

Chapter 9. Comparing Narratives from Multiple Perspectives

A Cross Lens Analysis of Each Church Viewed Separately

Having now read these composite narratives from three distinct perspectives it remains to now see how these are best understood and under what circumstances one or other frameworks offers particular insight. As has been said already, real world processes cannot be adequately captured in a single narrative of a sequence of narrative transitions (Pentland: 1999, 717, 718). A table format for each church narrative is provided in each case below which lays out the narrative of decline and renewal from a prior peak period until the recent past as they are in a new renewal phase. In these tables the narrative is simplified for the purpose of seeking striking relationships between the data for each case by reading these in parallel. At the same time if possible, we wish to discern how the theological threads of the communities' faith commitments are woven into the dynamic of the tapestry of stagnation and renewal. That is, what follows now is an appraisal of the narratives included from a parallel reading perspective allowing for a by-play between perspectives.

Carinia Downs

As already noted, the remarkable thing about Carinia Downs is that they have undergone significant change from inwardness and rigidity, toward venturesomeness and playfulness. The pastor is the major plot variable that has changed and stimulated change within the shared narratives. This is not the type of change induced by schism. It is hard to discount the impact of his own bold initiatives in outreach into the local community and his ability to bring the Gospel to

touch upon the earthy realities in the Downs.

While it is true that he demonstrated a ‘non anxious presence’ in the church, the cultural transformation within the church and beyond overly stresses this family systems theory variable. The morale and self-perception of the church has altered markedly for the better, from one that was largely passive; a minimalist approach to ministry and legalistically concerned with its own notions of purity and separation from the influences within the wider context. There was nothing to suggest as well, that the individuals who were pastors in the previous eras were ‘pathogenic agents’ or ‘poorly differentiated’ individuals. The theory has some descriptive utility supplying a useful set of descriptions for making discriminations, but little explanatory power of the *processes* by which the change occurred. On its own, a family systems story was found to be reductionist for Carinia Downs’ complexity.

While Pastor McLeish is artless in his individuality, it is more likely that this individuation did not meet with a great deal of resistance in this culture as the nature of the control culture in the church prior to this time was fairly weak. It seems to this reader that the dominance of the major deacons stemmed from their social position within the wider community, but, that with the advent of the pastor, as was usually the case, they handed the ‘liturgical issues’ over to the pastor. Their bullying was consciously resented by the members. Their function is more of a stop-gap measure and viewed as a necessary evil to keep the church going. The pastor therefore could shape his own role his own way as long as the minimal functional requirements were met. A comparison of such features viewed from each framework is shown below.

Carinia Downs	<i>1 Golden Era</i>	<i>2 Early Decline</i>	<i>3 Bottoming Out</i>	<i>4 Early Renewal</i>	<i>5 Emerging Stasis</i>
Leaders and Major Figures		Brief Pastorates	Dominant Deacons.	Graeme McLeish	Graeme McLeish
<i>Family Systems</i>		Closed Enmeshed Bounded	Close Enmeshed Bounded	Close Differentiated Bounded	Differentiated Less Close More Open
Leader Style			Deacons as 'Patriarchal' interim Parents'	Differentiated Parent figure	
<i>Culture</i>		Weak Control (Actuality-Impersonal)	Weak Control (Actuality-Impersonal)	Collaboration (Actuality-Personal)	Cultivation (Possibility-Personal)
Leader Change Agency Style		Uni Culture	Uni Culture	Uni Culture	Uni-Culture.
Impact of Views		Null	Null	Catalytic	Determinative
Order of change					Expressive Developmental
<i>Psychodynamic Climate</i>		Inadequate Holding Environment	Inadequate Holding Environment	Adequate Holding Env.	Mission and ministry as Transitional Object
Leader Style and Impact		BaD		Working Group W. W Leader-Facilitator	Working Group, W. W Leader - Facilitator
Theology/World View		God as Law-giver. Life has future heavenly orientation. Church for the Holy	:	God as Life-giver, Creator, present world orientation. Church for world	:

The new feature according to these narratives that is most striking is that the pastor, despite his awareness of the spiritual, or developmental immaturity of the church still draws them into dialogue concerning a range of major issues for them to face through a conciliative style of leadership. Voices are heard and opinions respected. Major decisions are made and actions are taken in a church not known for strategic movement of any kind. The cultural lens highlights the fact and the direction of the culture change from control type to collaborative, and recently to a cultivation stage.

The issue then is whether such a shift in style could adequately explain such a shift in culture. The culture change is not due to a change in terms of the composition of the membership due to the perennial exodus of young adults out of the district for work and higher education. There is a logical correlation at a surface level here between the pastor who is strongly conciliative and the formation of a collaborative culture evidenced by the massive degree of local initiatives undertaken together.

However this still begs the question of why this pastor is able to stir such a new theme into the previously passive resignation that denoted the culture. Something quite powerful has changed the mentality of the group over the past decade and this has not taken either aggressive or revolutionary measures to achieve the degree of culture transformation that is so evident. So, a cultural narrative does have a greater explanatory power than the family system's lens but does not grasp the shift in shared mentality in a compelling way.

To speak of issues like motivation and morale requires attention be given to the psychodynamic culture of the church. With changes in mentality, we are naturally led to consider two dimensions which are not necessarily incompatible. These are the dimension of psychodynamic sub-surface issues and the theological perspectives of the group. It is clear that the church had a history of dependency of reliance upon pastors who relied upon the church for support in the maintenance of the churches in the circuit as minimally effective ministry outposts. There was not much scope for development in the arrangement and therefore little anticipation that the status quo would not be perpetual. The story of liberation from dependency to active initiation is a developmental one. There is certainly some appeal in an 'object relations' perspective of what has happened with the McLeish ministry.

One striking theme that came through the narratives as has been noted has been the theme of the mutual acceptance of both pastor and people. Pastor McLeish enters the community as a city-born outsider, in a learning posture. The McLeishes both needed to recoup from their prior pastoral appointment that had been psychologically injurious. He expects God would bless the church's efforts. It may be that this itself provided the sorts of valency signals to the group that would appeal to the dual of *baD* of caring for the carer. But love and acceptance seeks something more than mutual dependency. This sort of acceptance comes with a form of 'differentiation' disguised as personal vulnerability and openness.

This is also reflected in the fact that the pastor was intent on fulfilling the assigned and appropriate functions within the community. He visited, led worship, chaired meetings, resolved conflicts and above all preached biblically rich sermons full of the material of the lives of the members. Moreover he committed himself to stay in the district until the task of building an

effective church was complete. Both in strength and in weakness his manner of functioning is a signal to the group to take up the mantle of being a working group in compassionate care. This provided 'an adequate holding environment' in which the group's development may then proceed unimpeded. In doing so, he has replaced the stifling bindings of legalism and diaconal intimidation with an engaging form of pastoral relationship that shows itself trustworthy and long term.

