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Polity, leadership and lay responsibility in a changing church

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<u>ABSTRACT</u>

<u>POLITY, LEADERSHIP AND LAY RESPONSIBILITY IN A CHANGING CHURCH</u>

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M.A. 1993

The aim of the thesis is to develop a methodology from which
to gain a fuller picture of what is happening in the areas of
polity, leadership and lay responsibility in the particularity of a
local parish church as it moves from first idea to actual
completion of a major re-ordering of the church building ("The
Story").

By analyzing The Story through several heuristic methods,
lines of investigation are opened up which are illuminative and
deepen insight into it. Thus, the historical, economic and social
background to the town and the description of the development of
St.Catherine's Church provide a broad setting for The Story.
Applying Edward Farley's development of phenomenology as a
theological tool provides an overall methodology for the thesis and
also opens up new theological dimensions to The Story. Recognising
the limitations of Farley's methodology leads onto a) examination of
the concept of symbol and of religious symbol, which themselves lead
onto discussion of how church architecture (J.G.Davies), the sense
of land (W.Brueggemann) and the sense of place (G.Lilburne) as
symbol illuminate our understanding of the local church building in
The Story; and b) examination of the general fields of canon law,
political order (R.N.Adams) and social order (D.Katz & R.L.Kahn) and
how they illuminate our understanding of the interaction of people
in The Story.

Because the several methods employed were developed as
descriptions and explanations of general fields they are not
expected to be applicable in the very detailed circumstances with
which the thesis is concerned. Their worth is in how separately and
interactively they open out and expose further layers of
understanding of what is going on.

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submitted for the degree of Master of Arts

University of Durham

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1993

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INTRODUCTION

Simon Schama describes his chronicle of the French Revolution as "an exercise in animated description, a negotiation with a two-hundred year memory without any pretence of definitive closure. And both the form of its telling and its chosen subject matter represent a deliberate turning away from analytical history towards Events and Persons, both long forbidden, or dismissed as mere froth on the great waves of history".[1]

There is an Indian story - at least I heard it as an Indian story - about an Englishman who, having been told that the world rested on a platform which rested on the back of an elephant which rested in turn on the back of a turtle, asked: what did the turtle rest on? Another turtle. And that turtle? "Ah, Sahib, after that it is turtles all the way down." ... Cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete. And, worse than that, the more deeply it goes the less complete it is.[2]

The purpose of this thesis is to provide a methodology from which to gain a fuller understanding of the complexity of what is happening in the particularity of a local church as it is undergoing significant change. The particular local church is the Anglican parish church of St.Catherine in the town of Crook in S.W.County Durham. The significant change to be examined is the process that led from initial idea to the physical, bricks-and-mortar re-ordering of the church building. This process, which is described in detail in Chapter 2, is referred to throughout as The Story.

Acknowledging that history can never be recalled with utter objectivity, it follows that the recounting of The Story is inevitably a semi-interpreted version of the history of the local church. From the outset, theory is interwoven in the knot of history. As a semi-interpretive description, The Story is a very superficial piece of history. By applying several heuristic methods to it, a much greater depth of understanding is revealed.

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[1]   Schama, S. (1989) p.6

[2]   Geertz, C. (1975) p.28f.

The fact that The Story is concerned with what it means to be the church demands a theological methodology. The fact that The Story is concerned with the ordering of a church building demands a discussion of symbolics. Because The Story includes faculty jurisdiction, a discussion of canon law is required. Because issues of power and polity are crucial to The Story, a discussion of political and organisational structures is required. These are the major dimensions of The Story and comprise the main chapters of the thesis: a critical appraisal and application of a) Edward Farley's use of phenomenology as a theological tool (Chapter 3), b) symbol, church building as symbol, land as symbol, place as symbol (Chapter 4), and c) canon law, political structures and organisational structures (Chapter 5). The methods themselves were developed by their authors as descriptions and explanations of general fields. They are, therefore, not expected to be entirely applicable in all the specific particularities of St.Catherine's Church; their value here is in the extent to which they illuminate and deepen insight into The Story.

The number of theories employed is limited, the choice of literature to describe these hermeneutic trajectories is judicious, because it would be impossible to include all the relevant theories and literature within the confines of this thesis. Instead, I have chosen to examine what I consider to be the major dimensions in The Story. More methods could have been employed and more literature relating to the methods could have been examined, but the intent of the thesis is to provide a series of well-rounded interpretations of the major dimensions of The Story.

In recounting the process that led to a large-scale re-ordering of a local church building, it quickly becomes evident that far more is at stake than mere seating arrangements and colour schemes. By changing the visible, the re-ordering also changes what lies underneath (i.e. hidden realities). The thesis is therefore concerned with seeing things for their significance, not

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just their factuality. Further, it is an attempt to examine the significance of things in a structured way. The nature of this structure appears to be an untidy spiral of developing complexity, whereby information gained through the filter of one method not only amplifies understanding of a particular dimension of The Story, but also adds to our understanding of the overall picture, thereby changing our perception of it, which then invites further examination. It is a continuing process with no definitive conclusion but an ever deepening and widening understanding.

In order to comprehend the complex depth of the knot of history, an approach is employed very similar to that of archaeologists in their careful exposure of layers of history at an archaeological site. The methodological approach of the entire thesis is this depth perception, which has the added function of exposing the major dimensions which then require further detailed examination.

The strength of the thesis lies in the range of theoretical material it brings into play. The limitation of the thesis is that the theoretical material does not directly connect with The Story: there is a gap throughout between the theoretical machinery being employed and its use in The Story. Thus, the strength of the thesis is also its weakness. It is a pulling together of theories which are illuminating and do not quite fit. Despite this skewed relationship, comprehension of The Story is much fuller and more rounded through learning from the theories. There is also learning for the theories from the particularity of The Story because implicitly the theories are improved by pulling them into the practical domain.

The value of the thesis is its exposure of the multi-dimensional quality of The Story and illumination of the theoretical frameworks employed. The thesis is not an ecclesiastical thriller, a church whodunit, in which all is

revealed by the end. Rather, it is a multifold interpretation of crucial elements of The Story providing a fuller picture which, far from leading to resolution, reveals an ever-increasing complexity and depth.

THE STORY

We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us.[1]

Certainly England as a whole was indulging in its favourite and sempiternal national hobby: retreating deep within itself, and united only in a constipated hatred of change of any kind.[2]

A. INTRODUCTION

In the story of the re-ordering of St.Catherine's Church, Crook, our concern is primarily about issues of change and how they are dealt with. Alteration to the building involves far more than physical change. Re-ordering uncovers and raises serious theological issues. In so far as the local church building is a symbol, all change, even the most simply cosmetic, is going to have serious repercussion in the attitude and life of faith in the people whom the church is there to serve. In describing and examining how the re-ordering of the building is determined, implemented and experienced, questions are raised about ecclesiastical, juridical procedure, which in turn raise questions about system-structure and institutional change. Change in the local church building has implications and repercussions for the much broader areas of ecclesiastical, social, political and economic outlook of those affected. Those outlooks are brought to bear on the process of change to the building and its inherent implications, and change to the building itself affects and changes those outlooks. Change to the local church building therefore has repercussions that reach well beyond the particularity of the people who worship there week by week to the local community and to the wider church (i.e. the diocese and beyond, and also inter-denominationally). Agencies outside the local congregation as well

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[1] Winston Churchill (Hansard,1943) quoted in Canter, D.V. & Stringer, P. (1975) p.10

[2] Fowles, J. (1985) p.16

as the local congregation are instrumental in change to the local church building.

B. THE SETTING

The Rise and Fall of Coal

The town of Crook in S.W.County Durham was built on coal. Until the middle of the last century it was no more than a hamlet, a watering place. With the development of deep mining, the local population increased dramatically: according to the national Census Returns, the population of Crook was 176 in 1811, 538 in 1841, 5,800 in 1861 and 11,098 in 1881. By the middle of the nineteenth century the mining industry was well-established and still growing. At its peak, there were twenty-six pits congregated in and around the town, with all the attendant industry. Coal and coal-related work provided nearly all the jobs in the area. In the 1930s, those jobs were decimated because no-one was buying coal. By 1936, 34% of Crook workers were without jobs, 71% of them had had no work for five or more years. Crook was saved by the Second World War; then, and during the postwar reconstruction, every ton of coal was at a premium. By the end of the 1950s, however, the pits were considered to be either exhausted or no longer viable, and one by one they closed.[3]

Since 1960, the town has undergone a gradual and significant change from long-established deep mining and coke works to short-lived general light industry and dormitory town. In the early 1960s as the deep mining of coal came to an end, Crook, with the North East as a whole, was saved for a few brief years by an industrial miracle: the era of Regional Policy. The roads in the area were transformed. The publicly owned English Industrial

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[3] About 60,000 mining jobs were lost in the Durham coalfield between 1957 and 1963 alone.

Estates Corporation provided new factories in the region's new towns and around its old ones. National and multi-national firms flocked to the area.[4]

In 1980, the government downgraded Crook from its previous "special development area" status. Already, many of Crook's factories had closed. Closure in itself is not of course proof of collapse. What is disturbing is that only Ramar Dresses (established in Crook in 1950), which had become the town's major industrial employer, managed to survive any length of time. It too eventually succumbed to outside market forces: in 1990/1 it incurred major redundancies in its workforce, and by the end of 1991 the receivers had been called in. Most attempts to generate new small industry in the area fail to produce sustained results.

The present population of the town is approximately 15,000. Unemployment now stands at about 20%. Whilst factory space continues to be under-used, a steady growth in new housing continues. As the spoil heaps were levelled and other vestiges of deep mining were cleared away, new housing estates were developed through the '70s and '80s on the edges of the town. Some of the old housing stock was demolished. These and other factors indicate a small but definite movement towards the town becoming primarily residential. The town provides easy access and is well within manageable commuting distance to Teesside, Tyneside, Darlington, Durham, Spennymoor, Sunderland and Washington.

