

Chapter 2. Framework 1: Organizational Culture Theory

This framework has flourished in the discourse on organizations since the 1980's, yet it has yet to have wide currency in the analysis of the organizational dynamics of church communities, with only one major study known to this writer at this time (Becker, 1999). Any form of human organization can be analysed by the culture lens. An organisational culture reading basically applies anthropological constructs to research on organizations as if they were distinct ethnic cultures (Hawkins: 1997, Hendry: 1999, Bate: 1996, Gabriel: 1999).

Since the seventies the theoretical interest in organizational culture has shifted from thinking of culture as one dimension of organizations, to being constitutive of the organization in and of itself (Strati, 1998: 1380, Bate, 1995:18-21). Popular management literature (Peters and Waterman: 1984) tended to view culture as some aspect of an organization that could be manipulated, aligned, or, re-engineered. An anthropological perspective would regard this viewpoint as nonsensical. Organizational culture is a way of viewing things that have become habitual in some parts of the organization. It is 'in the eye of the beholder (Bate: 1996, 12,14). Organizational strategy is analogous to myth making, or the attempt to give a historically emerging set of ideas some status as the prevailing logic within the organization, so as to influence the directions and interpretations of those within it.

The culture construct is all encompassing. It embraces many conceptions and inter-related conversations such as ethics, communication theory, organizational psychology, discourse theory (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000), and poetics (Gabriel, 2000). And there are also many diverse streams within this form of organizational research from an interest in structural aspects (Deal and Kennedy, 1982, Greenwood & Hinnings, 1988), aspects directly

connected with management interests (Peters and Waterman, 1982) through to the psychological correlates of culture (Stapley, 1996, Neumann and Hirschhorn, 1999, Gabriel, 1999, 2000).

Conceptions of Culture and Culture Paradigms

As regards the academic interest in the culture construct, Frost and colleagues have divided the field into three distinct groups of research: the ‘integration’, ‘differentiation’ and ‘fragmentation’ approaches to organizational culture (Frost, et. al. 1991). The bulk of culture readers are ‘Integrationists’ suggesting culture itself is perceived to be cohesive aspect of organizational life, a consensually-developed perspective. Or, it could be said to be a phenomenon which organizational members are widely aware of even if not able to fully articulate its dimensions due to its complexity. A ‘differentiation’ perspective tends to view the ‘integrationist’ perspective as an over-simplification, suggesting there may be in fact, no cohesive set of values or ethos within the group but a set of sub surface forces or alternate value systems operating in the particular group. The ‘fragmentation’ perspective is suspicious of the purpose to which the notion of culture itself was employed by management. Such a perspective focuses on the ambiguous and multiple perspectives that are possible within a particular setting and why one or other has heuristic privilege. This last perspective is characteristic of the postmodern research perspective with its methodology of deconstruction. Here the interest is not so much cultural change or understanding what drives the culture, so much as discerning which voices are privileged in the form of culture analysis chosen. This vantage point regards cultures as so unique that generalizations and comparisons, let alone explanations are pointless.

Another way to view the field of the study of organizations as cultures is to see the issue epistemologically as a set of distinct paradigm shifts from a 'modernist', through 'symbolic constructionist' to the 'interpretive' or 'post-modern' lens (Cooper and Burrell: 1988, Parker: 1992, Hatch: 1997). The 'modernist' approach attempted to understand culture through measurements done by an outsider from an objective standpoint. Those who share this vantage point view the culture of the organization as a source of resistance to management induced change and something that could, if harnessed be managed by those responsible particularly for the economic product of organizations (Peters and Waterman: 1982). Such an 'integrationist' perspective would see culture as a system of shared values and/or assumptions underpinning the structures of an organization and able to be manipulated by management through systems of rewards and punishments, or artefacts such as slogans, logos and new mission statements. Therefore, modernist approaches to culture tend to be functionalist or 'unitarian' (Bates: 1995). The concern has been to view the role of effective management as the capacity to integrate individuals into the value system of an organization through systems devised and deployed 'top – down' by management (Hinnings et. al. 1996: 886). Strong management was primarily concerned to develop 'strong cultures' where individuals had a strong commitment to a set of shared enduring values and meanings. However the modernist hope that culture strength would be the panacea to solve performance problems of organizations has been largely disappointed (Gabriel: 2000, 192). Strong cultures actually build resistances into the individuals within them and paradoxically can result in fragmentation as individuals refuse the attempts to promote uniformity. Each organization therefore contains both the managed culture and the unmanageable informal culture inaccessible to management control (Gabriel: 1995, 1999). To the extent that those who construct strong cultures or uniform strategies succeed, they have actually concocted an inbuilt recipe for disaster, as they are liable to lose connection with changes in their

environment. Such culture engineers can be blinded by their inward focus as well as empowered the process of dissent from within.

A second perspective, the 'Symbolic interpretive' approach assumes that culture can only be truly understood by insiders. Clifford Geertz states

Man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun. I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning. (Hatch: 1997, 218).

If the actions, processes and symbols of a culture are to be understood as connected to deeper meanings, it takes qualitative approaches to unearth and interpret them. This approach sees that the prime leadership role in organizational cultures consists of influencing and being influenced by these patterns, processes and symbols. In this view, any significant change in structural arrangement implies a corresponding change in values underpinning the structure. Such approaches are not particularly concerned with the usefulness to the organizational management of research, nor the positivistic validation of the results (Strati, 1998: 1380). Such an approach can overlap with psycho-dynamic interests as both have an interest in the connections between the emotional dimensions, the beliefs and ideology and the language and symbols used within the particular organization (Gabriel: 1995, 191, Gabriel: 2000, 87ff, Sillince: 1999, Dumford and Jones: 2000).