This approach to ministry, inducing also their own capacity to forgive his own occasional administrative slip ups, has encouraged other non participants little by little to become active contributors who often surprise themselves at their own achievements. His own bridge-building activities in the local community have therefore provided the transitional objects through which most of the members have relished the opportunity to move onwards as they move outwards. His patient provocative modelling, has enabled the group to move from dependency toward a work Group. His identification with the church means that his successes and social prominence has become the shared property of the whole church. The artefact of the church ministry centre which has almost doubled the seating capacity and is centred on a meals area, achieved through the labours of many within the church is not only out of character with the mood of the past, but testimony to a rich redemptive/maturational dynamic.

As we correlate these features with theological assumptions prevailing within the church we are also reaffirming the value of the cultural perspective. The positive climate in the church does not come through a revolutionary change or transformation of the culture, so much as a liberation and celebration of the existing cultural values. We also note that the palpable culture change that has occurred at Carinia Downs while transformational in scope has been achieved

through incremental, developmental means rather than revolutionary aggressive measures. In fact, in Becker's framework this church has moved from the 'house of worship or local store model' to the 'leader' model; from a culture whose values had little to do with life beyond the walls of the church to one that, despite its size, has inhabited a role that aims to affect the surrounding society and whose contribution has been welcomed (Becker: 1999, 14f).

That it is such a significant change speaks about the psychodynamic quality of the pastor's leadership facilitation that both releases the church from the dominance of compulsive leaders and the influence of a paternalistic church association, so that they now take their own rural identity seriously as something of value to God. This is indeed a rich form of 'charismatic renewal' as all that they are as they remain within the context in which they find themselves is received as service of God. Once life was bifurcated into sacred and profane; their normal culture was profane. Here we have to work back to the impact of the views of the Pastor, especially his priorities and framework of the version of the Gospel he espouses and lives out. It is not so much that he changes the form of the preaching and education. He follows in a line of evangelical pastors of moderate temper. The difference now being that his preaching is not so much a frame-breaking as a frame-making phenomena. It appears that there was little connection between the preaching of pastors in memory of the church and the life lived in the cultural context. This pastor has re-interpreted that life through the lens of a creation covenantal view of the cosmos rather than the excessive emphasis upon conversion that served to reinforce the disenfranchisement of the church from its community and indeed, member from member.

Conclusion

It is reasonable to say then that the cultural changes wrought by the change agency preaching of the pastor resonated positively with these primal developmental issues as well as with the theological justification for the culture change. In fact, one would have to say that it is both the perspective communicated as well as the personal pastoral response as a 'holding environmental' factor that has enabled the community to develop and mature even though they seemed unable to articulate the critical features of this theological perspective undergirding the new outreach emphasis of the church. The pastor himself operates out of a theology that anticipates a presence of God to be actively and redemptively manifest in the experience of the community engaged in culture affirming ways within the local context. He assumes God is 'at work' in the community beyond the walls of the church which takes the pressure off the members of either having to bear a 'bold witness' that would make them cultural oddities, or, stifle their faith and suffer guilt. And this is sufficient to motivate him to act in ways that legitimise the sorts of initiatives that are resonant with the values the members share with the wider culture.

The collective experience of this church would imply that if one was to come to grips with the essence of their narrative of renewal, one has firstly to utilize the cultural lens to note the fact and the nature of the cultural change. But to get to a level of reasoning which illuminates the 'motors' driving the change from the declining life cycle to this evolving story of creativity, one can find a richer level of resonance by reading the story through an 'object relations' explanation and the alleviation of the particular group fantasy.

These narrative threads therefore are tightly interwoven and interdependent. One dimension of renewal would not have happened without the other. Psychodynamic factors are certainly supported by the theological reconfiguration of the rural church's world through more helpful theological frameworks, in turn releasing a change in and celebration of their culture. It would appear then that the theological perspective introduced into the mindset of the culture is initially catalytic of culture change and psychodynamic health. The more it is understood it can also be seen to be a source of change and defined the direction of that change even if this only began in the mindset of the major change agent, the pastor. His theological perspective drives a leadership style that is interpreted at a sub surface level as an adequate holding environment.

Ivy Street

As one compares the impact of the narrative from the various perspectives as with the last church we can see that the three lenses again have a noticeable correlation suggesting some common dependency. But here, while the order of the change is just as significant it is achieved through transformational means. The present church is virtually unrecognisable from the past one despite the imposing nature of the architecture of its worship space, features not easily changed. The sense one gains considering all that each lens has to offer, one could not truly understand the uniqueness of this narrative without knowing the nature of its culture. The conservatism and impersonality of the original 'control' culture has given way to the dynamism of the current 'collaboration' culture that is increasingly displaying a future orientation. The church once prided itself on being a 'leader' type church both within the denomination and the evangelical world of the city. A comparative reading of the features of the church from various frames is shown below.

Ivy Street	<i>1 Golden Era</i>	<i>2 Decline</i>	<i>3 Bottoming Out</i>	<i>4 Early Renewal</i>	<i>5 Emerging Stasis</i>
Leaders and Major Figures	Max Grover & Elders	Passing parade of pastors & James Glover	Ray Fleet	Clive Crow and Elders	Clive Crow Emerging Leadership Structure
<i>Family Systems</i>	Enmeshed and close	Distancing & Enmeshed	Close and Enmeshed.	Enmeshed and Distancing	Differentiated and Closer
Leader Style	Patriarchal Over-functioning	(Short term pastorates up to Schism)	Maternal, Over-functioning	Differentiated	Differentiated Nurturing
<i>Culture</i>	Control	Strong Control	Strong Control	Collaboration	Cultivation Pluri-Culture.
Leader Change Agency Style				(Conciliative) Aggressive	Conciliative
Impact of Viewpoint	Determinative	Determinative	Determinative	Determinative	Determinative
Order Of Change				Developmental	Transformational
<i>Psychodynamic Climate</i>	Compulsive, BaD	'Death of Founder', 'Identification with the Aggressor' baD,	Specialized baF in Elders, baD in Church	Adequate Holding Env., baF in Church	Adequate Holding Env. Working Group
Leader Style and Impact	Messianic charisma, Organizational Narcissism.	Schism	Specialized baF	Specialized baF, Confrontation and 'working through'	Maturation, Differentiation c. Integration
<i>Theological Perspective</i>	Conservative Evangelical Orthodoxy	Polarizing Charismatic vs. Orthodoxy	Conservative Orthodoxy	Inclusive, Grace emphasised. Church as haven.	