Authority and Dependency

The town was created by pit-owners who came from outside the area. As a primarily one-industry town, the local economy was directly and radically affected by national economic circumstance.

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[4] In 1980, three quarters of the North East manufacturing employment was controlled by firms based outside.

With the demise of the coal industry, the related industry closed down, the railway closed and the Co-operative Store closed. (The Co-operative Society in the North East, with each local branch having its all encompassing departments, and the "divi", was as much part of the fabric of the local community as the pits.)

In an article in "New Society" in 1963 S.Aris made the observation, "strangled by the inevitable decline of the coal mines, Crook is slowly dying on its feet".[5] Since the closure of the deep mines, open cast mining has developed. It has had enormous environmental impact on the surrounding countryside but has made only a minor dent in the unemployment figures for the area. The open cast mining industry is privately owned and regulated from outside the locality, employing semi-skilled workers, most of whom also come from outside the locality. The factories that opened after the closure of the mines were owned and regulated from outside the locality. The type and price of much of the new housing attracts people from outside the town, the prices being remarkably high for the locality, remarkably low for those from neighbouring conurbations and cities (though since 1991 the gap has narrowed considerably). Two major new private housing estates (one of them Barrett housing begun in the mid-1970s, and the other executive-style housing begun in 1987) have had little effect on the commerce and welfare of the town. This is largely because the said estates are of a generally dormitory character: the occupants work, shop and pursue leisure activities elsewhere; and also, because generally the estates are not acknowledged by local people: they are situated out of sight and away from the centre of the town and populated for the most part by outsiders.

Local people have a generally held and usually valid conviction that major decisions concerning their quality of life are made by others outside the locality. There continues to be a

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[5] Aris, S. "The Struggles of a Dying Town" in New Society no.18 (January 1963) p.31

strong sense of being done-to: a helplessness in the face of
powerful, impersonal, outside influence and control. As has
already been noted (pp.6f. above) for as long as Crook was based on
coal it was shaped directly by the vagaries of **national** economy and
national energy requirements. Furthermore, there continues to be a
popular feeling in the North East of being too far away from the
centre: that national government is too far away to appreciate or
understand the worth and needs of the area, which means the North
East is persistently forgotten or undervalued. A new civic centre
opened in 1989, housing almost all the local district council
offices in one town and under one roof for the first time. With
remarkable insensitivity, it was built on the site of the Co-op
store, last bastion of the old Crook, thus upsetting local people.
The choice of Crook instead of the much larger, though less
central, Bishop Auckland annoyed even more people. Relations
between council and community charge payer have been flawed on both
sides for many years.

Despite the fact no pits have worked since 1960, many of the
people who have lived in the town all their lives still regard it
as a mining town. Despite the enormous changes nationally in
shopping habits, alongside the two supermarkets the main street
still retains its straggle of 1950s/1960s small independent shops
(albeit on a steadily reducing scale). This holding on to the past
is generated by a dignity and pride in how things used to be (for
example, the fact that Crook used to have one of the best amateur
football clubs in the country, and the fact that Crook used to
produce some of the finest coke in Europe) as much as blind habit
and parochialism. The innate conservatism that pervades much of
S.W.Durham finds skewed reflection in the local district council's
enthusiasm for re-inventing a rose-tinted past. Lifting tarmac and
replacing it with new cobble setts is an obvious example of a tourism-
and economy-driven distortion of local history.

In all of this, Crook is by no means unique. Nor is Crook

alone in the disintegration of its identity, and the dispiritedness
which follows from it.

C. THE CHURCH

The History of the Church Building and its Development

In 1840-3 the local Anglican church was built. Hitherto,
what was by then a rapidly developing hamlet had been part of the
geographically vast parish of Brancepeth, with the parish church
some seven miles away. By an Order in Council in 1845 the former
township of Crook in Brancepeth parish was constituted a parochial
chapelry. Thus, the church was built in a prominent position in
the centre of Crook just at the time the town was becoming
established.

Designed by Ignatius Bonomi, an architect based in Durham
City, St.Catherine's Church was built in the Victorian
understanding of Early English Style and comprised a simple nave
and sacrarium. St.Catherine's was one of Bonomi's "cheap
churches", so called because it was funded largely by the
Incorporated Church Building Society (based in London) whose main
pre-occupation was not so much aesthetics as the provision of "free
sittings". It was also funded by monies made available by the
Church Building Act of 1818. St.Catherine's Church was thus
another of the major institutions in the town funded and brought
into being from outside the locality.

In 1877 when the population was still expanding rapidly, a
south aisle was added to increase accommodation. Porches were
added and the main roof was raised six feet (presumably as an
attempt to add dignity and grandeur both to the building itself and
also to the townscape). In 1885, the building was further

developed: the sacrarium was extended to include a chancel large
enough to accommodate a choir, space for a pipe organ was added to
the north side of the chancel and a clergy vestry to the south side
of the chancel. In 1920, a heavy oak chancel screen was added in
memory of local people killed in the First World War. At that time
there was also major refurbishment of the chancel and sanctuary.
An altar and communion rail were installed in the side aisle in
1953. The last major building work was carried out in 1960 when an
annex was added to the west end of the building to serve as a choir
vestry and meeting room, requiring the removal of several pews at
the back of the nave and the re-positioning of the font. Over the
years, the plain glass has been replaced in all but two of the
windows by memorials in stained glass. Many small furnishings and
ornaments have been added, few removed.

Thus, there has been major alteration to the building more or
less every thirty to thirty-five years: each generation making its
mark on the church building. Whilst the addition of side aisle and
chancel reflects the increase in the town's population, there is no
evidence of an increase in church attendance. The accumulation of
furnishings with very little balancing disposal echoes the design-
less growth of the town. When the pit heaps were being razed and
landscaped in the early 1960s, the wall surrounding the church was
demolished, the overgrown churchyard was levelled and grassed over
and the headstones removed. The contention these changes evoked is
well-remembered thirty years later. The end of the pits and the
brave new world of attracting alternate industry evoked an
immediate enthusiasm but was short-lived. The value of the annex
to the church, like the town's plans for new industry, was short-
lived because it is limited in its size and use, and also because
the vision of it was small.

Despite the many and considerable changes to the church
building, despite the progressive encroachment on Bonomi's light
and space and simplicity, it still retains much of its original

style and feel.

Churchmanship and Leadership

St.Catherine's is described as having been "middle-of-the-road low church" up to the mid-1970s. What was felt by the then congregation to be a very settled period came to an abrupt end in 1975. A new incumbent arrived and quickly imposed a change in churchmanship, a change amplified by the next incumbent: 1975-1986 was a period of "high church" teaching and practice. The result, by 1987, was a church building with many of the trappings of high church worship but very little understanding or interest in such worship on the part of most of the regular worshippers. Churchmanship antagonisms continued, though often the detail of the cause had been mislaid.

Whilst churchmanship changed radically in the mid-'70s - a development again wrought from outside - the style of leadership continued to be fairly autocratic: the rector decided and the one or two key lay people ruled. That style of leadership and the issues of churchmanship were seriously questioned on the arrival of the new incumbent in 1987 (yet another instance of an agent from outside causing local change).

D. THE RE-ORDERING OF THE CHURCH BUILDING

Background

During the last interregnum (July 1986 - September 1987), regular worshippers at St.Catherine's had become more inward looking. Considerable bitterness between several individuals and factions within the church soured the overall atmosphere.

The incumbent's acceptance of the living in 1987 was conditional upon the PCC (Parochial Church Council) fulfilling several requirements, including the change from eastward to

westward facing of the president at the eucharist. For almost three years a temporary altar met this condition whilst plans (with all the necessary discussion) were drawn up. The intent of the plans was to open out the sanctuary and move the stone altar forward.

By November 1987, it became evident that the electrical wiring of the church building needed renewing. Redecoration of the interior was widely acknowledged as being overdue. From the outset, three main attitudes were discernible:
a) reactive: to restore the building to the same standard and style as the last redecoration and rewiring,
b) prevaricative: to talk around and avoid any decision making, and
c) proactive: to use this necessary work as an opportunity to examine the possibility/worth of further developing the building. These three positions reflect dimensions of time: the reactive holding on to the past, the prevaricative delaying, holding on to the present, and the proactive seizing the future.

The treasurer to the Parochial Church Council (who had been a member of the PCC for over twenty-five years) recommended that given the cost of rewiring and redecoration, and how that work would "fix" the building for the foreseeable future, the Parochial Church Council should consider the requirements of the church over the next fifteen to twenty years. It was suggested that this should include investigating alternative lighting schemes and possible alternative ordering of the building. In other words, the initial impetus for the discussions on the re-ordering of worship space came from within the local community and was practical: the need for redecoration and re-wiring, and the economic sense of including any further development of the building in the one overall scheme.

Discussion and Debate

The Parochial Church Council set up a steering committee

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comprising treasurer, one churchwarden, incumbent and two others
(at least one of whom should be a woman) and the power to co-opt as
necessary. The remit of the steering committee was to investigate
the possibilities and potential for reordering the church building.
The steering committee, chosen by treasurer and incumbent, provided
a broad representation of the regular Sunday worshippers in terms
of age range, number of years living in Crook, and also in attitude
towards potential change to the building with two members known to
be enthusiastic for change, one fearful of change and two
undecided.

The steering committee first met in February 1988, visited
several local churches that had been re-ordered recently, looked at
various lighting schemes, spoke with technical and ecclesiastical
experts, and drew on local electrical and interior design
expertise. From very early on in its proceedings, the steering
committee acknowledged the need to try and resolve the present,
long-established antagonisms amongst the church people. The
committee were convinced that by making the church building more
accessible and welcoming, the church people would improve in their
hospitality, social intercourse and friendship. Plans were
therefore developed to provide a larger meeting room, a kitchen and
better toilet facilities within the present plant.