So, a spectrum of approaches to culture reading, and organizational strategy or myth making is possible. These extend from a 'uni-culture' or strong culture perspective through to a 'pluriculture' perspective where the coexistence of competitive interest groups is

acknowledged (Bates: 1996, 65,66). Bates also criticizes the notion of the strong culture as an ideal. If culture is viewed as a homogenizing 'glue' that suppresses competing interests and claims, this is in reality a delusion. The more an organization is strong in the sense of forging top down a consensus on norms and behaviour the more rigidity, conformity and hence sclerosis and the lower the capacity or willingness to embrace innovation (Bates: 1996: 46, 71). Conversely, pluralism when allowed to run rampant ends up in replacing compromise with cold war and the possibility of imposed unitary culture is also enhanced.

A 'postmodern' approach to organizational culture in fact sees culture itself as a result of a political competition between subcultures. Culture is not so much a stable 'object' but a fragmented affair in constant flux. According to such a paradigm, there is no meaning that is not created without political intent or the self-interest of a particular group. It is somewhat ironic however that post-modern writers are a little more adamant about the validity of their own conclusions when they trace the political intent of the 'meaning makers'- the powerful who have the capacity to design the images and artifacts that reflect the official stories that produce organizational cohesion (Kilduff and Martin: 1993, Boje: 1995, Buzzanelli, Ellingson et al: 1997). Following Lyotard, such an approach rejects the validity of any attempt to explain or interpret the surface features of the culture (Schultz and Hatch, 1996: 258f). The reality before us in a particular culture cannot be explained by subsurface determining factors nor does it need to be. Any attempt to push beneath the evident surface implies a prior allegiance to a preferred meta-narrative above the existential one presented in the data. For these theorists to suggest organizational culture may have underlying systemic or psychodynamic causes is to confuse our agenda with the subject's experience which should be taken at face value.

Therefore the myth making enterprise of a culture has received particular emphasis from the postmodern communication analysts. Organizational or community stories are the "social attempts to manage certain problematic aspects of modern organizations through definitions of truth and rational purpose" (Boje et al., 1982). It is this level that comes to the investigator of a particular organizational culture, in terms of accepted traditions and explanations that circulate throughout the community as reasons for past successes and failures. This symbolic nature of organizational life includes both the concrete products, such as logos and symbols, as well as the heroic 'mythicizing' of organizational leadership in the public arena (Strati, 1998, 1388). In fact some would go so far as to say that organizational controls by whatever means are not merely means of constraining the behaviour of the members within them but of molding their very sense of identity and self hood. It is not so much as with the older models of culture that certain values are internalised by individuals, but the individual does not actually exist outside the exertion of the effects of power from within the organization (Gabriel: 1995, 185f).

The Genesis of Organizational Culture

Although the interest in application of anthropological frameworks to organizations begins in the seventies, the cultural approach is firmly indebted to the outlines of Edgar Schein (1985, 1990) for the application of the cultural lens to distinct organizational life. Any discussion of organizational culture must begin here. Schein understood that culture could be discerned at three distinct levels; basic assumptions, values or, artifacts.

The cultural use of the term 'basic assumptions' are the deepest level of culture and are the hardest aspect of culture to access. They are unconsciously learned, or absorbed responses that determine how group members perceive, think and or feel. Values and beliefs

are that aspect of an individual's consciously held conceptual apparatus, which they use to justify their actions and evaluate outcomes. One difficulty of accessing the structure of a culture is due to the process of formation whereby these very factors such as a group's peculiar values are forged over time. These eventually become sub-conscious and take the form of presuppositions lying behind the processes and patterns of group life. The most visible level of culture is the level of artifacts. Every tangible, and intentional product of the culture such as a church is an artifact. These include the layout of a worship space, a bulletin design, dress codes and official documents such as constitutions, history books, to stories, myths, sermons and symbols stemming from the inner life of the particular community.

Schein stresses both the critical function of leadership in the formation of culture and also the socio-psychodynamic aspect of the formation of cultures in organizations. "Once a group acquires a history, it acquires a culture" (Schein, 1985, 40). Leaders help form cultures by what they pay attention to, measure or control, as well as the rewards they dispense or the punishments they can inflict, as well as the roles they model. At the same time groups with little shared history tend to have weak cultures as they do not uniformly share the same emotional responses, emotional release or regression. Since crises stress cultures or organizations to react from without or within they too can be formative of the culture even to the point of distorting it for a longer term (Kets De Vries & Miller, 1984). But this is a two way process.

One may go so far as to say that a unique function of 'leadership' as contrasted with 'management' or 'administration' is the creation and management of culture. At the same time, all leaders are influenced by their own prior learning. Once leaders create a culture they may end up constrained by it. And they can no longer lead the group into new and creative avenues. A complex interplay of creative and

constraining forces operates both inside the leaders and the group. The resolution of such conflicting forces becomes one of the key tasks of leaders. (Schein: 1984, 172).

The key tasks faced by groups include those relative to the external environment such as the articulation of a core mission or function of the group relative to its primary environment, the specific goals pursued by the organization, the basic means of accomplishing the goals and, or the criteria for measurement of results and the ways to readjust if goals are not achieved.

