission.

The situation of the church could also be a factor to consider in deciding whether irrational forces at work. If a leader's charisma is viewed as a collusive relationship between leader and follower, then charismatic leaders may thrive in situations of ambiguity or chaos as dependent persons are drawn toward their advances. A cycle of either risk-averse or addictive leader behaviour would eventually result in church decline. This should alert the researcher to trace downward spirals of churches in terms of the realism of the hopes that members invested in their pastors or leaders. Moreover, the pertinence of charismatic leader-follower relationships is reinforced by Weiertier's proposal that some organizations make possible some sorts of charisma and that these organization provide the means by which the individual may realise central existential features of their own existence. This is an alternative to strictly viewing the charism of the leader as a projection from preconscious primal longings. The very purpose of the church revolves around the satisfaction of ultimate issues. To the extent that churches in this study do not trivialize the search for meaning of their members, they

could well be fostering these charismatic connections and projections upon themselves as organizations and their leaders.

The survey also noted that leader charisma is an ambivalent and unpredictable commodity. Leadership that is caught in a paradoxical emotional transaction with followers is due in no small part to the pervasive narcissistic drive within our modern culture whereby the notion of leadership is both necessary and unbearable. The individual today tends to hanker for a messianic figure to follow as a necessary defence against anxiety. Yet, at the same time this is unbearable since this threatens the autonomy and self-delusion of the individual (Hirschhorn, 1988:178f). The only acceptable leader is one who not only has truly outstanding qualities but one who must constantly “prove” them (Gabriel: 1997: 338). The higher the fantasy is inflated the greater the potential disappointment with the specific church leader or church community. This may be reflected in stories of churches where a rapid rise of great hopes and valuations are just as quickly dashed. A theological viewpoint may coopt or reinforce such inflated fantasies leading to even more heightened expectations and corresponding disillusionment. Stories likewise that take the form of father or mother substitute figures, fostering notions of one’s own innate goodness, or fear and jealousy on the other hand would also lead to the same assessment of the charismatic essence of the relationships.

Psycho-dynamic paradigms of group culture would suggest that pastors can be more adequate as leaders and effective fulfilling their mission to the extent that they can discern either the scripts assigned by the ‘basic assumptions’ prevalent in their groups or, these role assignments from the deep level ‘mythological structure’ rather than seek to find surface explanations stemming from recent history. Bion’s suggestion of remedies for ‘basic assumption’ groups was scant in contrast to the weight of his diagnostic insight as was the

case with Kets de Vries notion of changing 'neurotic constellations'. Nonetheless the ability to diagnose such cultural patterns would save the leader the frustration of attempting to change the church by merely rational organizational means.

As regards role assignments in the psychodrama of a group, Moxnes' notion of primal role assignments may imply that these roles can actually tyrannize innocent victims if they can never get a chance to escape a negative narrative. Church leaders cannot just simply abolish these deep roles by virtue of proclaiming a more transcendent mission or altruistic intentions. Object Relations theory reminds us that they are actually essential to the development of a strong culture and are fed from the learning ability of the individuals in the group (Stapley, 1996). We cannot live comfortably without some deep structure. This would suggest that churches follow unhealthy evolutionary cycles if they do not watch out for these stereotypical symptoms. Yesterday's heroes may be tomorrow's villains if they fail to perform their positive assignments or make more than their share of mistakes. Moreover, this psychological understanding of charisma would imply that there is every chance that a pastor may enter a church assuming a particular role, particularly that of 'father' by virtue of formal office, but the group could be looking to them as 'hero' by virtue of tacit deep role or to take on the mantle of 'fighting' presumed enemies within or without the church. Being an unspoken part of culture, such deep level presuppositions are difficult to unearth. Moreover, a church group may manage to vanquish 'impostors', 'whores' or 'rebels' from the actual church family, but then have psychological 'vacancies' for the church to fill!

The interconnection of charisma and role may also explain the not uncommon phenomenon whereby some churches replace pastors with the characteristics that they have complained about vocally, with another of similar characteristics, only to re-live the dramas of history. Again the model suggests that we should be wary of glowing reports of pastors being

either 'wonderful', 'transformational' on the one hand, or, 'foolish' or 'evil' pastors on the other. The hidden processes of splitting and projection may have more to do with the reputation they are accorded than actual performance and this would need to be teased out. Pastors who make an unfortunate miscalculation may be transferred in the role allocation of the group from the hero to the fool for not being able to deliver effective leadership or failing to read the situation. This may be out of proportion to their actual responsibility in the event and certainly not reflect a gracious view of frail human nature.