In December 1988, the steering committee presented to the PCC
the following set of precepts:-

"1.   The Church is first and foremost a place of worship that
       belongs to and is for the use of the community. As such it
       should
       a) direct us to the MYSTERY OF GOD;
       b) provide a climate of FELLOWSHIP/HOSPITALITY.

2.   The community should give nothing less than its best for God.

3.   Any work on the building should take account of present needs
     and the requirements of the near future.

4.   Any development of the building should take careful note of
     tradition, the history of the building, the architecture of
     the building. As people, and as a building, the church is
     ever-changing.

5.   The building should be available to the community, it should
     be a focal point in the life of the town."

     With these precepts in mind, the steering committee were
unanimous in making the following proposals:-

"a. complete re-wiring and re-lighting, using the subtlety and
     quality of modern fittings to provide suitable flexibility
     and emphasise focal points (e.g. altar, font, lectern,
     pulpit),

b.   redecorate throughout to complement the new lighting,

c.   provide for a nave altar or re-order present sanctuary to
     accommodate westward facing celebration,

d.   make present clergy vestry into two toilets and kitchen,

e.   put a doorway through from the east end of the side aisle to
     the kitchen,

f.   screen off the side aisle to create a meeting/assembly room
     with small entrance lobby by the main entrance, use space at
     west end of meeting room for choir/clergy robes, pews to be
     removed, area carpeted, stacking and comfortable chairs to be
     provided, room to be available for non-church as well as
     church use, screen to be flexible enough that when occasion

demands, accommodation be as at present,[6]

g.   a suitable architect be employed by the PCC to draw up
     detailed plans in accordance with this basic remit."

There ensued a very lengthy and detailed discussion in which
much of the process that the steering committee had gone through
was rehearsed. Enthusiasms, misgivings, a sense of threat, grasp
of particular detail, inability to discern the overall picture and
intent were voiced. Anger, hurt, delight, excitement, fear, worry
and bemusement were expressed. The main anxieties were: the
financial cost, and making sure St.Catherine's Church remained
recognisably St.Catherine's Church.

The discussion reflected an ambivalence experienced in the
steering committee over the building and its use - that on the one
hand the building should itself be an expression of God's free gift
of grace (it should "direct us to the mystery of God", and "the
community should give nothing less than its best for God" - which
might include the extravagance of a building used only two or three
hours each week), and on the other hand the building should be made
cost effective by offering greater potential for outside users (the
re-ordering of the clergy vestry and side aisle to provide kitchen
and meeting place) which should lead to wider and more frequent use
which in turn should lead to an increase in revenue. The steering
committee offered to the PCC its belief that there was an
importance in making the building more available without being
clear for precisely what or whom. The committee did not check with
the other denominations in the town, with the local district
council, or with other major agencies about facilities
available/unavailable, about perceived areas of need and about to
what extent they are/are not being met. Such an audit would have

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[6] i.e. the potential for the screen **not** to separate people in
the side aisle from those in the main body of the church and the
potential for seating in the side aisle to equal that afforded by
the existing pews there.

lent valuable information to the dialogue on how the church serves and ministers in its locality. The committee persistently avoided looking into how interior design of a church building can enliven or constrain worship - an issue the PCC also did not pursue.[7]

Some members of the PCC felt more time was needed before voting on the proposals. Others felt the issues were so big they should be decided not by the PCC but by the regular congregation or in a public meeting. However, the overriding feeling of the meeting was that as the PCC was elected to deal with the church's business the proposals were the PCC's responsibility and there was nothing to be gained from prevarication. The council voted: 19 for the proposals, with 2 against and 1 abstention. In order to publicise where the PCC had got to, the proposals and some further detail comprised the Rector's letter in the January edition of the church magazine (which has a circulation of c.350).

Response from churchgoers and others in the town was mixed. In a handful of cases there was vehemence either for or against. A rumour of a fifty-strong petition against the proposals was later proved unfounded and rumbled on. Two specific offers to provide fund-raising events in support of the proposals were made immediately. Pleas were made for a public meeting to consider the proposals. The strength of feeling perceived by members of the PCC, subsequent to their meeting, was unnerving to many of them.

In this period of startled flux, it was not easy to analyse the content of the melting pot. There was a school of thought summed up in the statement: "we resent the new Rector coming in and

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[7] - despite a four-session course entitled "Introduction to Worship" which was held at the end of 1988 in St.Catherine's Church - a course that was open to any who were interested. It attracted 20-24 participants, all churchgoers, some of whom were on the steering committee, and some PCC members. People on the course began to address, among other issues, the relationship of environment/building and worship but only in the context of the study groups, they did not bring that learning to bear directly in PCC or steering committee meetings.

changing things to his way of thinking". The proposals were regarded as following on from the incumbent's conditions for accepting the living (i.e. westward facing at the eucharist, and that the incumbent is to serve and minister to the whole parish and not just those who worship regularly). This was further compounded by a suspicion that because the incumbent's previous church was re-ordered during his time there, that is what he does wherever he goes. There is clear evidence that previous incumbents have come in and changed particular areas of church life and style of worship without real consultation. In this context, the proposals were perceived as yet another example of someone with authority from outside imposing values and styles from outside. Furthermore, they are values and styles that demand facing one another, and a wide open door: an open and accepting approach rather than a private and individual approach (which appears to have been the predominating style). It was an expression of angry concession: we can dare to shout resentment because, like the pits closing, and the opencast expanding right up to our backyards, and the building of the Civic Centre, whatever we say, it has already been decided. It was also an expression of avoidance, an abdication of responsibility: all that we can do (perhaps more honestly: all we **choose** to do) is accept and complain.

Another school of thought was a quiet, almost furtive sense of excitement: a tentative enthusiasm for tackling the issues, a wondering interest ("wondering" in the sense of doubt and in the sense of amazement - "are we really going to be allowed ..") in doing-it-ourselves rather than wait-and-be-done-to, proaction rather than reaction.

There was in these initial stages a gradual process of realisation going on: people began to discover that re-ordering a church building involves far more than bricks and mortar, because the church building is somehow a focus and expression of the mystery of God and also expresses something about those whose

church it is. And that means any attempt to get God's house in order will include critical appraisal of its administration, worship, pastoral care, outreach, and mission.

To summarise:- there was the fear and anger of what was seen as unacceptable change: change perceived as being imposed from outside. There was some excitement about daring to own grassroots authority. And, there was huge vulnerability. The wind of change in the church building created a dangerous turbulence around the habit and felt security of church people, a wind that demanded rigorous re-thinking of what presently obtained - in building and people - and the quest for what might or should be. As has already been recognised, serious consideration of how the church building is used and might be used has far reaching consequences. It disturbs fundamental areas of faith and religion - at the very least, issues such as how we understand God, incarnation, community, and what is meant by "the local church".

The December 1988 PCC meeting provided a mandate for the appointment of an architect to draw up detailed plans and costing. An architect recommended by the DAC (the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Church Buildings) was appointed by the PCC on the basis of his preferred style of working which is to collaborate with the local church people, translating their hopes and ideas into a workable scheme, rather than imposing his ideas as a professional from outside.

The architect examined the PCC's proposals and suggested to the steering committee further possibilities, leading to considerable revision. The plans that resulted from this dialogue went to the DAC for informal discussion. The DAC accepted the side aisle aspects of the plans but a minority expressed concern regarding the worship space, that it "did not go far enough". The steering committee's response to the DAC on the side aisle aspects was one of pleased reassurance. Their response to the worship

space suggestion was amazement, confusion and anger. The perceived presumption of the DAC was countered by a strengthened resolve to keep to what the PCC had agreed. Negotiations through the Rector (representing the steering committee) and the Archdeacon (representing the DAC) exposed a political manoeuvring in the DAC with these plans being used in a continuing debate about its orientation (whether it should be primarily conservative or open/progressive). These negotiations also resulted in the assurance of acceptance and confident support by the DAC of the principles enshrined in the original PCC intent.

On Valentine's Day, 1990, an Open Evening was held, the whole town having been leafleted and invited. The purpose of this public meeting was the dissemination and collection of information, concerns and views about the future of the building. Approximately 120 people came to the meeting. Pictures and plans were on display showing the development and changes to the building since its completion in 1843. The architect, the lighting consultant, the Archdeacon (representing the DAC), the Rector and the church treasurer were there to explain and answer questions. As at the PCC meeting when the steering committee's precepts and proposals were presented, the main concerns expressed at the Open Evening were a) financial, and b) that the building should not be "spoilt". Whilst several spoke with emotionally charged vehemence,[8] the Open Evening offered a clear mandate to go ahead and sharpen the detail and costing of the proposals.

Further discussion between the architect and steering committee continued, incorporating findings from the Open Evening; plans were clarified, costs increased. Meantime, plans were finalised to bring the altar rail forward to enlarge the sanctuary

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[8] For example, one person objected with apparent integrity that the architect's use of perspective in his sketches on display distorted reality. He argued that the 1960 annex (actual size 14ft. x 14ft.) was more than adequate as a meeting room, besides which it was in fact larger than the space in the side aisle proposed as the new meeting room (actual size 15ft. x 48ft.).

(and make access to the rail by communicants easier) and to resite the stone altar approximately five feet away from the east wall, thus facilitating the option of the president at the eucharist being able to face the congregation. In January 1990, the PCC voted 20-1 in favour of applying for a faculty to carry out the sanctuary alterations. The Chancellor agreed to the work subject to there being no objections. Objections were lodged by four people, all of whom withdrew their objections when advised by the Diocesan Registry of their financial liability. The faculty was then issued in May 1990 and the work carried out.