Despite its now significant membership it has become much more of a 'community' type church with open democratic processes and shared inclusive relational values. This is supported by the fact that neither the church leadership nor membership cannot articulate this mission or its goals in precise terms. On its own this could reflect a particular psychological basic assumption, but this is not the case.

One should not underestimate the impact of the pastor's unconscious change agency within this emerging culture. His inclusive mentality itself has attracted other professionals into the church and diluted the hierarchical distance between the elites and the members within the culture and paved the way for a 'collaborative' cultural pattern. That is, there is less pressure to conform and less distinction between social strata or, levels of influence in the culture.

We also know that this has also produced a genuinely deep level of transformation. The church and its leaders were formerly held as psychological symbols of intimidating proportions. Ivy Street was a place a member could not easily leave suggesting some form of idealization of the church and even a possible example of the neurosis termed 'identification with the aggressor' (Kets De Vries: 1995). The experiences of those within the culture indicated that there was a complex of counterproductive thinking with the exit of Pastor Max Grover that produced an irrationally hostile climate for those who joined the church when control of the pastor had passed into the hands of leading dominant leaders. This psychological climate persisted right into the present pastorate. Thus although the search committee that appointed Pastor Clive Crowe realised that it was high time for change and the need to effectively 'bury' the memory and mood of the 'founder' Max Grover, largely this culture proved extremely intractable along with the flight-fight assumptions that went with it in place of real work and ministry.

So, to really come to grips with what this solitary figure achieved in the role of leader one needs to read the narrative with the psychodynamic lens in operation in tandem with the cultural lens which supplies the local contextualized equivalents of dominating paternalistic symbols. A strong theme that pervades his own and others recollections we recall, is that he confronts, and sometimes shames the leading cultural symbol bearers with the impact of their actions and sets ethical limits to define more acceptable behaviour. People shock themselves with their realisation of their own inhumane attitudes. But any movement into a depressive position is short-lived. Clive Crowe had an ability to confront the culture and blatantly set about taking the risks and measures to make the church more appealing. The members who had been in dependency upon the leadership and other strong figures now are released from their aura and begin the real work of the church and the forming of a caring community.

A distinguishing feature of this means of change with the past church is that while the nature of the pastor's renewing ministry correlates with a winsome preaching style, there was little evidence that either he or the members thought that the theological perspective had shifted over the years. The almost total silence upon this issue is not as is the case in Carinia Downs of the low levels of theological articulation within this congregation. The congregation was regarded as having always shown a high degree of Biblical literacy. There was no comparison made between the various pastors on this account, with the exception of one of the few who followed Max Grover before James Glover who was noted for his strong Calvinistic streak. The dogmatic of this pastor reinforced the existing control culture. For the most part, all the pastors shared a comparable theological outlook. We recall also that the relaxed and spontaneous manner of the present differentiated pastor was interpreted as a 'return to charismatic movement' by some of his more strident critics. Obviously, changes in theological perspective are to be expected from phase

to phase and pastor to pastor as the composition of the church varied. The difference here, however, is that the range of theological variation is minor in comparison with the shift in psychological and organizational culture. Here is an instance where the change is not necessarily theologically driven by the introduction of a new perspective. It is more the case that the pastor called for a more consistent ethical expression of the sorts of conservative beliefs cherished by the office bearers and other significant figures. In this situation it is not so much the content of the faith that resonates with the salient features of the culture, so much as the absoluteness, or boundedness of the beliefs that permit little variation in interpretation or expression. In such a context it is not only what one stands for, but what one is stridently against that defines acceptable orthodoxy. Consequently, opponents of liberating change find theological categories to attack and define the sense of culture change happening to their culture.

In the light of the emerging 'pluri-culture' and the broadening base from which new members have come in recent years, especially the lowering of the inflammatory response toward people from non conservative backgrounds, that it is more the differentiated climate that has resulted from the psychologically maturing impact of the leadership that has made it possible for the church to embrace more diversity. This diversity has not been achieved through emotional fusion. The church may not have shifted the centre point of its evangelicalism but has fuzzier, more accepting boundaries. Psychological health produces more space for theological variation upon a theme.

We also noted beyond this that the conservatism of the theology also resonated with the psychodynamic defensive footwork prevalent within the former culture. The pastor noted that the most virulent opponents of heresy or diverse spirituality were extremely threatened individuals

with secrets and shameful aspects strongly defended and suppressed. Aggression toward others or other viewpoints at a theological level correlates with this feature.

Conclusion

The arrival of the existing culture seems to be somewhat due to sociological peculiarities of the context, but these had taken on psychological dimensions that had reinforced a strong 'control' culture, moving it from a 'leader' to a 'community' model. The way of change has been through confrontation after fruitless conciliation requiring great reserves of emotional maturity from the current pastor. Theological issues have not come to the fore as motivational factors driving this change in any way. While this would suggest the pertinence of a family systems lens in that the differentiation of the pastor may have affected the anxiety of the system, the theological position is still an important variable in the whole drama through the interaction of these faith perspectives with a strategy that is meaningful in 'object relations' terms. The main strategy of this pastor for change has been effected through removing the symbols of control culture, the choir, the deacons' court and the late service, and policing a more humane and respectful culture in leaders and members business meetings, that effectively empowers the member. And these issues flow from the espoused understanding of a principled Christian behaviour. It is his theological perspective of the pastoral role that has driven his own capacity to remain in contact with the most aggressive persons and induce an adequate holding environment where occasional cathartic incidents take place. Theology drives his leadership style which being internalised in the culture as an adequate primal parenting, which in turn, sees the simultaneous dissolution of neuroses at a sub surface level and corresponding demonstrable culture change at a surface level.

Red Hill Regional

The levels of conflict and anxiety in the period of Clarie Friedman then up until the present indicates that all was not well within this church's emotional system. But with regard to the decline era, the majority of the narrative demands a psychodynamic treatment. As with Ivy Street the degree of change has been 'transformational' in nature demanding equal resolve from the senior pastor to 'hold the line' of change. These dynamics are visible in the table overleaf.

The seeds of organizational decline were planted out of the strengths of its former peak period. The decline comes in the form of the 'dramatic' organizational constellation being led by a leader with a valency for 'fight-flight' and a strong capacity to control by intimidation. From Clarie Friedman's time onwards the decline of the church does not relate to a change in culture. It still shows the tell tale signs of an 'impersonality-actuality' approach to ministry with little consideration given to the future. The irrationality of a cultural pattern whereby capable adults were intimidated by one whose faults were so well known, and then the perpetuation of his impact in the psychodynamic expectations of his followers justifies the need to understand this church at levels beneath the surface phenomena. Different segments of the church succumb to diverse valencies and this leads on the one hand to the inevitable disillusionment with pastor Doug Watson and, on the other, a rejection of the dependency valency of Pastor aspirant, Russel Norris.