Ultimately, a pastor who is truly 'transformational' according to these types of stereotypical or charisma model would manage both to get the church to do 'real work', the fulfilment of their espoused mission. Simultaneously, they would have to have freed the church from a dysfunctional adhesion to the prevailing 'basic assumptions' or 'fairy tale' patterns of relating by bringing a degree of objective assessment of self and others in the dialogical spaces within the culture. Thus the leader would be appreciated but not adulated in a healthy renewed culture. She or he would be fondly regarded for what they had actually done, not for some mythic aura that separates them from a fallible membership. People would be as free to number their faults as much as the fruit of their labours. Rather than mythical tales of two-dimensional heroic caricatures, the charisma phenomenon of a positive kind would be discernable in fully rounded figures whose faults and foibles are as easily related as their real achievements.

It is no surprise then to find that in recent times while research evidence is scarce writers within a Christian context have employed these frameworks to reflect upon church dysfunction from the psychodynamic viewpoint (Carbo and Garner: 1999, Horan: 1997, Brynolf Lyon; 1999). Lyon (1997, 289) maintains that in a church context these theories

imply that a form of social idolatry precedes the neurotic behaviour of individuals within the group. The individual fulfils a role within that group schema first. Again, all that is called 'strong leadership' may in fact be stronger membership oppression. If leadership is indeed a role whereby one or more individuals succeed in framing the reality of others, then a redemptive leader would be one that enabled the follower to see for themselves the processes and products of their own delusions, to 'conscientise' them to their own freedoms, capacities and creaturely responsibilities, to provoke awareness of the group's capacity to chose.

Conversely, there may be stories of former pastors who evidently let the church down, yet at a psychodynamic level these may be pastors who exposed the prevailing fantasy, or who refused to play out the ascribed role within the 'script' assigned them. Without evidence of a pastor empowering the congregation in responsible reflection, stories with positive themes need to be validated by more than surface details of quantitative measures such as rising attendances, budget strength and other similar indicators. We would have more confidence that a church community has entered a genuinely healthy phase if they included changes that were accompanied by open dialogical processes and an increased capacity to reflect on the past and to take a share in the responsibility for how things had become.

It is entirely feasible to consider instances in our sample of churches where the tension between such positions appears to be compromised by the mood of the whole group. The capacity for forming empathetic bonds with others may become severely compromised (Lyon: 1988, 281). One would expect that overly zealous visionaries in a *baP* group could easily lead such churches into risky ventures, or brush aside the segments of the church population that do not share their utopian vision, deriving from supposed divine sources. Some churches with *baD* features would display an inability to consider other ways of doing their ministry

and mission no matter how outdated and inapplicable to present circumstances. Some of these churches passively and depressively accept the seeming inevitability of their decline as if the future has no hope for revitalization. Their lifelessness however is endemic and ongoing rather than the source of positive course corrections and betrays an inability to transcend this depressive 'position'.

The Impact of Theological Perspectives Upon Psychological Dynamics

One stated aim of this study is to perceive also how the theology of the church community affects the capacity for reparation and renewal. The theological correlates of 'object relations' constructs have been flagged by Rizzuto (1979), Meissner (1984: 164ff), Spero (1992), Lyon (1999), Horan (1997), and Carbo and Gartner (1999). A particular image of God may either reflect or, interact with the mentality featured in each of the various 'positions'. It has already been suggested that a 'stuck' group would be one that loses the ability either to hold goodness and badness within the self and other selves in creative tension, or to respond reasonably to environmental challenges. One would suspect that such a group would tend to have a theological bias that supports this fixity within a particular 'position'. The 'autistic position', liking firm boundaries and tending to view others as mere objects would tend to also possess a corresponding God image. God too would 'serve' as a boundary maker, 'One who bears down upon us' and prevents the chaos of the perceived 'sinful' environment from overwhelming the group.

One could posit that the black and white certainties of a strictly fundamentalist viewpoint, a naïve realist epistemology, would in fact characterize such a group. There is a comfort in black and white thinking (Carbo and Gartner: 1999, 267). Like 'borderline personalities', borderline features in churches also handle the uncomfortable synthesis of good

and bad aspects of themselves via disowning the evil and projecting it onto others. The world itself becomes categorized into the totally good and the totally bad, believers and non-believers, insiders and outsiders. This sets up a typical dependency/independency dynamic especially within those individuals who have not resolved such separation individuation conflicts in early childhood. This dependence further serves to fuel the religious leader's own Oedipal fantasies of being a rescuer and saviour. (Carbo and Gartner: 1999, 267). This phenomenon was predicted by secular theorist Hirschhorn in strong theological terms. An idealized church like any other idealized organization, may demonise the dissenter or outsider who questions a significant structural change.