In July 1990 when plans had been finalised and tenders received for the major re-ordering work, with all but one member of the PCC in favour, a faculty was applied for. The DAC enthusiastically approved the scheme in all its detail. The Chancellor agreed to grant the faculty subject to there being no objections. The citation for faculty was posted and four objections were received. This time, two remained outstanding and for this reason the Chancellor decided to call a Consistory Court Hearing. The Court was held in March 1991. At the hearing, the Chancellor found in favour of the faculty application in every detail. Building work commenced in April and was completed by November 1991.

One of the objectors (the one member of the PCC who voted against the proposals) was a churchwarden and key leader during the interregnum who after eight years was not re-elected as churchwarden in April 1988. She had also voted against the sanctuary re-ordering and was one of the four objectors who subsequently withdrew their objections. It is felt by some local people (church attenders and others) that the two people whose objections led to the Consistory Court were holding the rest to ransom.

E. CONCLUSION

In the emotional belt of confrontation of the vital issues that the proposals for change in the building have raised, there have been ostrich heads in the sands of time, there have been fearful enthusiasts for movement and development, and there have been others standing variously on all stations between. How far critical examination of major tenets of faith attended the dialogue remains unclear, though its importance is obvious, and evidently the surface has been scratched. Certainly, the depth and range of emotion that the re-ordering of the building has evoked suggests that far more is going on than concern simply about the physical change.

Because it is generally felt that all significant change in the town has been done to the place from outside, and because many of the changes to St.Catherine's have hitherto been instigated by people or agencies from outside, there is an understandable fear that development to the church building (and to church people) will once again be done by outside agencies. It is a considerable undertaking to create an environment in which people can believe in a partnership between them and us resulting in a valued change. However, unless the complex issues about the nature of the church (building and people), including issues of authority and responsibility in the church, are addressed, unless the concept of local church building as symbol is examined, any development of the building will be merely cosmetic, the pasting on of yet another religious wallpaper.

CHAPTER 3

ARCHAEOLOGICAL THEOLOGY

"Only connect ...."[1]

Philosophers of science now often say that, even in the empirically
most objective disciplines, all observation terms and all
observation sentences are theory laden.[2]

A. INTRODUCTION

The value of an archaeological "dig" is in exposing, layer by

layer, strata of history as a means of building a progressively

fuller picture of the particular site and the particular periods of

history exposed. Phenomenology provides for a similarly

archaeological approach in its potential to expose certain levels

of meaning of phenomena ("strata of realities"[3]) that are

inaccessible to purely scientific method.

Because phenomenology has become so broad and diffuse in its

direction and meaning, we begin with a brief introduction to the

founding work on phenomenology by Edmund Husserl. Acknowledging

the diversification of phenomenology within philosophy and out

into other disciplines, we then examine Edward Farley's use of

phenomenology as a tool for re-figuring theology. The validity and

worth of Farley's phenomenological approach is tested by addressing

it to several aspects of The Story.

B. PHENOMENOLOGY

Phenomenology as a mode of philosophical thought was

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[1] Forster, E.M. (1947) frontispiece

[2] Lindbeck, G.A. (1984) p.10f.

[3] Farley, E. (1975) p.49

developed by Husserl (1859-1938), who was greatly influenced by Bretano's "descriptive psychology". It is an attempt to describe consciousness and phenomena as clearly as possible by direct observation, unfettered by presuppositions or any causal theory such as empiricism. Such observation, it is argued, can expose the essential structures and relationships of phenomena.

Husserl's phenomenology arose out of his concern that philosophy had been side-tracked into second-order issues: instead of addressing being, knowledge, consciousness, it was examining theories **about** them. This misdirection, he believed, had come about through the mistaken application of models from natural and cultural beliefs:

> To assist in its own self-immolation, philosophy
> foisted onto human consciousness laws and terms which
> describe relations between objects in space.[4]

It was Husserl's perception that Western thought had become paralysed by the duality of "reality" and "non-reality". "Reality" is that which is known and verifiable through scientific method, and "non-reality" is that which can only be inferred, felt emotionally, opined, believed, etc. It is thus a duality of formal knowledge and personal/cultural historical being.[5]

Phenomenology is a reaction to empiricism generally and the narrowness of positivism (the view that all true knowledge is scientific). It is an attempt to be fundamentally more realistic than empiricism, in that it is not restricted to the range of sensory experience alone. By taking appearances and trying to look into them through sensory **and** non-sensory experience, phenomenology is an attempt to get behind the manufactured duality of formal, scientifically established "reality", and inferred, felt emotionally "non-reality", in order to address reality in its

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[4] Farley, E. (1975) p.30

[5] The latter is described thus by Farley: "[Western man's] entire life and life world, the world of concrete decisions, values, aesthetic objects, history, evil, hopes, and dreams .." Farley, E. (1975) p.31

wholeness.

As a descriptive method of philosophical inquiry, phenomenology is the investigation into and examination of essences/meanings. The process commences with the "*epoche*" or "bracketing", whereby all empirical science, the entire world of fact, history and nature is suspended. This is not to deny their value but to acknowledge that they are insufficient in describing phenomena. Having put the *epoche* into place, a process of "intentional analysis" is undertaken. "Intentionality" is the recognition that the observer is not a passive receptor (hence the perceived inadequacy of the empirical approach) but actively sifts, defines, decides, puts into context any perceived phenomena. "Intentional analysis", which is fundamental to phenomenology, describes a process of up to six levels of reduction; this progressive "questioning back" or "uncovering" (the penetration of appearance by the ego) is believed to lead to the "pure transcendental ego" of the observer whose apperceptions at this stage are so objective that the "essence" of a phenomenon (that which is "necessary, complete, objective and unquestionably veridical"[6]) becomes evident. Thus, phenomenology is the continuing process and attempt

a) to get at the "essential" content of phenomena,

b) to examine the strata of reality that lie between science and the "pure transcendental ego",[7] and

c) to disclose the world as it is before, and uncontaminated by, scientific inquiry - i.e. to get at that which lies under scientific inquiry: "that which is pre-given and presupposed by the sciences".[8]

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[6] Bullock, A., Stallybrass, O., Trombley, S. eds. (1988) p.258

[7] "Placing science as the formal, technical, and explicit product of human knowledge at one end, and the almost contentless transcendental ego at the other end, it would not be too simple to say that Husserl's efforts .. were devoted to the exploration and discovery of layers of reality, both actual and transcendental, between the two." Farley (1975) pp.40-41

[8] Pickles, J., quoted in Johnston, R.J. (1986) p.342

In other words, phenomenological method addresses first order

meaning, whereas scientific method is concerned with second order

meaning.[9]

From the outset, the phenomenological approach has displayed

considerable ambiguity. Husserl himself was not always consistent

in his use of words and their meanings, or in his definitions of

terminology. As Husserl's thought progressed and was fine-tuned,

so the ambiguity increased. Those who have developed Husserl's

work have themselves also tended toward a Humpty Dumpty approach to

terminology.[10] Subsequent to Husserl's foundational work,

phenomenology has been appropriated by disciplines other than

philosophy (such as geography, psychology, anthropology, religion),

and in the process has become further diversified. Thus the

ambiguity has increased. This ambiguity was aided, at least in the

beginning, by polemical caricature borne in part in the early years

by the unavailability of material on phenomenology, and also by its

very susceptibility to varying interpretations.

In his introduction to phenomenology, Farley[11] attempts to

bring some clarity by distinguishing between phenomenological

philosophy, phenomenological method(s), and phenomenological

attitude:

a) <u>phenomenological philosophy</u>

Since Husserl's germinal work, a great diversity of

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[9] "Unlike the physical scientist, who concerns himself only
with meanings that he himself projects onto things, a person
working in the realm of the human sciences must take into account
the pre-interpretations by man of his lived world. In effect, a
human science must contend with two orders of meaning - the
scientific and the lived - because a scientific theoretical
framework exists as the second order of meaning which is
constructed and derived from the lived world as the first order of
meaning." Christiansen, K. in Bould, P.R. & Olsson, G. (1982) p.37

[10] "'When I use a word', Humpty Dumpty said in a rather
scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean - neither
more nor less.'" Carroll, L. (1970) p.190

[11] Farley, E. (1975) pp.26-28

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philosophers have laid claim to phenomenology. What identifies them is their fundamentally all-embracing approach. They begin their philosophical reflection

> not simply with being, language, visible behaviors or even perceived events and qualities of nature, but with the human being in his pre-reflective intentionality.[12]

On this basis, Farley recognises Heidegger, Sartre, Marcel, Merleau-Ponty and Ricoeur as phenomenological philosophers (though he acknowledges that none of their individual works has any more than tenuous links with Husserl's vitally important "transcendental" programme).

b)   phenomenological method(s)

Because of Husserl's accumulation of ideas throughout the development of his thought, there has never been the one phenomenological method. Two strands are, however, clearly identifiable: the descriptive and the transcendental. Furthermore, phenomenology lends itself to exportation to other disciplines by virtue of its pivotal tenet: the use of intentional analysis to identify and describe essences. More specifically,

> methods employed outside of philosophy are 'phenomenological' insofar as they use intentional analysis to isolate and describe essences.[13]

It is in this sense of **method** that Farley uses phenomenology as a theological tool.

c)   phenomenological attitude

This third category describes the phenomenological approach in its loosest sense. Whilst lacking in both eidetic and intentional analysis, there is nevertheless a basic phenomenological "feel": the attempt to discern its subject as it is, the concern

> not to determine the object in advance by imposing arbitrary or foreign interpretive categories and

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[12]   Farley, E. (1975) p.26

[13]   Farley, E. (1975) p.28

methods.[14]

Thus, the phenomenological attitude is the opposite of a reductionist or dogmatic approach.