Culture decline in Red Hill certainly has strong resonance with the idealization of charisma that deskills the church's active membership from making consolidated task progress together. This church plays out its ebbs and flows in a psychodynamic theatre where the main characters are characteristically assigned 'messianic' roles.

Red Hill Regional	<i>1 Golden Era</i>	<i>2 Decline</i>	<i>3 Bottoming Out</i>	<i>4 Early Renewal</i>	<i>5 Emerging Stasis</i>
Leaders and Major Figures	Pastor Clarie Friedman	Pastor Doug Watson and Russell Norris	Russel Norris and Deacons	David Ross, Russel Norris and Deacons	David Ross, New Board Co-pastors.
<i>Family Systems</i>	Enmeshed & Close	Enmeshed Under-functioning	Enmeshed	Enmeshed and Close	Differentiated Distant?
Leader Style	Patriarchal over-functioning	Adult Child (becomes under-functioner)	Matriarchal	Differentiated	Differentiated
<i>Culture</i>	Strong Control Uniculture	Weak Control	Weak Control	Collaboration	Competence Pluri-culture
Leader Change Agency Style				Conciliative, Indoctrinative Aggressive.	Determinative
Impact of Viewpoint	Determinative	'Ghost' of Clarie Determinative	Determinative	Catalytic	Catalytic
Order of Change				Transformational	Transformational
<i>Psycho-dynamic Climate</i>	Dramatic, baF 'Identification c Aggressor' 'Icarus Paradox'	'Death of Founder', baP baF	BaP, baF	Adequate Holding Env. baF persists	Working Group Transitional Object in Ministry
Leader Style and Impact	Messianic Charisma, Dramatic, baP baF valency,	False Messiah Unsuccessful at W creation	Dependency Valency, False Messiah	W Group facilitator	Differentiation and Integration
<i>Theological Perspective</i>	Fundamental. Biblicist Law keeping Church as gospel bearer.		Attempted Calvinistic refounding.	Inclusive, Church as outreach to community. Victorious Conquest	

The renewal-period was also clarified by using the same lens. Comments of members indicated the noticeable difference between the present pastor and those who went before. These did not revolve around their general pastoral ability and they certainly, with the exception of the reformed views of Russel Norris, did not amount to a significant shift in theological outlook. It is significant that the church's whose peak period was characterised by evangelistic appeals and growth should expect that such a core value should persist as an expectation of the pastors that follow. Yet the present pastor however manages to avoid the restrictive projections of the group neither fostering vague utopian dreams of an ideal family church nor showing symptoms of paranoia and animosity toward his co-leaders.

In contrast with the above churches, the renewal period pastor brought a definite strategy for change and restructuring. The significance of policymaking and strategic projections has resulted in an articulation of the church's purpose and the roles of the members and leaders within it are so specified that they can and are held to account for their real work. The ecclesiology of the Baptist church required that such issues be devolved through the political process of members' meetings to gain a consensus. It is this that determines that the change process was both 'conciliative' and 'educative'. However, the sheer determination to ensure that these boundaries were firm and that roles for members, staff and leaders were not only articulated in a handbook accounts for the dramatic shift in group mentality from the passivity of *baP* to a working group where the majority of the growing members make a productive contribution to the church. The capacity to invest in the mission of the church has dramatic impact upon this culture providing for many a positive 'transitional object' in the form of ministry.

Obviously this took a 'differentiated' or robust form of leadership from the pastor and his team. This narrative shows the reader that psychological cultures and basic assumptions do not budge easily even when the processes of producing an adequate holding environment in the form of policies and strategies is developed through collaborative, dialogical means. In summary, it is the psychodynamic changes that propel the narrative forward while the results are detectable through a cultural lens. The church does now have a more pluriform culture accepting the place of varying worship styles and the animosity toward other spiritualities has begun to vanish. The values, attitude and mood of this narrative turns upon the style of the pastor. As the new culture has become encased in structures and processes of review and fund raising cycles, it approximates a 'competency' culture, with 'possibility-impersonal' features. In terms of Becker's model the church has shifted from a classical 'family' or 'patriarchy' model to a 'leader' model with overt ambitions to transform the culture surrounding it.

As with Ivy Street, with the exception of the brief interim period of Russel Norris which saw the influx of people with Reformed convictions then leave with his departure, there has not been a considerable variation in theological position or the image of God accounted for by the members. They notice stylistic shifts in the communication patterns of the pastors. But if anything, one would have to say that the theological variable has been held relatively constant through the process of decline and change. Therefore this is not a strong factor driving the change in terms of the centre point of the predominant convictions. The distinction is the new pastor and tone from the pulpit is inclusive of more interpretations of that centre point and spiritualities that accompany the greater diversity of members. The former pastor defined who was acceptable within the culture by stressing a firm boundary line on beliefs concerning the faith, charismata and social ethics. The present leadership are far less tolerant of variance from the espoused mission

and ministry procedures of the church's ministries than they are of doctrine. As for doctrine they maintain the old core but allow for a fuzzier boundary. Deviation from the agreed purpose is not tolerated.

It is also significant that the leadership in the present era of renewal have achieved a state of change that some would call 'revolutionary' in method and 'transformational' in its extent. But they have not so much developed the culture through an injection of new ideas so much as called the church to live consistently with their long term espoused goals and values. Transformation does not come about through indoctrination so much as a re-structuring process and a determination of the leaders to maintain this course amidst resistance from those who preferred the former arrangement. The more significant changes are in mood of the church than mindset.

Conclusion

Red Hill's narrative depends strongly upon the insights provided by a psychodynamic perspective to ascertain how the leadership style of the former 'golden era' created a discernable neurotic constellation that persisted in the form of certain utopian, and dependency basic assumptions across several pastorates. The new pastor addresses this issue strongly adhering to a policy of empowerment, greater tolerance of difference and conciliative processes. This has produced a structure and a culture where rational evaluation has replaced irrational idealization. Again as with the churches above, this has fostered a strong working group with high personal investment.

Insights Gained from Comparisons

Some simplification is necessary for any focussed perception that could lead to possible generalisations. We again are using these experiences to generate insight both in the direction of the usefulness of a particular lens or lenses and also to see what can be discerned when all three are compared in parallel. Putting together the dramas from three sites viewed from three vantage points leads to the following sorts of insights into the interplay of factors leading to both decline and renewal.