A group at risk may erect and support a charismatic leader in whom they invest all their hopes and on whom they vitally depend. To protect their now idealized leader from their own hatred for authority, they must project their hatred onto others, thus they mobilize the leader in a fight against the "bad people" outside the group. This is a fundamentally social arrangement and is the genesis of all evil. (Hirschhorn: 1988, 203).

Again, this leads one to suspect that the dogmatic nature of the worldview of some churches could make the phenomena of splitting and projection even a greater potential. A group which shared theological convictions with moralistic or judgemental overtones would easily be pressed into the service of justifying if not inducing such idealization of themselves and demonising opponents when a more universal doctrine of sin would lead to a more sympathetic view of others as whole objects with the same weaknesses as oneself.

A group that has collapsed into the 'paranoid-schizoid' position would tend according to Lyon (1988), to have a view of a God who can be relied upon to 'separate the wheat from

the chaff' within the group. Such a God is 'One who would break in' with revival as the miraculous Redeemer of the faithful. A remnant theology could be helpful here. God is one who will eventually vindicate the group against the persecutor. For these groups the worst sin that could be envisaged would be committed by the questioning the spiritual intuitions of the group leadership. Such would be the case if there were an evaluation made by an appeal to some higher authority such as the teaching of Scripture, tradition, or principles of natural justice. Such dissenters would easily be dismissed as virtual unbelievers.

The 'depressive position', by contrast, introduces the notion that we can be sinners ourselves and have the capacity to wound others. For groups in this position the image of God most cherished would be, one would suspect, of a God who is merciful, mutual and present in the mundane things. This God commands love and justice for all. Therefore sin would be defined as alienation and exclusion of others. A psychological equivalent description of such a faith consciousness would be:

When we act out of guilt, we affirm our insignificance. We cannot transform the feeling that we are unworthy. We require then others more powerful than we to tolerate our inadequacies. In contrast when we act out of shame, we affirm our value to others by offering something of value to them. ... In repairing our relationships we overcome our tendencies to split apart our good and bad feelings of others. We stop idealizing others or having contempt for them. We simply affirm their value because of their lively relationship to us. (Hirschhorn, 1988: 203).

Hirschhorn here is actually advocating the fostering of a sense of shame rather than guilt as better cultural therapy as shame requires no higher framework that involves the evaluation of a more powerful 'Other'. This is where a Biblically informed theology would diverge from a

purely humanistic psychological perspective. Nonetheless, forward movement in either type of community cannot bypass the discomfiting phases of working through the feelings of being out of kilter with others either via feeling triumphant over them or dependent and vulnerable. Only then can the source of anxiety that paralyses communion in community be addressed. Interpersonal reconciliation simultaneously affirms both the worth and limitation of both parties both the forgiver and the forgiven, and moves the group away from dealing with anxiety through complicated internal fantasies. This is both necessary therapeutically and theologically (Volf: 1996, 100, 129). The Christian who wants to live in community has to remember both their own sins and the deficiencies of those who oppose and wrong us. Then and only then can we realise that in Christ both are forgiven and all sins remembered only to be forgotten in the light of the forgetting of the God of the cross, eucharist and coming Glory.

It would certainly appear that all 'positions' have a major contribution to play at various times and seasons of the church life cycle, depending upon the challenges it faces in the internal or external culture. Movement toward maturation in such communities would require a willingness to entertain the depressive position as the capacity to embrace, even when the wronged party. Secular theorists are optimistic about the healing power of such moves if only the group can venture into such a depressive positions (Hirschhorn: 1988, 203).

A theological correlate of this ability would involve the capacity to realize that the doctrine of sin applies to ourselves as well as others. It would necessitate the welcoming of the 'other' as a full self rather than a part object. This is according to Paul (2 Corinthians 5.17-21) the human communal response to God's embrace of us (Volf, 1996: 98-100). God's embrace of us does not however come about through a depressive re-intergration of hateful

and loving ambivalence within God but the perfectly integrated all-knowing of the evil of sin and the subsequent incarnational experience of the suffering of human evil that culminated in the Cross of the Son. Such a theologically grounded internalised awareness of the basis of our position in the embrace of the Father through the work of the Son, an embrace that heightens our awareness of our own sinfulness as well as empathy for suffering inflicted by others, contrasts most sharply with the anxious responses of ‘splitting’, ‘projection’ or ‘pairing’. Faith centred on the Cross enables its subject to accept and face both their own and the other’s internal contradictions and hold these together in tension, to remember both, to mourn both and in the hope of Glory for both, to forgive both. This is the type of mature response encouraged by the Apostle Paul of the naturally factious idealizing Corinthians. Writing of a critical ‘depressive’ moment of communal repentance in this community he says:

I am glad now, not because you were made to feel distress, but because the distress that you were caused led to repentance. Your distress was the kind that God approves and so you have come to no kind of harm through us. For to be distressed in a way that God approves leads to repentance and then to salvation with no regrets; it is the world’s kind of distress that ends in death. (2 Corinthians 7.9,10, *Jerusalem Bible*, 1990).