There are significant internal integration issues to which one has to attend for a group culture to form (Schein: 1985, 65-69). A group with a strong culture will also tend to have the following features:

- (i) A common grammar or conceptual system
- (ii) Boundaries for exclusion and inclusion
- (iii) Criteria for the allocation of power or status
- (iv) Criteria for the expression of love and affection
- (v) Criteria for the allocation of rewards and punishments
- (vi) An ideology or a conceptual framework for handling the unmanageable aspect of the organization.

These features should alert the unwary about the difficulty of changing a strong culture.

The very process of change may invite a period of instability where we may fear the loss of control, and that fear may keep us committed to whatever cultural assumptions we have, even if another set of assumptions might be more desirable from an objective point of view. (Schein: 1984, 69).

We certainly find this to be the case in the church cultures examined below. Mere expertise, argument or plausible evidence does not easily overturn ingrained patterns of processing common life and problem solving. It is often only a crisis that determines whether a culture remedies itself, or comes to re-evaluate its values and assumptions. Culture itself is a conserving rather than an innovating force. It retains anything but cannot create anything. Left to themselves, organizational cultures will only change in order to remain the same (Bate: 1996, 90, 91). Bate calls them 'autopoetic systems'. It is not so much that organizations do not solve, as they do not see problems. That is because they are self-referencing and do not recognize or 'frame-breaking' ideas that may involve transformation so as to take advantage of them.

Here lies the crucial significance for discerning the theological framework in analysing church communities as distinct cultures, since the shared belief system lies at the deepest level of culture. Schein's analysis assumes that these ideological core values underlie the assumptions and patterns of solutions to the issues faced by the particular community. The ideology of the group touches upon issues of world-view such as the nature of truth and how it is discerned, the nature and purpose of humanity in nature and the cosmos, moral evaluation of humanity as to whether it is intrinsically moral, neutral or sinful, or, the nature of the basis for human relationships, whether the community is competitive, collaborative, communal or individualistic, based on traditions, laws or charisma and so forth (Schein, 1985: 81).

The 'ideology' of a group is the rationalization for the unexplained or superstitious behaviour and functions as the guide and incentive system to the members. Generally it is not directly accessible through policy documents or organizational mission statements,

although an official version may reside in such places. The actual operational ideology of the group is discernable by listening to the ‘mythic structure’ of the group through the stories of crises, conflicts, heroes and villains (Zaleznick, 1993, Gabriel, 2000). It is at this type of sub-surface level of reality that determines the above-surface responses to the historical accidents within or outside the boundaries of the community. Survival problems happen for most communities, including the churches in this study, when their deep level assumptions are out of kilter with the environmental realities in the dominant surrounding culture (Bate, 1996: 71,76). According to this perspective, one cannot hope to change the culture of an organization until the underlying ideology is surfaced and the culture of the group is articulated at a conscious level through the subjective lenses of the members of the particular community. Operative ideology coming in the form of stories of heroes and villains are crucial ways that the culture is stabilized and core values and assumptions are kept alive. Anyone attempting to ‘tune in’ to the uniqueness of the group must attend to these seriously for more than a mere historicizing interest. The myths make the people how they are.

Complicating the Schein Model: Depths and Dynamics.

The notion that culture can be read or understood via a classification scheme, distilled from underlying values or assumptions and under-girding metaphors, or, ‘mapped’ as a static object, has been challenged overtly by both symbolic interpretive and postmodern writers. Recent studies reflect a development of Schein’s organizational cultural lens particularly for describing both the essential features of a culture and also the mechanics of culture change.

Hawkins (1998) supplements Schein with two recent models from the Bath Research Institute. The main features of the scheme are to suggest that there is a deeper level of culture than the level of assumptions. Hawkins thinks of a culture as an object imagined as

operating at a series of levels as with the functionalist scheme of Schein. At the top, or on the surface Level 1 represents the 'artifacts' level such as policy statements, mission statements, dress codes and so forth. Level 2 represents 'behaviour', also at the observable surface concerning what people do and say, what is rewarded how conflict and mistakes are treated. Level 3 concerns the 'mindset' or the organizational worldview, ways of thinking that constrain behaviour, taboos, values in use, basic assumptions. This can be deduced and discussed at a conscious level. Then he adds a new Level 4 the 'emotional ground'; the mostly unconscious emotional states and needs that create a context within which the events are perceived. This may correspond to what earlier research denoted as 'organizational climate'. Finally, at Level 5 lie the 'motivational roots'; the unconscious level that cannot be articulated, concerning once known basic sources of incentive.

Hawkins expounds a depth dimension beneath the discernable cultural levels, rather than a dynamic interchange between levels. The Second Bath Model therefore focuses upon this unconscious aspect of group 'consciousness' as the defining aspect of a culture and breaks level five into finer grade distinctions again (Hawkins: 1997, 429). While conceptually appealing it is not at all clear how these distinctions could be utilized by a participant-observer if these issues are often lying beneath the consciousness of members of the culture.

These examples of the development of Schein's layered perspective suggest that something is felt to be more primary and operative within culture than culture itself if that can be so. This view of research implies that consultants are not involved in an exact positivistic science but discern cultures through critical inter-subjectivity supported by triangulation of data gleaned from a variety of vantage points. Hawkins and others (Stapley:

1996, Neumann and Hirschhorn: 1999) seek not only classification but explanation from other more primal frameworks such as the psycho-dynamic framework, which we attend to in later chapters. Needless to say, this notion suggests that culture forms in a much more dialectical¹ than a lineal fashion and for reasons that may not be directly observable to the observer, let alone the participant.