(i) Depth of Renewal

There are a striking number of similarities between all three stories of renewal. Firstly, all situations regardless of which lens used show a distinct shift toward a more humane, less controlling culture, more collaborative compared with the usual status quo. These more impersonalised cultures bearing the marks of the various basic assumptions, sometimes all three kinds in sequence. There is always a degree of dependency upon the key leaders as their charisma and the idealization of the church is born in the churches peak period. By the same token the change of climate in these churches along an impersonal-personal domain is a reminder that all personally based ministry is not necessarily health promoting. Likewise, pastors who emphasised a strategic approach to ministry were not necessarily 'impersonal' for the sake of focussing upon the future possibilities.

(ii) Multiple perspectives required

A combination of lenses is definitely required to interpret the dynamic of decline and renewal in a meaningful way. No particular lens identifies a positive or negative cultural state that is contradicted by any other perspective. This should not surprise us since there is an overlap in the various nuances of each type of lens for the same manifestation.¹ This however does not mean that all lenses are of equal value in coming to grips with the nature of congregational cultural change. To speak in mechanistic terms of ‘causality’ when referring to the rigidity of dysfunctional patterns is usually a matter of identifying the social and cultural forces that permeate the church life as with Carinia Downs and Red Hill which work in the same direction as psychodynamic issues and group fantasies. These may be compounded, or even justified by recourse to a particular set of theological assumptions by the pastor/agent of change. The results are discernable in both family systems and cultural typologies. But these features are dependent variables. It is the deeper level changes in psychological culture and theological assumptions that seem to motivate the changes in the culture and the systems variables that are discernable from the surface of the culture.

(iii) Sources of Decline are not Resources for Renewal

As regards the period of decline there is evidence to suggest that decline begins when the culture is strong and morale is high. At the time when the church has a proud tradition as with Ivy Street, expanding as with Red Hill, the seeds of decline and distress are already evident.

¹ For instance, an ‘aggressive’ leadership style in the cultural lens may also reflect an essential component of the Family Systems phenomena of a ‘patriarchal’ leader as they do in the decline period at Ivy Street. Evidence of a ‘basic assumption’ dependency group may logically also reflect a valency for ‘matriarchal’ parenting styles. This was so in the case of the decline period of Forrest Hills.

More specifically, the dysfunctionality of the leadership style of the main pastor can breed a level of anxious attachment. For all their group esteem, pride or success, these 'control' cultures are brittle or rigid systems. The fragility of these cultures is determined by the reaction of the leadership team and church toward the exit of the charismatic figure of the pastor associated with the peak growth period. This enmeshment is somewhat discernable through a family systems lens, but a richer interpretation is provided by a psychodynamic which focuses upon the motivations beneath the surface. Some may prefer a dysfunctional culture, idealization of the pastor with all that entails, than experience personal and group development and task achievement. The culture lens is critical here as well. These cultures being inherently conservative 'control' cultures, being consciously policed against the intrusion of dissent, there is no likelihood that these churches could become self-righting and self-healing. The prevailing neurotic elements therefore are entrenched as essential components of the uniqueness of the actual church.

(iv) Interim Leadership Rigidity

The 'lay' leaders who remain after a 'founding pastor figure' leaves, can exacerbate the dysfunctions within a system by complimenting or amplifying the leadership style of the former pastor. They exhibit paternalistic styles of leadership that are more extreme versions of their former pastor's pattern. They do not have the charisma or expertise of the pastor but act as preservers of the type of neurotic constellation, or 'basic assumption' that was emerging during the decline period. As regards the impact upon culture, being anxious to preserve the culture, their style of leadership is to induce the impersonal features of a 'control' culture and a focus

upon the present at a time when the church's needs to address its place in the future scheme of things. Power vacuums fuel regressive agendas.

Destabilisation is taken to a new level when the prevailing 'basic assumption' finds a figure with a valency that corresponds to the particular valency within the critical period leading to 'bottoming out'. The homeostasis of each psychological culture means that there could be a ready supply of members who are willing to step into the breach of the pastoral absence whether that involves taking upon the formal title of pastor or not. The destabilising of leadership and community is fuelled by the charismatic-follower projections that gave leadership aspirants the opportunity to come to an anxious church's rescue.² These aspirants do not induce renewal for both rational and pre-rational reasons. On the one hand, leader aspirants offered solutions to decline that involve a major course correction in terms of a new model of the church in line with their own idealized church image, one that asks for too great a change from the existing patterns. Their eventual lack of success guarantees their eventual fall from favour and the decline continues unabated. On the other, they symbolise the persistence of particular neuroses, exhibiting a valency for a prevailing basic assumption. As Staw (1991) suspected of workplace cultures, personal neuroses resonate with, or even come clothed as organizational neuroses. For this reason too if the advances of aspiring neurotic leaders were successful they could only hasten the decline.

² This is especially the case at the two omitted churches, Petersham and Forest Hills and somewhat at Ivy Street and Red Hill.

(v) Resonance of Theme and Theology

All three lenses coalesce around the crisis when the evidence of decline becomes unavoidable. 'Strong' cultures are those like Ivy Street where shared beliefs and values are aligned with structures and cultural patterns of interaction. These are not thereby rendered stable if their psychodynamic foundations are neurotic. In fact the prevailing theological outlook of the group here reinforces, even justifies, the destabilizing dysfunction or regressive aspects of the culture, by disempowering the role of the individual member and failing to sustain a relevant future oriented mission.³ The mere orthodoxy of a group's theology 'on paper' does not seem to stem the tide of decline. It is the motive operating beneath, not only the espoused content of a church's theology that matters. An espoused prevailing dogmatic which does not touch the living contextual experience of the community is somewhat 'docetic' and able to be left at the margins of the group consciousness as people fail to connect such truths, no matter how orthodox to the presenting realities of church life. This gives little room for hope of a divine renewal or break through within the prevailing status quo. A 'subordinationist' Trinitarian view serves the purpose of rigidity through stifling dissent against the superior, as does a prescriptive legalism. In the decline cycle the form of fundamentalist doctrine emphasised may vary, but the way in which it is held, its stridency, exclusivity and legalism serves the purpose of sealing in the prevailing neurotic elements and justifying a control culture. The theological dimension of the church serves the organizational cultural purpose of supplying the 'fancy footwork' (Argyris: 1990) that enable those threatened most by the demands of maturational change to 'dance around' and avoid the undiscussable, regressive aspects of the

³ At our other 'worship culture' church 'Petersham' there was an explicit subordinationism in god Image to foster subordination to the elders. At Carinia Downs, a holiness code to entrench isolation, at Forrest Hills a polarization in spiritualities diffuses constructive mission, at Red Hill a fundamentalism to breed a fighting approach to diversity.

existing culture sustained by the leading parental figures within the system. Then once encrusted in culture's depths, the less theological views are spoken about the more they and the neuroses that they defend subsist together undetected at the level of cultural assumptions where they are difficult to revise consciously. When theological accusations are flying, fantasies are being threatened.