An adequate ‘holding environment’ for this believer is supplied within God’s initiating, graciously justifying word of unconditional approval accepted by faith. If such an image is internalised this would have the potential to free the community to face their individual fallibility and own their guilt without shame or psychic damage. One would envisage that groups that do more than just dutifully espousing such approving, reconciling images of God, but genuinely operate outwardly from an understanding of God’s forgiveness, will reframe the obstacles and offences that are part and parcel of community life in more helpful ways.

Conflict and disagreement can even become viewed as positive opportunities to affirm the right of others to disagree about certain issues. In the light of the Glory that awaits, the forgiven one cannot be defrauded by difference from our essential dignity and significance. It is less likely in this context of lowered anxiety and conscious acceptance of the conflict, that other pre-conscious issues will be projected onto the opponent. In the same way it is less likely in the face of such an 'embrace' that the group will regress into denial and avoidance rather than engagement and the process 'working through' to a new level of understanding.

As noted earlier, Kets de Vries, Miller, Argyris and others, were far from optimistic that change in such situations would be a simple process, since the groups with which they work comprise a mixture of perspectives, usually including the objective realist as well as those who have a vested interest in maintaining a group fantasy. But the processes they employ as consultants rely on 'frontal assault' of the prevailing group fantasy and the upshot being a public admission of the dynamic by the leadership. It hardly seems likely that such an approach would encourage groups to embrace critical reflection and reconciling dialogue characteristic of a 'depressive position' when hard feelings and interpersonal bruises have become an assumed part of the culture. The psychodynamic lens suggests that the group fantasy may have become the very reason for a particular community's existence, a 'basic assumption' at the deepest level.

Resonance of Psychodynamics with New Testament Ecclesiology

The free church vision of the church upon which these Baptist churches are constructed, at least in theory, revolves around the concepts of the direct access of the believer to God, ministry belonging to the whole people of God and the particular ministry of the individual being predetermined charismatically (Karkkainen: 2002, 62-65, 148,149). These

are common 'shibboleths' in the contemporary denominations from which the churches within this sample associate even if these are not articulated clearly. They are interpretations of New Testament metaphors of churches as priestly communities of people called into ministry (1Peter 2.1-10). In such a conception there is neither '*laikos*' nor '*kleros*', but only *the 'laos tou theou'*.

But, the implications of these ecclesiological principles themselves can also be viewed from the point of view of their psycho-dynamic potential to induce maturation. As noted above, just as childhood experiences of parental absences may be mollified by transitional objects, so the primal world of fantasy from or ties to internal objects and fantasies of others in the adult world may be transcended by similar objects. As with other organizational identification, these transitional objects may take the form of churches as they too can easily be invested with meaning as 'holding environments' by the member. The psychodynamic significance of this participatory ecclesial structure of such churches is highly likely since they are viewed by many of the members as the human side equivalent to the ultimate ground of reality, the 'Kingdom of God'. To the extent that these churches were being true to their traditions, their convictions would cooperate with their maturational potential.

Just as Hirschhorn (1988, 1999) advocates clear definitions of work roles and encouraging individuals to assertively inhabit the full boundaries of their roles as a way of being healthy in our aggression toward others in the tasks that we are authorized to perform, if within the secular world of work, the products of our work can actually function as transitional objects in the absence of the ultimate parent figure, then the work of the church, its 'ministry', helps the member to offer something of value in the present aeon in which one lives by faith . In analogous fashion, if church members as ministers of Christ invest this ministry 'product' or service with "feelings of goodness and if it is received by the other, we

in turn feel better about our worth and are able to affirm the worth of the other” (Hirshchorn: 1988, 212-215). The consequence of having one’s contribution accepted and valued by the community is critical. Members are not then dependent upon the splitting process and projected images or organizational idealizations to sustain their self esteem. Again the membership are more likely to encounter others as real selves rather than part objects, part persons as they own and express our unique gifting and calling in a ministry.