Phenomenology may well be qualified to deepen and amplify our understanding of phenomena by reclaiming aspects and dimensions of personal being dismissed by science. However, there are drawbacks. Its easy applicability to a diversity of disciplines means it has value in so far as it provides a common ground. But such value is easily lost as the phenomenological element is absorbed and subsumed into the particular discipline. The complexity of phenomenology in itself is then further compromised, leading to a multiplicity of diverging methodologies each laying claim to phenomenology.

Phenomenology, in its complexity, contains considerable paradox if not contradiction. For example, it contains the avowed intent to take account of non-scientific **and** scientific information, and yet begins by bracketing off the empirical. Furthermore, this suspension of reality (Husserl's "*epoche*") raises a basic philosophical question as to whether it is possible to bracket off empirical knowledge.

Perhaps the most serious criticism of phenomenology is that it is peculiarly static: intentional analysis seems to freeze the phenomenon in time and space. It is as if, for example, instead of addressing a phenomenon as it is on a video, the "hold" button is pressed and it is the qualitatively different phenomenon, the phenomenon in the still that is subjected to Husserl's reductions. Thus, whilst the intention of phenomenology is to take account of the phenomenon **as it is** in all its aspects, its very methodology appears to guarantee its failure to do so. Another example of the peculiarly static quality of phenomenology is the unnatural

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[14] Farley, E. (1975) p.28

bracketing off of the natural, the act of *epoche* itself is a process of decontextualisation, a freezing (albeit temporary) out of time and space.

Phenomenology, therefore, does not and cannot achieve what it purports to. However, by pursuing sensory <u>and</u> non-sensory perception by way of intentional analysis, it does offer a broader and fuller picture of phenomena than empiricism.

C. EDWARD FARLEY

Introduction

Just as phenomenology is a philosophical attempt to provide a methodology for getting underneath the surface comprehension of phenomena, so Farley's theological method is similarly the attempt to provide a framework for getting at what lies beneath the theological 'givens' of scripture and tradition. It is beyond the remit of this thesis to give a comprehensive critique of Farley's use of phenomenological method (see p.23 above), but by drawing principally on <u>Ecclesial Man</u> (1975) and <u>Ecclesial Reflection</u> (1982), our purpose is to examine the extent to which particular elements of Farley's theological method provide a helpful framework for understanding The Story better. The particular elements to be scrutinized are: the "principle of positivity" - including "*ecclesia*", appresentation, and "ecclesial reflection" - the theological *epoche* and uncovering, and his discussions on idolatry and institutionalisation.

It is assumed that there is more to The Story than meets the eye; that examination of the sub-surface will reveal more information, which will in turn provide a fuller picture of what is going on. The methodology developed by Farley for such an

archaeological approach is in two parts. There is the Universal Joint, the connector that allows the exploration of the relation between local church and church universal, locality and culture (phenomenology's "principle of positivity"). Secondly, there is the Bulldozer and Mechanical Digger & Trowel. The Bulldozer is concerned with the process of identifying and pushing to one side the 'givens' (phenomenology's *epoche*) in order to open up and make available what lies underneath. The Mechanical Digger & Trowel take advantage of the availability provided by the Bulldozer to lift out and sift out the sub-strata debris (the phenomenological process of 'uncovering').

The Principle of Positivity

The principle of positivity was developed by Husserl from the distinction already recognised by Pascal between a "universal, speculatively apprehended God" and "the God of a determinate religious faith"[15] - a distinction not between true and false, but between the God of the philosophers and the God who made himself known to the patriarchs of Israel. The principle of positivity is ontological in that it is concerned with the relation of universal and determinate strata. The worth of the principle of positivity is in the degree to which it provides a framework a) for comprehending the relation between the universal and the determinate, and b) for figuring the various levels between these two polarities.

By examining two procedures which do not employ positivity, the principle should become clearer. A **provincial** hermeneutic endeavours to understand faith entirely from within a specific and particular historical form. A **generic** hermeneutic is concerned only with universal structures. Thus, with a generic hermeneutic,

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[15]   Farley, E. (1975) p.57

a specific historical faith is perceived as an example from within these universal structures, whereas a provincial hermeneutic either ignores or denies any universal elements in giving primacy to the particular historical faith under examination. The generic denies the "essence" of particularity by expanding it to the universal. The provincial denies the "essence" of the universal by confining it to the particular. Here lies the inadequacy of the two hermeneutics, because universal structures, or "essences" do not disappear in attending to the specific historical actuality. Rather, they are transformed. And, for Farley, these transformations are not static but continue to change through time on multiple levels of determinacy. The direction of the process is from the general to the particular, with the more general being transformed by the more particular. What the principle of positivity asserts is:-

> each general stratum undergoes transformation when it
> is incorporated into the strata more determinate than
> itself.[16]

For example, a European is transformed in the determinacy of being a British citizen, who in turn is transformed in the determinacy of being a Liverpudlian, who in turn is transformed in the determinacy of being a businesswoman and so on to the individual herself. At every stage in this process there is the addition of new content: the more general adds to the more particular.

Given that faith encompasses the universal and the provincial, to a faith that has a general universal framework and also is a faith expressed by a particular group of people in a particular place at a particular time, the principle of positivity clearly has much to offer as a method for revealing how the two relate and how the more general is transformed by and added to by the particular:-

> A determinate social world, combining as it does the
> concreteness of a particular life world and universal
> structures of social world, presents to the
> investigator the special methodological problem of

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[16] Farley, E. (1975) p.60 (Farley's italics)

sensing the way in which the universal structures have undergone modification and have taken on new content."[17]

Having recognised the continuing complex transformations through time and on multiple levels of determinacy, Farley seems to be at odds with himself in his insistence that the principle of positivity is one directional. The principle of positivity would appear rather to be of a spiral nature, with the possibility of starting off from any stage (e.g. Liverpudlian, businesswoman, etc.) and in any direction, each determinacy adding to the picture and transforming it.

The Principle of Positivity in The Story

The principle of positivity is concerned with the relation of general and determinate strata, the more general being transformed by the more restricted in a hierarchy of determinacy. In The Story, several such hierarchies are evident. There is the universal of Christian faith with the progressively more determinate strata of Anglican Communion, Church of England, diocese, archdeaconry, deanery and parish, to the individual as the most determinate. Within the local church itself there is a hierarchy of determinacy from the parish as a whole through those who attend church, to those who worship regularly, the PCC (Parochial Church Council), the standing committee, the churchwardens and incumbent, to the individual. With the issue of change to the church building there is a hierarchy of determinacy that is concerned with authority: from the diocesan bishop through DAC (Diocesan Advisory Committee)/archdeacon, (Deanery Pastoral Committee), PCC, standing committee, churchgoers and parishioners to the individual. But alongside, and in tandem with the diocesan bishop there is also the chancellor of the diocese - appointed by the diocesan but thereafter exercising independent authority in

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[17]   Farley, E. (1975) p.93

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matters of ecclesiastical law, mediated through the Diocesan
Registry, which in turn is mediated, sometimes, through the DAC, to
the PCC. Furthermore, in this particular hierarchy of determinacy
two forms of polity (episcopal and synodical) are herein conflated.

Already, in these very crudely assembled hierarchies, the
idea of a linear structure just does not reflect the actuality: in
reality, lines overlap, strata are missed out and picked up on
different levels, and the interconnectedness is evidently highly
complex.

The process, described in The Story, of re-ordering the
sanctuary and moving the main altar illustrates this complexity and
also the transformational aspect contained in the principle of
positivity. Prior to the alterations, the general stratum of
transcendent God was transformed in the determinate of
St.Catherine's church building with steps up from the nave, through
the first fence of chancel screen, past the choir stalls, up more
steps, past the second fence of altar rail, to a stone altar fixed
against the east wall and thus permitting no other than eastward
facing for the president at the eucharist. Such a layout offers a
perception and understanding of God as being intensely above and
distant, set apart from his people. After the alterations, the
general stratum of a transcendent God had been transformed in the
determinate of St.Catherine's church building with the altar rail
brought forward to expand the sanctuary, most of the sanctuary
furniture removed and the stone altar brought forward. This new
transformation is from an only transcendent to an "and-also"
incarnational God by the emphasis on westward facing. Without
losing the beyondness that engenders the sense of transcendence,
with the president facing the people in the eucharist there is also
the focus of God in the midst of his people.

The procedure that led to the sanctuary re-ordering included
the polarities of the universal of the transcendent/incarnational

God and the determinate of St.Catherine's church building. That much is obvious. What is not so evident (and where Farley's theory is lacking) is the middle ground: the not-so-universal and the not-so-determinate. Other agencies were clearly involved, for example, the PCC, DAC, Archdeacon, Architect, Diocesan Registry and Chancellor. If and how each of these agencies were transformed is not so immediately evident. By virtue of, and to the extent that members of these agencies took on board, accepted and owned the physical change to the sanctuary and position of the altar, they were transformed. Those agencies who attend the church are transformed by the alteration to worship (and, therefore, the alteration also of their experience of God) that these alterations have engendered. Those agencies who do not attend St.Catherine's Church (the DAC, Archdeacon, Architect, Diocesan Registry and Chancellor) are transformed in that the particular experience of dealing with St.Catherine's sanctuary and altar changes and informs their perception of God. They are further transformed by the experience of dealing with St.Catherine's in any subsequent transactions they might have with the re-ordering of other church buildings.

Furthermore, contrary to Farley's single, linear direction, with the more general being transformed by the more particular, the transformational aspect is multi-directional. The DAC, in advising on the particularity of St.Catherine's, made suggestions borne out of experience with other churches involved in similar schemes. Similarly, the chancellor required certain conditions to be met before granting the faculty. In both these instances, the experience, suggestions and requirements made by the DAC and Chancellor respectively concerning St.Catherine's all had the effect of transforming the more determinate stratum which was St.Catherine's.