(vi) Replacement Pastor Reinforcement of Irrationality

Just as leadership aspirants from within the church play upon the group fantasy or are promoted by the group to preserve it, so also the pastors in the stagnating periods before renewal, are commended to the group for more than just their rational credentials. New interims and resident aspirants are similar in that they often lacked the capacity to generate the necessary structures or to present an adequate holding environment to promote maturation through ministry. If a basic assumption has been enshrined at a psychological level beneath the assumption level of the culture then one suspects that some pastors and leaders are appointed for the very purpose of conserving that fantasy as the basic reason for the group's existence.⁴ Pastors in these declining groups could well be serving the unconscious goals of the group to fight, be cared for, or to passively wait for the magical appearance of a utopian future or evangelistic revival. Given what we have said about the theological 'wrapping' of the prevailing neurosis it is not surprising that all churches in the decline period show a tendency to appoint pastors that 'on paper' at least, espouse the same theological bias as the peak period. Evangelists, pulpit masters and members of the same para church group follow in sequence.

⁴ Hawkins (1997) Bath University model of culture with psychodynamic foundations beneath the level of assumptions has much to commend this here.

This is more than just a matter of preservation of theological orthodoxy. It also reflects the group's desire to defend it against any contradiction of the neurosis.

The combination of the rigid control structures, with the inevitable disillusionment that results from following the idealized leader with a particular valency for the group fantasy accounts for the church reaching critical levels of decline in terms of both morale and numbers of attendees.⁵ Without a clear perspective regarding what is actually happening, stagnation follows on unabated. In this way because of these three features immediately above, the dysfunction that proceeds from the time of the heights of the church's history becomes bound up in a strong culture, making it very difficult for one or more of the ensuing pastors to make any headway against the profusion of irrational forces constraining the real work of the particular church. These are not tangible or addressable by a method of 'frontal assault' but only discerned by noticing the self-defeating and neurotic aspects of the cultural narratives.

(vii) Renewal is not Return

We have confidence that the nature of renewal which springs forth after a dysfunctional period in these instances is not superficial, a case of mere statistical growth. Nor is it of a satisfying marriage of group fantasy with the valency of a replacement charismatic figure in the form of a new pastor that feeds the narcissistic urges of the group. It does appear that both the emotional and rational experience of living within these communities shift markedly from a decline period to that of a renewal period.

⁵ With Carinia Downs and the church not included from Petersham, this resulted in a willingness of the church to settle for a minimalist resignation to their situation.

(viii) New Leadership as Catalyst for Renewal

The role of the new pastor would seem to be either the critical or one significant factor in both the decline period as well as the period of renewal with regard to both the change process and outcomes. The distinctions between the stories are critical in this regard. Sometimes the seeds of change were already planted before the pastor arrived through strong and principled stands taken by differentiated 'lay' leaders who could not accept on principled grounds the irrationality or oppressiveness of the status quo. The crisis itself of the church becoming increasingly unviable, or, out of kilter with changes within its ecclesial 'market', spurs some figures into action on the basis of rational appraisal of the church's situation or way of operating. In all situations the role played by the introduction of the new senior pastor was still instrumental in fostering a new and healthy climate. This happens through the pastor both 'foregrounding' the aspirations of rational elements within the church, or, by confronting and censuring the forces perpetuating the group fantasies.

(ix) Leadership as Symbol and Strategy

At this critical point of upsurge also, that we note that a multi-lens narrative reading has much to commend it. If leadership is critical to renewal then this would suggest that their actions must have a positive and interlocking resonance at three levels as much as the dysfunctional symbols did in the decline phase. They must affect the anxiety of the group through being a differentiated self, create a collaborative culture and provide the sorts of artefacts that, in terms of object representations, may be interpreted positively and introjected within the boundary of the group mindset. Here we should also mention that all of the renewing

era pastors in our stories were respected both as people and as pastors. They all possess a necessary level of competency in the general range of skills and in some cases extraordinary giftedness. Despite the resistance to the changes they bring, they are respected by admirers and opponents alike as 'channels' through which Christ is at work. They have a secondary strategic influence upon culture by virtue of being able to attract new members who do not share the prevailing values, fantasies and assumptions of the resisters, but read the cultural health in terms of the health of the pastor. Normalcy with giftedness attracts health.

(x) Personal Qualities of Leaders

As these pastors enter the control culture of the church in stagnation they are not automatically accorded 'adult' status relative to the other influential figures in the church family. They are expected as with the interim pastors before them to maintain deference to both the prevailing fantasy and any 'ghost-parents' in the system. But due to their clear perspective regarding their real roles, they eventually take up the posture as able system 'adult-parent' figures (Cosgrove and Hatfield: 1994). These leaders were highly differentiated selves; the sorts of persons who can address difference and conflict in the group without raising the anxiety within the group as a whole. They confront the highly anxious member without losing contact, using depersonalising tactics or, without fleeing from their pastoral responsibilities to such people. They are strong, not so much for their own grandiose church visions but for just processes and therefore confront behaviours that fall outside the accepted policies and protocols of the group or, which are inconsistent with the social implications of the faith commitment of the group. While these pastors may have been appointed for rational reasons to do with a matching of their own values with those espoused values and beliefs of the church, it could well

be that they are also popular appointments for a season, because they match the valency of the particular group making the decision to appoint them. A psychodynamic appraisal of this feature could suggest that in cases where 'utopian' or 'dependency' assumptions prevailed pastor's unconsciously exploited the prevailing fantasy as a window of opportunity to gain influence within the church system.⁶ However, this was not their longer-term strategy and would have been counterproductive as far as healthy change is concerned. The emotional responses that followed when these pastors introduced change by restructuring, revising or, removing artefacts, suggests that the pastor is no longer playing according to the script of the prevailing fantasies or roles assigned to them by the psychological level of the culture.