Culture Dynamics and Organizational Change Research

In the terms of this general framework, the crucial explanation for the demise of a community lies with the lack in a capacity of the community to adjust to the demands of its environment or a lack in a capacity to find harmonious solutions to the issues faced within the group in its formation and ongoing cohesion. The responsibility for this usually lies with the community leadership. More likely, the changes demanded by pressing external realities within the environment require a significant shift in the nature of the 'ideology', or, in the case of the believing communities in this study, their 'theology'. Therefore a leadership's comprehension of the core values around which the faith of their particular church resonates is critical to any deliberate or managed change.

Change cannot be injected with a 'silver bullet' approach. Culture change is not just about changing surface issues such as routines, patterns, or, processes for group behaviour or

¹ A more recent and quite complex cyclical revision of Schein has been proposed by Hatch (1993, & 1997) in her 'cultural dynamics' model. It is not used directly in the research that follows as it is a heavily theoretical construction to do with the conflicting directions of interpretations and reactions towards changes at each level of culture. She also distinguishes between actual artifacts and the symbolic meaning of these to the culture members. The benefit of this approach over Schein's according to Hatch is that it allows a culture transformation process to happen in one of two directions and not only in the direction of 'top down' as cultural solutions continue to reinforce their underlying assumptions. Assumptions underlying a culture may be changed from two directions, through reaction to imported alien values or the new interpretation of symbols. The cost is that the complexity of the model while having theoretical plausibility in emphasizing the continually changing nature of cultural dialectics at various levels is infeasible to use as a research tool to gain a sense of the enduring or strong aspects of a culture being studied or for making cultural comparisons across cultures or across time.

communicating new organizational policies clearly. The climate within the organization and how the organization presently functions for the humanity within it determines the degree to which any change in the focus of people's energies can be sustained (Schneider & Brief, 1994: 10). Organizational researchers of a more rationalist/modernist persuasion, akin to the organizational 'climate' research of the early 1980's, would suggest that change has to do with the climate injected into the culture by management at a level such as the nature of interpersonal relationships and the degree of trust or mistrust, cooperation or competition, the concentration of privileges within the upper levels of hierarchy, or the degree of challenge within the nature of work itself (Schneider and Brief, 1994: 9) Organizational 'climate' is the consciously perceived aspect of organizational life. This aspect is more subject to social control than culture (Dennison, 1997: 624). By contrast, Schein defined culture as:

... A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

Attitudes and overt behaviour are more superficial and less reliable representations of this underlying structure. Culture researchers since Schein realize that culture is a much deeper structure, rooted in deep beliefs and worldviews that are instilled through the socialization of individuals into the life of the group over longer periods of time. This functionalist approach views the upper levels of the cultural 'cross section' that, by corresponding to these beliefs, symbolize these deeper convictions and thus give the culture its stability at all levels.

Cultures are inherently conservative as they provide secure processes and habits that work for the particular group (Bate, 1995: 88, 90). When they change, since they are self-referencing, they change only as internal revisions in order to stay the same or, remain operative in a changing context.

This phenomenon of social production of culture gives the particular community or organizational culture its uniqueness. This is where the inherent appeal of culture research as opposed to earlier positivistic organizational 'climate' research lies for the post-modern researcher. In terms of epistemology, the post-modern approach to culture research would reject the older positivistic approach to comparative studies across a statistically significant group of organizations. Such an approach holds that the dialogue between the culture partners is unique within the particular setting and symbolic representation can only be understood only within that specific setting making generalization impossible or, meaningless. The individual behaviour cannot be abstracted from the social context in which it occurs. However, we should not be restricted in our options for research either to statistically significant generalizations of unimportant, meaningless but provable surface features, or, unique non-generalizable 'thick' descriptions of individual cultures that have no value for leadership practice. Generalizations are possible and not futile as long as one keeps in mind the unique nature of the interrelationships between deep levels of assumptions and higher levels of values and behaviour. Many fruitful studies have been done through comparison of a moderate number of organizations through comparing these unique organizations at intermediate levels of culture (Dennison, 1996: 629). Comparisons between groups would provide valuable insights into the ways in which the representation of values and beliefs have been generated within the particular communities studied.

By contrast, a symbolic-interpretive view would posit that managed change is not simple. If indeed it is cultural change we are speaking of then this change occurs at a deeper than behaviour level in the realm of new perceptions, values and assumptions. These values and assumptions are also deeply rooted in unquestioned beliefs and worldviews. It is much more involved than changing the managers in an organization or coming up with a new set of structures or directives from above. Cultural realities exist in relationships between people (Bate, 1996: 201) and despite the popular misconception, no single leader no matter how equipped with incentives is able to produce culture change. Experiences of such attempts at change are interpreted through the stable value system of the members of the organization and form fairly stable attitudes over time and affect the moment by moment mood of those members (George & Jones, 1997:397). While managers or leaders will have some capacity to change their organization or, to induce change by the actions and the artifacts they introduce into the life of the community, the culture may well change in diverse and unintended directions. The desired changes will always be accommodated to these deeper symbolic schemes within the particular culture. Leadership behaviour is both interpreted and evaluated, and responded to by the follower on the basis of the prevailing ideological frameworks under-girding the whole culture. The leaders themselves also will be ‘managed’ by the culture. “Managers are artifacts who would like to be symbols” (Hatch: 1997, 235). A leader simply cannot guarantee that the structures, initiatives or solutions they introduce via their conscious management of organizational life will be interpreted in the same way they themselves interpret them. It would seem reasonable to in church cultures that the level of ideology, assumptions and beliefs, formed over generations of church life resonate both constructively and destructively with the intended symbolic statements that leadership would hope they were communicating.