The work on St.Catherine's sanctuary and altar was itself transformational on the groups concerned: those who wanted to keep

the building as it was found the altar/sanctuary changes had not
altered the look of the interior radically and therefore were more
open to the main re-ordering scheme. Because the consultative, the
technical and the legal processes had been dealt with in a correct
and seemly manner, the DAC, Archdeacon, Diocesan Registry and
Chancellor were more predisposed toward the main scheme that
followed and certainly more informed. Thus, another spiral of
universal to determinate strata comes into focus.

In all of this, the complexity is of course much greater,
including "countless other organic, historical and psychological
factors".[18]

Farley is useful in drawing attention to the determinate
strata and he does acknowledge the complexity. But he fails to
provide tools to address how the many levels in the various
hierarchies interact and overlap. However, what the principle of
positivity does expose here is that the church as an institution is
not at all clear about its own hierarchy of determinacy. There is
the confusion of synodical and episcopal authority, which is
further compounded by the role of chancellor (as prescriber of
ecclesiastical law) in the polity of the church. For example, the
DAC is a part of the structure of synodical government. Answerable
to the diocesan synod, it advises the Chancellor, it advises the
bishop, and it advises the local parish on all technical and
aesthetic matters in the care of church buildings. Yet it is the
chancellor of the diocese, answerable to no-one, who is the final
arbiter for such relative minutiae as the colour, design, quality
and type of floor covering for a church building. Without the
chancellor's approval, there is no faculty, and without a faculty
the work cannot be put in hand. There is a collision here between
local determination and church authority. The provincial
experiences a loss of autonomy, an enforced surrendering to the

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[18] Farley, E. (1975) p.60

generic: the principle of properly ordered buildings for the worship of God is experienced as a virtual stranger whose skill is in law deciding which carpet for **our** church.

Hierarchies of determinacy are very easy to come by, applying the principle of positivity is where the value lies. So, for example, in The Story there is a hierarchy about who is in charge of the local church: the one or two individuals from within the local church exercising power and assuming authority during the interregnum, the many in the local church who passively authorise that power, the incoming incumbent having a position of authority and exercising power, the diocese (the bishop exercising his authority in appointing the incumbent), the DAC and chancellor exercising authority in faculty jurisdiction, the power of the diocesan administration in levying the quota, the power of synodical government, the canons and formularies of the Church of England, tradition, scripture and reason, and divine authority. Already, this accordion of determinacies is stretched beyond any reasonable expectation of well-tuned music. Before even beginning to address the principle of positivity, assembling this particular hierarchy of determinacy clarifies once more the cumbersome length and convolution of power and authority in The Story (remembering that The Story is a particularity which is also a window through which to look at the more general question of what it is to be The Church).

This complex of power and authority is an important piece of evidence to have unearthed in itself. The same outsideness and beyondness of power and authority as experienced by the majority of local people is echoed in the development of the town: of local people being transformed by industry from outside the area coming in, and of that industry being controlled by individuals from outside the area. Again, the local church building was largely financed from outside the old Brancepeth parish, the major part of the money going into the local church goes straight out into the

diocese - money indicating here sources and levels of power.

In The Story, the autocratic style of leadership of the previous incumbent was adopted and adapted further by the assumption of authority by the retired district nurse who was a churchwarden during the interregnum. This in turn transformed local people's understanding of authority not just within the local church but also the diocese and wider church as being similarly individualistic and autocratic. Thus, contrary to Farley, the more particular transforms the more general. Now that we have unearthed this information, the inevitability of the showdown between newly arrived incumbent and churchwarden is more comprehensible: the clash between licensed and assumed authority was not simply between the two protagonists but permeated all levels of determinacy, hence the enormous energy and emotion invested in the incident. There is much more to be said about power and authority (see chapter 5 below) but Farley's methodology is not sufficient to take us further.

Again, very crudely, the process from initial vision for the building through to completion of the re-ordering work could be fitted into a hierarchy of determinacy. The treasurer's vision for the church building had the effect, it could be said, of progressively transforming the steering committee, who in turn transformed the PCC, and from there to the congregation, the DAC, the diocese, the chancellor and the parish. To suggest such a linear progression of transformation (cf. individual to European p.31 above) is to pay no heed to the immensely complex interaction each of these groupings had with the others. Such a neat progression ignores the reality of the individual, it ignores the painful fits and starts, hopes and fears, progress and set backs that were experienced by all the various groups identified in The Story at various stages in the process. Furthermore, the groups were by no means mutually exclusive: some individuals belonged to more than one group, others moved from one group to another, some

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left groups, others came into them. A deeply interwoven spiral is a more apt model for describing the complexity of The Story, with information, events, people and circumstances weaving into the spiral at any stage, thus qualitatively changing the spiral three-dimensionally.

This is further evidence that whilst Farley is extremely useful in exposing and identifying some of the raw detritus he offers little help in clarifying the enormously complex inter-connectedness. Farley, on his own admission, does not venture into the third dimension.[19] Farley's three dimensions are described in detail on pp.45f. below.

Farley's failure to grasp the third dimension is further exemplified in addressing the polarities of universal and general to The Story. There is in The Story the universal of the local church building being a place to worship God; and the determinate of the same local church building as very specifically commemorating the local dead (for example, memorial windows, chancel screen, vestments, ornaments and litany desk), and as a place to celebrate events of local and civic import. The determinate is also there in the generational imprint on the building, the major alterations to the church building ever thirty years or so throughout its existence. Initially, these two polarities appear to be clearly separate. However, the determinate of generational imprint, for example the present re-ordering, is in fact drawn out of an attempt, conscious or otherwise, to marry the universal (worship of God) with the determinate (St.Catherine's Church building) within the cultural confines of the day (where 'culture' is both a universal, as defining in this case Western society, and a determinate, as the realisation of that culture in the particularity which is the town and people of Crook). Farley

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[19] "The remainder of this investigation will not attempt an account of all three dimensions of ecclesial reflection. Our focus shall be on the first two dimensions, ecclesial existence and determinate universals." Farley, E. (1982) p.191

deals with the highly complex matter of symbol very briefly and inadequately. How, and in what sense the local church building is a symbol will be developed in the next chapter.

Ecclesia

The theological counterpart to what phenomenology discerns beneath the framework of empirical knowledge is described by Farley as *"ecclesia"*.[20] The word "church" is not used by Farley because of its various sectarian and institutional connotations. The word *"ecclesia"* is used rather than the word "faith" in order to emphasise its participatory and historical and eschatological aspects: in order to "ground" faith. *Ecclesia* is thus an arena in which the principle of positivity may usefully be employed. Farley's description of *ecclesia* as "an intersubjectively shaped redemptive consciousness"[21] raises complex questions about institutionality.

The community of faith that Farley calls *ecclesia* has five fundamental traits:

1. the community is unique;

2. it is an actual community that has a long historical existence persisting into the present;

3. it is not so much about the concrete actuality of the community as with its **essence** and **telos**;

4. it is not an ideal community but one that encompasses its shortcomings and strives towards its *telos* which so far is only partially actualised. Thus, participation in ecclesia means the

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[20] "Phenomenological theology's aim is to locate the immediate and founding apprehensions which accompany faith. Generally expressed, our thesis is that faith's apprehensions occur pre-reflectively and by means of an enduring participation in a form of corporate, historical existence which we are calling ecclesia." Farley, E. (1975) p.127

[21] Farley, E. (1975) p.xiv

"modification of human existence toward redemption"[22] *because* ecclesia is not an end but is **in process**: it is incomplete but moving toward its eschatological completion;

5. whilst it is a distinctive form of sociality, unlike a tribe or nation or face-to-face community, it is not exclusive.

It seems to be the case that the *telos* of faith is generally comprehended as an individual's goal/aspiration, the place where all **individuals** are to be drawn to. That then raises the question as to how the local church as a group of people (however that group is defined) comprehends its *telos*, and how such particular groups of people *per se* can be drawn into the kingdom. Farley's *ecclesia* therefore is not helpful in the concrete, actual situation. More positively, *ecclesia* highlights the inability of the local particular church to grasp its cosmic time/space dimension.

It is in Farley's development of phenomenology's 'uncovering', which he calls 'ecclesial reflection', that he actually uses the word "dimension" - the three dimensions of ecclesial reflection. However, before moving on to the Mechanical Digger & Trowel work, we must first see how the Bulldozer operates.

The Theological *Epoche*

Just as phenomenology's *epoche* is a means of release from the constraints of cultural tradition (both the particular and the universal), so theology's *epoche* is a means of release from the constraints of theological tradition - issues of churchmanship, styles of accepted and habituated worship. The function of the **theological** *epoche* is to suspend the theological "givens": to suspend

> the belief-ful or theological commitment to the church
> tradition, especially as it presupposes its own

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[22] Farley, E. (1975) p.128

authorities such as Scripture or confessions.[23]

The reason for this suspending is in order to address what is present but hidden without being compromised by a circularity of evidence: philosophy, like history, is never neutral, neither is theology:-

> No human being escapes the emphases, valuations and pre-dispositions of the life world in which he is shaped.[24]

Farley is not suggesting here that phenomenology as a human endeavour is also by definition unable to escape, but rather that phenomenology is never more than an **attempt** to escape these constraints. The theological *epoche* is an attempt to free the investigation not just from the theological "givens" of Scripture and tradition but also from philosophical criteria for reality and knowledge (i.e. the determinate and the general) and thus allow voice to what lies underneath.

Attempting to apply the *epoche* to theological method presents the same level of philosophical difficulty as the attempt to apply it in phenomenology. Briefly, it is easy enough to appreciate that empirical knowledge is a framework for understanding the universe we live in and therefore approximates to what is and is vehicle to comprehending what is. But, suspending empirical knowledge (the *epoche*), in this case the theological givens of Scripture and tradition and doctrine, to get at the 'real' theology is a theoretical leap that is humanly impossible to complete. The worth lies in the attempt and proximate achievement.