(xi) Ethical Charisma

The leadership that induces real renewal, while respected is not of a heroic type. They are not venerated as God-like figures nor adulated by their fondest supporters as would be the case in manipulative charisma (Gabriel: 1997). Instead they are known to be limited, imperfect in nature, wisdom and competence by those who appreciate their ministry. To this extent these change agents are not charismatic figures as they attempt to move the church to a greater level of consciousness of their own values and beliefs. Rather than wanting a membership that thinks less and follows more, they hope that their people will flesh out their espoused convictions. They enable others to take responsibility for their own ministry, without over-supervising. The leader-follower theatre develops a complex script allowing for a 'dramatological' interchange of many roles as the needs of the organization dictate, rather than having the attention focussed

⁶ A confirmation of the suggestion by McCollum-Hampton (1999).

upon themselves as the one who always takes the lead (Buzzanelli et. al., 1997). These are spokespersons for the cultural norms and strategists for the group mission. Their facilitating style resonates with the values innate within the group itself rather than merely being a source of attraction toward themselves or their agendas.

(xii) Empowering Strategies for Renewal

At a cultural level, all these pastors, develop a collaborative culture through the conciliative approach to change. The means include the creation of either a new forum whereby the church is forced to consider its beliefs and values in a threat free environment and to articulate its mission. Alternately, they use existing structures such as church leaders' and member's meetings to address the critical issues that divide or, distract the church from its forward progress toward becoming an effective community. They only reject legal processes when these have proven their obstructiveness and inhumanity. It is striking that these change agents are acute students of the church culture, recognising its unique features even when rebelling against the prevailing cultural values. They were not revolutionaries vying for power even if their initiatives were met with resistance. Structures also are devised by most of these leaders to consciously extend the church in its mission and coordinate or equip the members, giving them political voice or finding active roles needed for accomplishing the mission of the church.

(xiii) Theological Inspiration and Psychological Impact

In some churches there really was no discernable shift in the theological convictions of the renewal pastor to that of the group, let alone the pastor, in the former peak period. A culture change is not necessarily evidence of a change in theological assumptions so much as a perception on the part of the leader/change agent to activate those aspects of theological vision that have been suppressed or pushed into the cultural margins by more primary psycho-dynamic commitments by the group. The agents of change act in such ways due to their theological commitment to a particular view of interpersonal relationships shaped by their view of God and the Gospel. Nonetheless only a few of the members interviewed who appreciated the efforts of the leader, were ever able to reflect theologically or discern notable differences in the Images of God prior to or after the changes.⁷

Here again we need a multiple lens perspective on change agency in this context. Changes in church its worship habits, political systems and artefacts, are at one level changes in culture. But for a member entrenched in that community and sharing with them the same illusion of a faith in a God object beyond themselves, such changes in the holding environment imply a magnitude of change analogous to a change in their identity; especially when their familiar community no longer reciprocates or reinforces the same values and meanings that it once cherished. This is what makes cultural conformists in one era in these narratives become rebels against the new culture in another time. It is a search for, or, anger over, the lost transitional object of community, worship or even faith that is at stake. In this sense the more visible, new and concrete the cultural artefact is the more likely the rebellion against it. For this reason the

⁷ The exception was Petersham where individuals could distinguish between authoritarian images in contrast to an encouraging image of God in partnership in mission with the church.

fact that pastor and member share the same faith 'on paper' is irrelevant as the culture changes under their influence. Personal beliefs may not at all be reflective of the God of Scripture or creed, or maturely reflected upon, but contain elements that stem from earlier developmental stages even the most narcissistic and dependent (Meissner: 1984, 179-182). The symbolic function of a change of worship or church culture cannot be underestimated. The importance of this would be amplified when strong or well-aligned cultures have evolved in the group setting over a long period. This explains the minimal impact that rational argument has with powerful pillars of former culture based upon Biblical justifications of a supposedly shared mission, even one devolved by consensual discussions. Theological convictions convince only the convinced. In the mind of the conservers of the former culture the marks of the faith held by the church as it was, prior to the change agents' actions, are not held as stringently as they should be. So strength of church culture is about strength of regressive defence against fearful exposure of the undiscussable.

When the culture changes, the bindings of combined dogmatism and defensiveness have loosened considerably. Leaders of churches moving into a new renewal phase insist upon new systems and protocols that define the boundaries of the set of the faithful both precisely and yet also moving the group toward a fuzzier, more inclusive set of boundaries within which the new patterns and systems are developed and defended as consistent ramifications.

(xiv) Enacted Leadership and the Defence of Change

Pastoral differentiation is also critical at the points when individuals preferring the existing cultural patterns resist the possibility to move toward becoming a working group that

purportedly is ready to fulfil its expressed purpose or enact its espoused values. Often this is through a collusive subterfuge. Neurotic cultures do not dissolve in the face of theological facts and reasons. As with individuals so also with church groups. Resistance can take a variety of forms from the aggressive and active to the passive forms disguising their underlying basic assumptions. The role of the pastor at such points of resistance however is not directly analogous to the organizational psychologist. While, they do confront the patterns and realities within the system and while they do provoke irrational levels of hostility toward themselves that suggest the occurrence of anxious transference, they do not proceed to 'working through' nor deliberately help the church to identify the sources of their group neurosis as would an organizational consultant. Nonetheless the change effective leader at this point stands on the mandates and protocols granted to them with the role. There is no flinching away from the self justification of these role definitions and they are not deterred by either the ferocity of attack, the political stature or apathy of the resistant. It is this principled behaviour of leaders and pastors that shake the church free of fearful enmeshments or idealized fantasies. They manage at these points by a joint effort, to remain connected with the resistant as they 'do their worst'. In effect they demonstrate the adequacy of the 'holding environment' in their very leading that will not flee, give way to pressure or drop their responsibilities. Unshakable principles provide an alternative, reliable holding environment to legalism, domination and traditionalism.

(xv) Alternative Transitional Objects

Accompanying this critical juncture is the capacity for these leaders to create structures to enable the members' spiritual and personal maturation. Such transitional objects that are afforded are not implemented on the basis of perceived psychodynamic interpretations of the

group, but were informed by an ecclesiological vision. To the extent this was shared by pastor and people and motivated them to collaborate in the mission of the church toward each other or beyond, these initiatives and structures for ministry empowerment are effective sources of transitional objects both strengthening faith and enabling infantile fixations and regressions to be laid aside “as each one does its work” (Eph. 4.15). Theologically principled culture development offers the direction or formwork for mature psychological development. This has cultural ramifications in moving the church beyond a ‘collaborative’ culture and a diffuse missional vision, toward a ‘cultivation’ culture. Here a common task is valued along with the significance of the contribution of each person. To the extent that the mission bears fruit, a cultivation culture is reinforced. The renewed theology deepens to accepted core values, even down to the level of assumptions.