Bate (1996: 137) reminds those who would institute change from the top down, that because culture is a natural bi-product of human interaction, the issue is not whether a culture can be changed but whether culture change can be managed. Once a culture is created, that is, once a consciously intended strategy has become a habit, the culture has its own momentum and will resist any attempt to change direction even when the environment threatens it with extinction. If culture is understood retrospectively as a historically accrued process then change agents must seek to diagnose where and for what purpose the culture or organization became snared in vicious cycles. Bate builds up a case from the very nature of the types of change for a multiform approach to culture change that is sensitive to the peculiarities of a local context. In fact he rejects the notion that change can be strategically planned.

There are two basic attitudes that need to be kept in tension in understanding change. “Developmental”, or ‘first order’ change, seeks to give the organization momentum but not movement, to change incrementally so as to remain as they were in the face of challenges. “Real”, ‘second order’, also known as ‘discontinuous’ change is the sort that is usually resisted. It is like a quantum-leap, or ‘transformation’ that seeks to take advantage of a shift in the environment. All organizations need both at some stage, and an over-reliance on one, paradoxically, triggers the need for the alternative form (Bate: 1996, 34). Constant second order change fails to consolidate upon strengths of recent decisions and needs the sorts of revisions that help an organization interact effectively with its environment. Organizations that think that they can secure a future by ‘tinkering’ revisions will fail to adjust in time or degree to paradigm level shifts in the environment. If left to themselves, organizations will never evolve into a state where they accept second order change. Evolutionary forces always move away from this. New forms have to be created outside the system and separately from

the old strategies and forms (Bate: 1996, 151-153). Besides this, cultural forms take time to implement and always lag behind social change in perception.

Bate outlines four basic modes of change management that can be discerned within organizations. He evaluates how each of these forms works both in terms of its internal logic and then in terms of the particular situations in organizational life cycle where each is most or least appropriate. For our research purposes then, when transformational change does appear to have occurred, we should suspect the prior, deliberate and successful management of a process by the change agents.

The four approaches are somewhat discernable within the narratives of the church communities which follow. These include the following types. The 'aggressive' approach is where the change agent acts so as to institute a 'tough guy' culture (Bate: 1996, 169). The manager of change does not want people in the organization being creative or thinking for themselves so much as taking direct action. The people need to be confronted with the thought that their traditional ways of thinking are erroneous. The aim of the manager is to establish a strong integrated culture in which there exists a single source or authority and a single focus of loyalty. A variety of compliances will follow from unthinking adoption through to outright resistance (Bate: 1996, 177). This is appropriate in times when the survival of the organization is threatened. It is not so much a bullying neurotic form of leadership, and not a raw form of heroism but a 'messianic act' of redemption for the good of the organization. The problem with this approach is that its apparent successes can be short lived as the culture reverts to its usual tracks and traits especially when the 'heroic' leader is absent. It inevitably raises counter-cultural resistance and segmentation when trying to

homogenize the organization. This approach is the only one that by itself can trigger second order transformational change (Bate: 1996, 215).

‘Conciliative’ change management believes that the new culture can be grafted gently onto the old. This approach rejects confrontation in favour of more amicable discourse. It is a trickle down fluid approach used by those who perceive that they lack sufficient power to compel change (Bate: 1996, 181). It involves constructing new practices before ‘tearing down old scaffolding’ (Bate: 1996, 183). The hope is that the new approach or product will sell itself and make the rest of the organization look old fashioned. Bate warns that such approaches are idealistic and ‘auto-catalytic’ ideas may never progress being ‘smothered in the arms of mother culture’.

A ‘corrosive’ approach appears like the conciliative approach but is a covert attempt to manipulate relationships to achieve change. This approach assumes that change is a ‘zero-sum’ game and yet like the aggressive approach, the culture is a balance that needs to be disturbed. This is more a matter of ‘pulling’ rather than ‘pushing’ for change by attempting not to work at the directing end of the culture but at the performance enactment end. The approach attempts to heighten the gap in perceptions between what the organization perceives itself to be and what actually is happening. It utilizes networks of relationships that cut across the existing organizational maps (Bate: 1996, 190). The approach is criticized by Bate on the basis that it may produce more subcultures than dominant culture change. More pertinently, networks too can be just as order maintaining so as to guarantee their own perpetuity.

Finally, an ‘indoctrinative’ or educative approach attempts to impose a new mindset in the members of the culture through deliberate training ‘rites’. These can be rites of passage, integration, or the people processing programs that attempt to produce one uniform way of thinking. This does not happen by edict as with the aggressive approach but through mission statements, ethical codes and values documents (Bate: 1996, 198) to replace the individual’s frameworks for evaluation with those of the organization. The utility of the approach is criticized by Bate since it is strong on teaching for change but lacks a theory of learning as a basis. Values and perspectives tend to be caught rather than taught and the approach itself can as with the aggressive model be resented and resisted just as much as the confrontational approach.