There are no guarantees here as the other may reject one’s offering and the individual may feel devalued again. But this proposal seems to suggest, that to the extent that a group is empowered to find and value their spiritual ministry they will neither fixate with persecutory fantasies about others, nor, unhelpfully idolize their leadership as a means of satisfying primal narcissistic tendencies. In our inquiry then, it would be important to discern whether leadership which affect church communities positively did change their cultures via a simultaneous process of the encouragement of member ministry and the affirmation of the contributions of others.

Both a Pauline theology of ‘gifted ministry’ (1 Corinthians 12-14, Ephesians 4.1-16 especially vs. 15,16, Romans 12.1-8) and object relations theory are moving in the same direction here. Both affirm the same tangible, corporeal outcome of reconciling interpersonal processes through the robustness of ‘speaking the truth in love’(Eph. 4.15, 25) since in the Christian framework ‘we are member of one another’(Eph. 4.25) sharing the same secure organizational ‘skin’ which makes forgiveness and gentleness a living possibility psychodynamically (Eph. 4.32). Meissner correctly illuminates the transitional process in religious community membership.

“In this sense faith can be regarded as taking shape within the realm of illusory experience, and the faith of the religious community as being realized through the sharing of illusory experience within a given group of believers.”

The transitional zone then is one in which real objects and illusions have a proper role where the objective products and subjective significance and symbols interpenetrate (Meissner: 1984, 178). Both see the potential for the creation of real interpersonal pleasure through participation in a symbolic environment through the construction of abstract symbols such as ministry and expression of giftedness (Meissner:1984, 179). The Pauline definition of ministry or “spiritual worship” (Romans 12.1) produces the fruits of spiritual discernment and a grateful appreciation for the goodness of the will of God (Romans 12.2). And this worship is to be expressed by faith (Romans 12.3) through a conscious and mindful acceptance of one’s distinct “function” (Romans 12.4-8) resulting in a cheerful compassion. According to the Pauline vision, it would be imperative for church leadership to facilitate this reparative come sanctifying process from a therapeutic point of view and that indeed is the mandate of the office bearer or leader ‘to equip’ or alternately ‘to reset the dislocated’ member (Eph. 4.11)³ for the sake of the developmental up-building well-being of the whole body. According to the object relations theorist, as one seeks to transform one’s environment this is also an expression of one’s internal life and a vital part of human experience and nurturing of creative capacity (Meissner: 1984, 177).

Similar sentiments are expressed by the theorist operating without the benefit of the cosmological framework supplied by the gospel.

³ Alternatively valid renderings of the participle ‘katartismos’ (Reinecker and Rogers:1982, 531).

Such organizations create developmental cultures, because people are free to focus on the work they do, can achieve a greater sense of wholeness, and therefore restructure their relationship to their own internal objects. Because the focus is on the work itself, people are less afraid to scrutinize their working relationships and are therefore less likely to distort them with projections and introjections that limit their capacity to observe and learn. (Hirschhorn:1988, 219)

Again, the ordinance of creation and new creation do not work in opposition at this point and yet are informed and inspired from distinct sources.

Another clear way this may be facilitated which accords with this theory is for the leadership of the church to clarify its purpose in the external environment of its own local or even regional community. This would then enable the church member to forget the obsession with the painful internal dynamics of the church and focus instead upon the church in an instrumental way, as a means of fulfilling transcendent purposes within the Reign of Christ. The church would need to be seen as existing for more than its own survival. This too would enable the member to more aggressively approach the organization's boundaries and both discover that the outsider is not all evil nor the insider, entirely sanctified (Hirschhorn:1988, 218). Instead of a form of commitment to a church built through adulating its idealized properties in the minds of the prospective or present member, which are nothing other than the idealizations from within the membership, the church would be valued because of the measurable value it creates for others through its finite but worthwhile mission. A church without a clear sense of mission would, by contrast, appear to be very vulnerable to the temptations of narcissism or schizoid projections.

Conclusion

The paradox of such a psychologically healthy ecclesiology is that by attending to broader missional tasks, relationships are restored and re-founded on more helpful, realistic theology of human nature and a lower tendency to idealize the church itself. Likewise, if Hirschorn's insights are helpful, a genuine change in the psychological culture of the church would be typified by, the individual discovering the real value and offering their own contribution to the corporate life or mission of the church which has been raised to a level of conscious articulation. We would likewise expect some theological correlate in terms of a shift from a focus upon the pastor as priestly shield and from whom the life of the community is directly sustained, to the priesthood of all believers (1Peter 2.1-10) interdependent upon the sustenance of a present and affirming God operating through mutually responsible persons. It will remain to be seen how such interrelationships are reflected in the stories of those who have experienced both pain and renewal within their church cultures.