(xvi) Culture Forming Events

We should also note that these leaders and people recollect critical incidents quite apart from their deliberate culture creating strategies. They cite peak experiences in the life of the church; church meetings, conversion experiences, flashes of inspiration, life-crises, baptisms, evangelistic appeals, community concerts, epochal sermons and church camps as punctiliar incidents after which the culture was changed. It seems that when groups experience moments of God’s presence together that this forges within them a sense of both their uniqueness and preciousness within the ministry of the living God. Just as the sense of the presence of God at these events could neither be predicted nor orchestrated, such moments should not be blurred under a generalising heading of culture change strategy. Nevertheless, they are definitional for

the group. They rejuvenate flagging morale without narcissistically inflating the group's self esteem to delusional levels.

(xvi) Ambiguity of Renewal

Success itself is also a paradox that can go hidden beneath the narrative floor. While success and growth are useful educators and reinforcers of culture, they also have the ambiguous capacity to be self-subverting. On the one hand this is due to the changing demographic of the church. In one sense there are healthy individuals who join the church as an opportunity for self-expression as they wish to do the real work that is being visibly structured before them. However leadership cannot determine the cultural interpretation of the renewed church in the mind of the new member despite having introductory classes and other induction processes in place. For some, the newcomers they are attracted to the leader for reasons of their charisma, their commitment is vitalised by an idealization of the church that in time could become counterproductive to the group's rational mission. Collaborators in rebellion against the old culture can also become caustic critics of the new arrangement. In other words, the creation of a healthy culture is an ongoing role of leadership as nature of the culture is both precarious and symbol of the leader paradoxically is always liable to be coopted for regressive rather than developmental purposes. Narcissistic idealization of a church that is demonstrably successful can be cloaked in religious enthusiasm. The wise pastor will therefore not confuse admiration and even high commitment to the institution with spiritual maturity or noble self-sacrifice nor see the present support they have as unconditional and indefinite. The return of the past regressive cultures is a living possibility due to the irrationality of less than perfect human community.

Implications for Interventionists

Psychological factors are about the motivation either to change or to resist change. Cultural factors are about the provision of spaces in which the change may occur and the shape of the change once change has occurred. Theological factors prescribed the justification for direction of the change and support the reasons why change has not occurred until now and the justification for directions in which the change moves after the fact. Theological perspectives capped in the dysfunctions and fantasies at the assumption level of the culture.

On the renewal cycle producing the sorts of dissonance and alternative visions that prompt the initial stirrings of cultural change come from within the mindset of the new entrant leaders and pastors. The theological perceptions of these churches are dependent upon the God representations that occur at the boundaries of conscious experience of its members. When these were limiting images a restrictive, uncreative, impersonalised and neurotic culture was the inevitable result.

Group dysfunction may come with quite a degree of conformity and stability, but is brought about in the short term by a loss of freedom and developmental potential of the members by those wanting to perpetuate the strong culture. As the upswing begins, chaotic forces conflict at the level of the pre-rational and the level of unconscious cultural assumptions. Strategic efforts to induce uniformity through collaborative dialogue eventually result in the stability of the new culture. However this stability is always in peril of being sabotaged by the influx of members who have a valency for idolizing the successful organization or successful pastor.

This would suggest certain rules of thumb for the wise interventionist or would be pastor of a renewal upswing. A set of issues to be addressed sequentially includes:

(i) Diagnosis: The interventionist should notice what irrational aspects of culture are repeated especially the dissonance between what the culture professes to want to do and what it actually does by way of fulfilling its mission and caring for its members. The forms of fantasy may be discerned from the stories of who the heroes and villains were in the past and the sorts of excuses used to explain the difficulties of actually working toward the mission. If one is dealing with a dysfunctional culture this may well be enshrined in a 'control' or actuality-impersonality culture and defended by the rigidity of its theological vision and lack of grace toward diverse spiritualities and styles on dogmatic grounds.

(ii) Readiness: The interventionist should also be aware that a movement from neurotically driven cultures to a possibility-personal 'cultivation' culture may not be seen as 'good news' but could well be ardently defended against by the most anxious supporters of the current oppressive arrangements. Both the person of the interventionist will be demonised and any supporters and cultural artefacts that they introduce will most likely be attacked in disproportionate ways. This only confirms that the culture is moving in a health giving direction. Such a role therefore requires immense spiritual reserves and self-awareness. Changing a declining church is not for the fainthearted.

(iii) Wariness: By the same token, some support may also be generated from the prevailing group fantasy that ascribes mythic qualities to the pastor or interventionist. Such things may be exploited momentarily to set up new forums and collaborative structures, but they cannot be trusted as true indicators of pastoral performance. Again this is indicated by a lack of proportion in the praise given to the pastor.

(iv) Consensus Making: The interventionist needs to use all the rational and spiritual resources available to force the group to take responsibility for articulating the possible future that they would desire. At the same time those who sense these possibilities should be elevated into positions of leadership or areas where the forum for consensus making needs to be structured. This changes the culture itself and is likely to result in criticism, deliberate misinterpretation and political resistance. People need to enter that depressive position where they learn to listen to each other, remain in contact with each other and find common ground for a shared enterprise.

(v) Artistry of Paradoxical Care: At the same time as consensus is formed the skill of the change agent would be enhanced by two opposite actions. One is to hold the line of the new consensus against those who recognise the rational implications this may have for changing the culture. The interventionist is subverting the role control culture held as an inadequate holding environment. At the same time, for those who are choosing a freeing future the interventionist needs to provide an alternative holding environment in terms of remaining in contact with the resistant as an adequate pastor-carer, while defining roles and leading new missional initiatives themselves as an initiator of mission. The possibility of culture change would seem to hinge on these initiatives being somewhat successful. Both are pastoral actions though seemingly aggressive for one group and nurturing and educative for another. The wise pastoral interventionist also would realise that in the growth and success of the new developing culture, others will join who will adulate both church and leaders but for reasons to do with the symbolic role they hold within the member fantasy.

If we presume for a moment, that these positive changes can be affected by the experience of a fresh revelation of God, it is possible that the psychological factors may be affected in ways that are of God's choosing, interdependent with culture change. Images of a relationally

connected, accepting God seem to replace those that reinforced a human social distance, hierarchy, and a fear of healthy interchange. Pathology is related to inability to tolerate relatively minor differences. Healthier images are both preached and modelled by the ministry style of the pastor. Renewal at the level of shared God representations is not just the conscious construction of the rational reengineering of the pastor or leadership. The artefacts of strategy and structure are 'after the fact' aspects of culture in the process of change and only capture it partially. The pattern of group interaction demonstrates a quality of interdependence, creativity and acceptance that is as tangible as it is surprising. It is appropriate to conclude the whole with a discussion of the ways in which one may discern the working of the Triune God within the renewal of church life.