Bate offers a grid to evaluate the effectiveness of different approaches to cultural change. Effectiveness is determined by the unique particulars of the individual situation. He chooses five variables to weigh the respective value of each (Bate; 1996, 203ff). The ‘expressiveness’ variable is the ability to project a new idea taken up by the feeling or affective component of the culture. The variable of ‘commonality’ is the ability to create a unifying set of values affecting the relational component of the culture. The ‘penetration’ variable is the extent to which the change is able to penetrate the depths and breadth of the culture. The ‘adaptability’ variable is the ability to adapt to changing circumstances that relates to the developmental aspect of the culture. Whereas the variable of ‘durability’ is the ability of an approach to change the culture in long lasting ways thus affecting its institutional or structural aspects.

The notion of ‘culture change’ as a construct reminds us that the mass of persons prefer to have their existing orientations reinforced no matter how outworn they may be.

'Common sense' is the cultural system and protector of its retrospective and introspective foci. By the same token, the pressure for change comes from the fact that people cannot tolerate endless uncertainty and have to do something about it eventually (Bate: 1996, 219,220). The approach seeks to stimulate the culture to switch modes from automatic process to a consciously aware mode of enquiry.

The first phase of change involves a series of approaches used in sequence. The four phases Bate advocates proceed from a 'deformative' phase, using aggressive or indoctrinative measures, to a 'reconciliative' phase involving the opportunity for dialogue and open disagreement, then into an 'acculturative' phase, where options are narrowed, commitments garnered and socializing of new comers occurs to finally, the 'enacted' phase where shared meanings become cultural practices and the informal culture confirms the desired patterns. The last phase is 'the formative' phase where policies and artifacts are produced to expound and reinforce the culture (Bate:1996, 222, 223).

Bate's comprehensive work reminds us that cultural change is not about following a blueprint as if directions produced performance but that the opposite is in fact the case. Organizational life follows out of actions that flow from a degree of shared perceptions and meanings. And that depends upon what interpretations of actions are occurring within the organizational member. The significance of this conditional and dynamic view of culture for this research would be to suggest that it is not only the assumptions or the ideological convictions of faith communities that pastors must attend if they are to attempt to manage change positively. They need to know the significance of the strongest symbols, or to be aware of the connections between key artifacts, their symbolic meaning and the values and assumptions which under-gird them. A change agent cannot directly attend to assumptions

or ideology and adjust these, so much as respect their symbolic correlates, be those symbols en-fleshed by ritual actions or concrete artifacts such as worship spaces, practices, even architecture. Alternately, the successful agent of change could seek to induce the sorts of changes that are desired by addressing the core values of the group and realizing that they have no control of how these indirectly filter down to affect the core assumptions of the group and visa versa.

Typologies of Cultures

This study presumes that while cultures arise in organizations due to unique contextual factors and the social construction of the particular group, they are not so unique as to render comparison meaningless. A common approach to comparison has been through the distillation of anthropological theories in the forms of taxonomies through which whole cultural archetypes may be located and then compared with others (Handy, 1988, Schneider, 1994, Hawkins, 1996, Hendry, 1999). Such grids could greatly simplify organizational analysis if the particular culture could be directly plotted or identified via its bearing the hallmarks of a particular type. A taxonomy has the potential to locate a culture at a particular time in its history so as to compare and contrast the culture of the organization before and after perceived change. Relationships may be found between the type of culture and other critical features such as the style of leadership, structure and decision-making as well as the emotional experience of the participants (Gabriel, 2000; 202). There are many examples of such taxonomical approaches. The ones here are pertinent to intra-organizational rather than macro cultural analysis.

Schneider's fourfold typology (Schneider, 1994) has a strong foundation in organizational theory.² Schneider sees organizational culture as generated along a domain and range that enable one type to be quite distinguished from another despite formal or industrial similarities. At the same time similarities can be noticed since they may share a similar cluster of features with regard to one variable but be quite distinct with regard to the other. Schneider emphasises as did Schein that organizational culture is essentially formed from (a) what it pays attention to and (b) how it makes judgments and decisions (Schneider; 1994, 124). The first domain concerns the pattern of decision-making employed within the culture and how this reflects the degree of recognition given to the personal subjective aspect. Cultures may range from 'impersonal' task focused to 'personal' types where subjective values are allowed expression. The other variable concerns the focus of attention. Cultures vary as to orientation of the culture toward present stable 'actualities' as opposed to future 'possibilities' that are out of present sight. This allows a very useful discrimination between four quite distinct types of culture.

A 'control culture' is defined as an 'actuality - impersonal' culture. It pays attention to the tangible reality and matters of practical utility. Decision making primarily takes an analytically detached type, is formula oriented and prescriptive as with the Role culture above. A 'collaboration culture' is an 'actuality-personal' culture. Like the 'control culture' this arrangement attends to concrete reality and matters of practicality. Decision making process is people oriented, organic and informal. Schneider believes this characterizes the helping professions or highly people focused companies.

² This is similar to another popular taxonomy comes from Charles Handy's popular *Understanding Voluntary Organizations*. Handy suggest there are four primary paradigm cultures; 'power', 'role', 'task' and 'person' without specifying the theoretical or empirical grounds for these distinctions (Handy, 1988: 88-92).

A 'competence' culture essentially is a 'possibility-impersonal' culture. This type of interpersonal process attends to potentiality, imagined alternatives, creative options and theoretical concepts. Decision-making is analytically detached, formula oriented, scientific and prescriptive. Advertising agencies and consultancies where there is a strong emphasis on achievement would characterize such a culture. A possibility-personal values set is found in a 'cultivation culture'. This culture attends to the potentiality of persons, their ideals and beliefs, aspirations and values inspiration and creative options. Decision-making is people driven, organic and subjective. Schneider sees this as typical of religious and therapeutic organizations. This has some similarities to the 'person' culture above yet must not imply that there is no important task to perform.