The Theological *Epoche* in The Story

At the beginning of The Story, a number of firmly held assumptions threatened to scotch the proposals before they even got

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[23]   Farley, E. (1975) p.71

[24]   Farley, E. (1975) p.73

off the ground. "We don't have the money." "The church building
is solely for worship and worship related activities." "The
present generation has a responsibility to maintain its
inheritance" (in this case to maintain the building as it has been
handed down to them). This last instance leads to: "the building
cannot be changed beyond new wiring and new paint".

By looking at other church buildings that had been reordered,
and by attempting to suspend their habituated perception of
St.Catherine's church, the steering committee were able to be much
more imaginative about St.Catherine's. The constraints they had
first felt about St.Catherine's were now in part shelved, but
replaced by new constraints: the limits of what they had seen and
how those schemes fitted their understanding of the role and
purpose of a church building. So, for example, a visit to a
church with a recently installed upstairs area led to speculation
about installing an upstairs area at St.Catherine's. Evidence of a
church building now enjoying a considerable and wide community use
did not persuade those who felt the only use for a church building
was church worship.

Interestingly, the steering committee did not need to suspend
theological/belief-ful givens about the church building because one
of the given assumptions was that the "religious bit" was not their
concern but the responsibility of the incumbent. Whether or not
that assumption was acceptable, **those** issues were already bracketed
off. However, it is not as simple as that: that is what was **said**.
Strongly held, but largely inarticulated views, on the "religious
bit" for many concerned were buried unspoken but still exercised
powerful constraints. Such unconscious cover-up makes the
bracketing difficult to apply, and also because the reality of the
"religious bit" in those concerned is largely unacknowledged by
them, it surfaces in other strata, further confusing and
confounding any attempt at bracketing-off. Not surprisingly, after
the apparent ease in bracketing off the "religious bit", the

steering committee found the weight of the general expectation of traditional stability and unchangingness in the building proved much more difficult to shelve. The issues of traditional stability and unchangingness are clearly loaded with theological and belief-ful givens, but this was not easily recognised by those involved in the discussions. They preferred to confine themselves in this context solely to considerations about the physical building and the social history of church-goers and the town. The role of the architect was in this respect very helpful: precisely because of his professional skill in working with buildings and the fact he was from elsewhere (i.e. from outside the parish), he as it were carried that *epoche* for the standing committee and PCC. And yet, as has already been clarified, the *epoche* can never be more than an attempt: the particular architect employed by the PCC majors on church work and sees each new project as growing out of his previous work. He is also a practising Christian and thus brings to his architectural work on church buildings his particular experience and understanding of faith. Whilst the employment of an architect from outside the locality afforded the steering committee some measure of "bracketing", it is not the case that the architect himself suspended his theological/ belief-ful givens, and, of course, the architect-*epoche* did not extend to a full bracketing off of the theological and belief-ful givens that lie just beneath the surface of traditional stability and unchangingness.

Whilst the concept of *epoche* was never formally identified or consciously employed by the people in The Story, it is evident looking back over the events that one of the difficulties running through the process of change was how easily the *epoche* was forgotten, ignored, not noticed. At each stage in the preparations and with each group - whether the transaction were formal or informal, between architect and incumbent, steering committee, PCC, Public Meeting or DAC - the *epoche* had to be re-established. Because the *epoche* is more of a determined way of thinking than an achievable goal, it was never going to be the case in The Story

that any group would get to the stage of beginning from nothing, from a blank piece of paper. For example, as meetings of the steering committee progressed, the set of precepts replaced the given assumptions. The assumptions grew out of the inspiration of the treasurer, but that inspiration grew at least in part out of a barely articulated wish to commemorate his recently deceased wife, which itself links back, with the loaded vigour of these antecedents, to the spiral of determinacy. Thus the spiral grows and fragments. Not only is the *epoche* literally unachievable, it is also a fearful prospect: divestiture of what is known, habitual and mostly comfortable results in discomfort, vulnerability and an enthusiasm to avoid, rather than an exhilaration of new possibilities.

"Uncovering"

Whilst the *epoche* is a holding back, a cordoning off of the reality as we know it, "uncovering" is a reflective method of stepping inside and questioning-back into our pre-conscious understanding of reality, the delicate digging into and careful sifting of strata. In terms of theology, this "uncovering" is concerned with what lies underneath the everyday faith activities such as attending church, prayer, social action and care for those in need. Farley asserts that such activities "are founded in a 'world' that contains many strata; institutional, pre-institutional, intersubjective, subjective and experiential and transcendental".[25] It is a reflection that is not speculative but descriptive, exposing and describing what is there in the pre-conscious levels of reality.

The process of uncovering is described by Husserl as one of reduction - that is not to say a narrowing down, but a progressive

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[25] Farley, E. (1975) p.77

opening out and enlargement in description. This can be compared
with open system theory (q.v. ch.5 pp.126-130). One of the
elements in uncovering that exemplifies this ecological direction
is **appresentation**: the theory that an "object" contains in itself
more information than can be perceived (e.g. a tree can be seen
only partially, its roots and the back of it are hidden from view
but "known") and also that an "object" is perceived in context
(e.g. a tree is not seen in isolation but rooted in some
landscape).

The theological counterpart of "uncovering" is described by
Farley as "ecclesial reflection". In his book entitled "<u>Ecclesial
Reflection</u>", he defines three dimensions of ecclesial reflection.[26]
The first dimension is concerned with ecclesial existence: the
internal examination of the historical community and the story (the
Adamic-Gospel story) that pervades it. Such ecclesial reflection
that looks no further than the first dimension tends to insularity:
depending on how the historical community was defined, ecclesial
realities would be Israel's/Christianity's/the denomination's/my
truth - it would not be truth for human being.

The second dimension is concerned with determinate
universals.[27] Fields of evidence are here brought in which are wider
than ecclesial existence because ecclesial existence is in the
world and of the world and therefore subject to determinate
universals. Furthermore, Farley argues that:

> Evil and redemption as motifs in the Adam-Gospel story
> are intended as being in some way universal. And this
> is what propels ecclesial reflection to a second step,
> not just because of general world affirmation, but
> because the realities are experienced as themselves
> *universal* realities.[28]

Stopping in the second dimension would be to lock theological

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[26]   Farley, E. (1982) p.186ff.

[27]   "determinate universal": that which is constitutive of
human being

[28]   Farley, E. (1982) p.188

reflection into a past or universal with no way to move into the present or particular.

The third dimension addresses that constraint by beginning with determinacy: the concreteness, the situationality of the individual and social contemporary situations. Whilst drawing on the first and second dimensions, the third reflects on specific autobiographical, political and cultural situations as they are in the present.

Schools of theology find their place in one or other of the three dimensions. Thus, historical and biblical belong to the first, philosophical and systematic belong to the second, and practical theology (e.g. liberation theology, black theology) belongs to the third. It is to the third dimension that The Story belongs. As has already been noted, Farley chooses not to take up the third dimension (see p.38 above).

"Uncovering" is one of the more accessible aspects of phenomenology which as a theological tool retains its accessibility. As with the attempt to achieve the *epoche*, uncovering engenders a great sense of release, giving the freedom and licence to new ways of thinking about old established issues. Herein also lies the danger - that the freedom becomes anarchic and undisciplined. For the uncovering to have some discipline and direction presents its own problem: in order to uncover towards essence presupposes at least an inkling as to what the essence is or might be. Whilst this is not necessarily a direct contradiction of *epoche*, criteria are evidently employed without sufficient validation. This problem in phenomenology's uncovering persists in Farley's use of it. The value of Farley's uncovering, his "ecclesial reflection", is in exposing the need to get under surface limitations and also the need to make connections between the three dimensions he identifies.

Exposed once again is the proclivity of phenomenological

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method to "freeze the frame": the *epoche* has the effect of taking the phenomenon out of time and space before subjecting it to the process of uncovering, thus changing the phenomenon. Despite Farley's recognition of this problem in phenomenology, his theological attempt is only partially successful: the problem is at least addressed if not satisfactorily resolved.

"Uncovering" in The Story

One of the major anxieties expressed by members of the PCC and others was that they had a responsibility to maintain the building as they had inherited it, that what they should not do is alter or destroy the building their forbears had worked so hard for. The assumption here is that the church building in its current form was just as it was when initially completed in 1843. A highly useful antidote to this tunnel vision of the past was to draw attention to the stark simplicity of the original building and the progressive changes and accretions ever since through the display of old plans and sketches.

The process of "uncovering", of stepping inside and questioning back, is fundamental to understanding what is going on in The Story. Despite the display of old plans of the church building, there were those at the Open Evening who were adamant the church building had always been as it was currently. Similarly, one of the objectors at the Consistory Court objected to the need for a ramp to one of the entrance doors to the church, insisting there was no step in need of ramping when the evidence of the step was incontrovertible. The process of "uncovering" is useful here in getting under the surface of what was being said to what was motivating the evidently nonsensical statements. If the persons making these statements were not being irrational then the question arises as to what lies behind their assertions. The possibilities include an understanding of the church as an oasis of stability in

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the shifting sands of contemporary cultural change and development; a very narrow understanding of a God who is the same yesterday, today and forever, which is then misplaced onto the church as institution, and as the local church. Their assertions may also be about authority in the local church: who has the right to make changes to a local church building; or about ownership: who the local church belongs to - is it a closed shop or open house? As each of these avenues is probed, further avenues are opened up to exploration and examination.