Such an approach has the appeal of enabling one to sense discrete shifts within church cultures in certain directions according to these two variables rather than just to liken the church to a particular constellation of features. It is possible to conceive even at this level of simplicity that although congregational governed churches would apparently fit into type four; 'possibility-personal' culture, they may at different times display cultures more akin to quite alien secular situations. Unlike the other taxonomies, its two variables do not presuppose a corporate context.

The danger with this and all such approaches is that one can tend to view culture as a static 'object' with certain recognizable stable characteristics. The cultural perspective reminds us that communities are cultures and they are in constant process of negotiating external and internal demands. Schneider's grid implies that when two cultures differ from one another in both content and process they are opposites. Therefore leaders who plan to change a culture would have more success by moving toward one of the two 'adjacent'

cultures that share either a similar content or a process. For example a control culture would find it less difficult to become either a collaboration or a competence culture but quite difficult to become a cultivation culture differing in both content and process (Schneider:1994, 123).

Penny Edgel Becker (1999) produced a recent example of the power of such a typological study of the culture of congregations. Becker's main interest is the relationship between church type and conflict levels. She demonstrates that it is the self-perceptions and values of the group that shape the experience of church life for the members more than the theological variables to which openness to change is usually attributed. Becker identifies four major types or 'models' of church culture that cut right across ideological or size lines in terms of the prevalence and power of conflict. Discrete conflict outcomes are less determined by a uniform set of demographic or theological conviction variables, than dependent upon variation in the basic types of congregation that both shape and are shaped by conflict and other aspects of group process. Variables such as size, polity, liberal versus conservative orientation could not directly explain the levels or types of conflict (Becker: 1999, 45). In fact some mixtures of variables displayed similar results such as hierarchical conservative communities displayed similar patterns as liberal consensual structures.

The four models she regularly discerned were described metaphorically as firstly, the 'family' church, or 'patriarchy' where strong figures control directions and high levels of enmeshment occur. The second type is termed the 'house of worship' model, likened to a 'local store' where interaction is minimal beyond worship time and the faith has little connection to wider issues of daily life. The high morale 'leader' church, like a social movement which is more concerned with perpetuation of a tradition, a denomination than

interpersonal connections and which sees itself as being responsible for a mission capable of affecting the wider community. Finally she identified the 'community' congregation, or 'democracy' which has little notion of mission beyond the perpetuation of a uniform set of values and beliefs.

In short, these models vary mostly around issues to do with how much they valued the promotion of close fellowship and intimacy among members and how much value the congregation placed upon utilizing the congregation as an arena for debating social and political issues that the members valued as important (Becker; 1999, 13, 35,36).

Others had previously argued the need for cultures to be distinguished by dynamics of commitment, the styles of moral debate, and the structure of participation in a variety of social movements and voluntary organizations. But, Becker found that both theologically liberal and conservative congregations are equally likely to frame conflicts as moral issues, to favour compromise, or not. Prior to her study, the scholarly consensus had proposed that individual attitudes and beliefs were better exponents of the outcomes of conflict. Conflict between people who possess diverse frames of reference is the most severe or prone to escalation. More routine conflict occurred within the same frames (Becker: 1999, 43,44). Frequently congregations in conflict thought themselves to be in conflict about the congregation's future or survival. Associated with this was some change in membership and then a trigger incident that led to the protracted conflict (Becker; 1999, 159).

Central to my interests, Becker demonstrated that it is possible to identify sets of core goals and values and other shared assumptions from the public discourse and ritual life of the congregation. This is partly because the official artifact production, the construction of

strategy documents and policy comes usually from the one central source of the pastor or leadership team. In times of conflict however, people struggle to defend the familiar model of congregational life, or alternately, struggle to introduce a new model. Folk tend to tell different versions of the conflict, but usually agree that there was one group or ideology trying to take over and the orientations of the different groups are assumed to be mutually exclusive. Even though one party may have more power, one group tends to abandon the community when it becomes apparent that there is no common basis in assumptions for the resolution of the conflict. The effectiveness of the 'victor' who remains depends upon having sufficient power to shape congregational decision-making and resource allocation, and, more diffusely, to be able to structure what is said in different contexts.

Taking this further, postmodernist Gabriel reminds us that the very enterprise of seeing change as something that can be understood and then controlled itself is a totalizing illusion. There are always 'unmanaged' domains of organizational life. Aspects of ideology or values may seek to be imposed upon an organization by leadership and are stated in such documents as values statements or mission statements. However, there may be a variety of conflicting or, contradictory ideologies, possessed by organization members that are not subject to control by the leadership. This is called the 'unmanaged organization' (Gabriel, 2000, 126). These appear in 'in'-jokes, rebellious acts, and particularly, subversive organizational stories that put a lie to the attempts of management to produce a strong uniform culture. These should not be thought of as synonymous with the informal organization. The informal organization can be 'policed' by regulation and rule of the management these stories are not censurable. Nor are they fantasies, as the organizational leadership may also place great store in the projection of such stories around which the group may be expected to officially cohere. These stories from the margins "allow individuals and

groups through their stories and other narratives to affirm themselves as independent agents, heroes, survivors, victims and objects of love rather than identifying with the scripts that organizations put in their mouths” (Gabriel, 2000: 129). The story world within the minds of a community culture may reveal identities and climates in communities that are richer and more complex than the official shapers of culture would prefer or desire.

Implications for Reading Church Stories

Some of the practical implications of the culture framework for our study of churches are as follows. The cultural framework fundamentally enriches our power of *description* of culture and this in turn affects our capacity for comparison and contrast. It is not aiming to explain the culture so much as to see it. Hence the story data revealing assumptions, values and structural arrangements is not a reflection of some other underlying reality or determinants.

As regards the descriptive facility afforded by the plethora of cultural theories, the cultural lens affords the following comparisons and alerts us to the following cultural phenomena. Some of these phenomena are particular in their focus whereas others concern the culture as a whole. While it has to be recognized that it is a scholarly fiction, a stable 'snap shot' mapping of the particular phenomena which define a community as a distinct culture could focus upon the following issues.

Firstly, a descriptive church analysis could attend to the ‘strength’ of the culture or, the cohesion between the levels of the culture matrix across the various areas of church life. That is, one could seek to discern whether the espoused values and processes accepted by the congregation are coherent and related to their assumptions and demonstrated in their

behaviour. Or, conversely, one could aim to discern whether there are more ‘unmanaged aspects’ of the organization that is more of a collective of competing pluralistic interests. The stories shared may permit a degree of inference as to the existence of pockets of resistance to the changes in the macro culture within certain subcultures and groups affected by the changes.

Thirdly, if churches are at all ideologically driven cultures, the cherished values underlying the visible behaviors and rituals may be able to be connected to the espoused beliefs and assumptions concerning how the Being of God expressively operates and what God expects of those communities. These connections may be possible if not through explicit statements then at least, through making intelligent inferences based on the allusions to convictions expressed within the stories, particularly stories of deep conflict that disturb the sacred assumptions held by parties within the larger group.

Fourthly, it would not be difficult to compare and locate the type of particular community with regard to any of the taxonomies used to map and categorize organizational culture. If the organizational stories pertained to such issues these also could enable us to discriminate between the culture of a community from one period of the church’s life to another time, from dysfunction to health and compare distinct communities. Of particular interest is the notion of whether a change agent has actually managed to move a congregation from one type of culture, from ‘controlling’, to ‘competence’, or from ‘collaborative’ to ‘cultivation’ type and vice versa.

Fifthly, with regard to descriptions of the change processes, we are alerted by the recent refinements in the culture paradigm to attend to those aspects of culture that may not

make straightforward sense and the chaotic and dynamic nature of change. Regarding the moment of change, whether there was a perceived opportune moment for the change, or, what is the pressure for change from the surrounding cultural 'eco system' to which the church is linked. This is to do with Bate's notion (1995: 189) as to whether an impetus for cultural change was provided by a gap between the preferred espoused directions needed and the actual performance of the church. Regarding the phenomena of culture change, we may be able to discern the means by which change was brought about, its speed and relationship to the past traditions, beliefs and values of a group. The various agents of change may have consciously or unwittingly desired one of the various levels of change such as a merely developmental kind, or, more transformational, whether it was just set in motion or moved. Whatever 'order' change has occurred we may be able to discern what means were used to bring this about; whether 'aggressive', 'conciliative', 'corrosive' or 'indoctrinative' as compared with the approaches of former change agents or leaders.

The cultural lens can also be used somewhat attributively to posit causes of changes or resistances. As regards these attributive aspects of the cultural framework, it would tend to suggest that groups decline or flourish, become more or less humane when the internal cultural formation role of leaders is addressed or neglected, the ideological convictions of the group conflict with the cultural setting in which the particular church community finds themselves, or, to the degree to which change was managed positively. A positive cultural transformation would imply the leaders of the church were in tune with the deeper worldview underlying the surface patterns, rituals and artifacts of the community. The successful change agent would presumably be able to proactively symbolize changes that in turn were compatible with the interpretive processes of the community from the perspective of their theological presuppositions. The cultural framework itself does not prescribe which sorts of

theological perspectives would induce decline or dysfunction, nor whether a particular image of God or, worldview, would facilitate managed or positive change more readily. The lens simply implies that it is the resonance of the assumptions of the community with the environment and the ensuing positive interpretation of the actions of the agents of change that permit a strong yet adaptive culture to find positive expression. This framework would not so much reveal whether the theological vision of the leadership was positive, biblical, or negative in any absolute sense, but that it was interpreted positively and accepted into the assumption level of consciousness of the rank and file membership. We may in fact be able to identify some of the cherished theological convictions or, world-view of the church deductively from the way the group symbolizes and interprets the changes wrought by the leader or change agents.

The culture framework emphasizes that it is not so much what people did to induce change but the sub-surface compatibility of the recipients of intentions, gestures and actions of change agents with the intentions and interpretation of those artifacts that are accorded symbolic status. While this stops short of the postmodern view of culture analysis as pure surface description, the later versions of this analytical framework suggest that the process of change while being a product of good management is constrained by the interpretations and reactions of the subjects that construct the shared cultural experience. Culture change then beyond a modernist perspective, is much less a positivistic science as a fortuitous intersection of favourable timings and conditions and beliefs with wise management. And these conditions, as some have suggested, are dictated by internal, historical and even pre-conscious variables that may not even be discernable to the subjects living within matrix of the particular culture. We now turn to consider the analysis of culture from a deliberately sub surface psycho-dynamic level of symbols and vested preconscious interests.