"Uncovering" for our purposes, like the *epoche*, is a fundamental **approach** rather than an achievable goal: whilst providing no final answers (i.e. whilst not discerning the essence) it is enormously helpful in broadening our understanding of what is going on in The Story. Once again, Farley's phenomenological-theological tool, this time "uncovering", is a valuable preliminary in exposing the layers bit by bit, but it is inadequate to the task of addressing what is exposed.

"Appresentation", which is a particular facet of "uncovering", is the timely reminder that there is more than meets the eye. For example, the plans that describe the progressive accretions to the building provide one version of its history. There are also people's memories which provide their versions of history. In other words, the history of the building is far broader and more complex than a series of plans. In order to appreciate the development of the church building in all its fullness, all those versions need to be included too.

Similarly, the DAC does not exist simply and entirely for the re-ordering of St.Catherine's. It too has its history, purpose and polity; each member is far more than the particular skill he or she brings to bear in the context of the work of the DAC. Thus, when the DAC returned the re-ordering plans submitted by the PCC with the suggestion that they did not go far enough, what was being

stated was far more than that the plans were not sufficiently
radical. Looking at the field in which the tree that is the DAC is
placed, (i.e. by discussing the issue with one of its members) what
came into focus was that there was a split in the DAC between those
members who were happy to continue in the long-established re-
active mode (simply responding to plans as submitted, dealing only
with what is given), and those who would rather be pro-active, who
would wish to make novel suggestions over and above the plans
submitted. In The Story, the statement received by the PCC of "not
radical enough" had its roots in this DAC division of opinion. The
initial response of the steering committee and the PCC to the DAC's
"not radical enough" was one of dismay, anger, confusion,
frustration and strengthened resolution. Knowing the context did
not make those responses go away, but it did make the statement
more comprehensible. Appresentation as a particular aspect of
"uncovering" is thus a valuable check. Rooting issues in the
contexts where they belong, examining the broader picture, makes
for a more wholesome understanding of them.

Ecclesial Reflection in The Story

As a scheme for theological "uncovering", Farley's three
dimensions of ecclesial reflection are of limited use. The first
dimension is ecclesial existence: the internal examination of the
historical community and scripture. The second dimension is
"determinate universals". And the third is the determinate, the
concrete actuality, which draws on the first and second dimensions
but majors on autobiographical, political and cultural situations
as they are in the present. Once more, it is the melting pot of
the third dimension that Farley refrains from dipping into, yet
this is the most crucial of the three. The choice of the word
'dimension' is surely not accidental? The third dimension develops
the first and second, giving body and depth. It is only in his
exploration of the first dimension that Farley grasps the sheer

intricacy of what he is uncovering.

Two further issues require examination: idolatry and institutionalisation.

Idolatry

There is in Hindu philosophy the understanding that the world as we know it (i.e. empirical knowledge) is an illusion. Reincarnation occurs so long as we are enthusiastic for this illusory world, so long as we are addicted to it and idolise it. When we see the world for what it is - an illusion - and accept it for what it is, we have no further need for reincarnation and therefore are not reborn into the world but return to Being from whence we came. There are echoes of this in Judaeo-Christian faith's fallen humanity striving for redemption, repudiating this world and aspiring to the next.

Idolatry is defined by Farley as that which seeks to fix and overcome chaos.[29] By displacing chaos, the idol brings cogency to the lives of its idolisers and the world they inhabit. The price exacted by the idol is absolute loyalty. The idol inspires certainty: the process of making something an idol is to displace its actual being with unambiguous perfection and power. Its power can only be maintained by preserving it from its own reality, i.e. by refusing to criticise it, or doubt it, or recognise its relativity, all of which requires dishonesty and fear on the part of the idolisers. Investment in an idol results in the idoliser being defined through the idol. Far from putting an end to human vulnerability by the management of chaos, idolatry is a precarious pursuit:-

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[29]   "Idolatry is the attempt on the part of man to secure himself against refused chaos and to transcend his vulnerability by means of something in his environment." Farley, E. (1975) p.143

> Since the meaning and destiny of his very being depends
> on the idol and on maintaining its adequacy, the
> idolator lives constantly on the edge of a precipice.[30]

For those seeking security from chaos, idolatry is much broader

than any one particularity:

> Because of structural insecurity, alienated historical
> existence is marked by idolatrous relations with
> everything in the surrounding world.[31]

Idolatry in The Story

In a world of rapid change where most of the local beacons of

stability (the pits, the local Co-op, many of the small shops, some

places of worship, the railway) have gone, the church is grasped by

some as a fixed point, an oasis of certainty and safety in a desert

of shifting sand. Despite the catalogue of alteration and

development throughout the history of the church building, some

will still argue that the building should stay as it has always

been. Added to this are the many variations of the statement

"she's done an awful lot for the church" ("church is very important

to him", "he's given his life to the church", etc.): the vehicle

has become the journey's end, at the very least faith is diminished

and the vehicle to faith is idolised.[32]

When "church" (which mainly means the local building) is the

focus of faith, the dishonesty and fear of idolatry are heightened

when the fixity, certitude and absolutitude of the building is

opened to discussion and development as in The Story: the

falsifying fabrication that is the result of idolising becomes

exposed and the idolaters become vulnerable. This at least in part

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[30] Farley, E. (1975) p.143

[31] Farley, E. (1975) pp.143-144

[32] "Social structures and individual behaviors and attitudes
are at best vehicles for whatever realities faith apprehends but
are not the realities themselves. Believing in God simply does not
mean believing in believing in God." Farley, E. (1975) p.15

explains the desperate tenacity and evident irrationality of the objectors (see p.20 above).

It also raises the question as to whether a judicial inquiry into the technical and aesthetic aspects of re-ordering (faculty jurisdiction in this case leading to consistory court) is the most pertinent way to deal with idolatry. Not least because whilst the consistory court did decide regarding the technicalities and aesthetics of the re-ordering, the issue of idolatry remains, and not just on the part of the named objectors. The juridical element in The Story will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 5 below.

The idolising of the church building as exposed in the management of change in The Story is a highly dramatic expression of the process. There are other lesser examples: those who idolise the form of words in worship instead of what the words are vehicle to, and direct the worship to; those who idolise the routine of the church instead of being open to what lies beyond the routine. The move to idolatry is thus energised to some extent by a misappropriation of institutionalisation.

Institutionalisation

"Institutionalisation" is the result of a social grouping being intent on survival and the preservation of its purpose. Institutionalisation includes organisational structures, customs, rites, rules and symbols to ensure the continuity and maintenance of the social grouping. Because *ecclesia* exists at least in part as a social grouping, elements of institutionalisation are necessarily there in it. Rather than give an exhaustive description, Farley lists three key elements - face-to-face reciprocity, memory and sacred space. He examines these elements in some detail in order to show how they can be incorporated

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successfully, and how they can corrupt *ecclesia*.

Face-to-face reciprocities are fundamental to all communities including *ecclesia*. They as it were "earth" *ecclesia*: they comprise the aspect of *ecclesia* that is concrete actuality.

One of the fundamental traits of *ecclesia* (see pp.39f. above) is that it is an actual community with a long historical existence persisting into the present. The persistence of that historical existence depends on the community's ability to remember its origins, to recall the events and the person Jesus Christ. Memory is therefore literally a vital part of the framework of *ecclesia*'s sociality.

How memory functions is crucial to ascertaining how successfully it is incorporated in *ecclesia*. Memory, to the Israelites, was of an ethnic and national unity with clearly defined geographical boundaries. It was within those boundaries that Israel's story took place. (And it continued to be the story of the holy nation even when the nation was dispersed.) To remember the Exodus is to remember a geographically defined religious community. However, *ecclesia*'s memory is of a different order. To remember Jesus Christ is to remember the breaking down of those boundaries, because the remembered person and events broke the ethnic and national confines once and for all. That means that the continuing history is qualitatively different too.

In *ecclesia*, to remember Jesus Christ is also to remember "the continued process of universalization"[33] - a process which means the boundaries of *ecclesia* are never fixed but for ever changing to accommodate the stranger.

The introduction of the stranger brings us to the issue of

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[33] Farley, E. (1975) p.178

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sacred space. There is a sense in which the universalising aspect of *ecclesia* abolishes sacred space: the land, mountain, city, temple of the Israelite community of faith are no longer indispensable requisites for the presence of the sacred. Because *ecclesia* is open to the stranger, the outsider, its space is "more the space of ever-changing boundaries than discrete regions of divine mediation".[34] The geographical venues which served as institutional forms through which God's presence was experienced in Israel have been superseded by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is now the place of God's essence. In other words, the emphasis has shifted from geographical venue to social activity - in particular, "the specific corporate acts of testimony (Word) and sacraments".[35]

Farley[36] further defines three types of activity which are not mutually exclusive but overlap and inform each other, and together constitute ecclesial process. The three types of activity are: proclamatory, sacramental and caring.

The proclamatory (teaching, preaching, writing, editorial, theological, homiletical, pedagogical) is primarily linguistic and interpretative activity. Interpretative activity is concerned with interpreting received tradition, and more importantly, interpreting present reality by means of that tradition. (The leadership role of the parish priest is primarily that of interpreter: one who works at the interface of present and past, who "sees through" tradition to the present actuality.) On one level, ecclesial existence as present reality has a historical basis and therefore proclamation is proclamation of Jesus as the Christ. On another

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[34] Farley, E. (1975) p.178

[35] Farley, E. (1975) p.179

[36] Farley, E. (1982) pp.253-258

level, ecclesial existence is future ideality, it has an eschatological character. Because there is potential realisation of that ideality in the present (i.e. the present possibility of transformation, of redemption) proclamation is also concerned with expounding the impending kingdom of God.

Sacramental activities (which here does not mean the givenness of a specified number of carefully defined sacraments) are primarily present, physical, symbolic acts of bringing together individuals with God, time (then, now and after) and space (here and there). The sacramental inculcates a sense of belonging and also it brings together the remembered tradition and present actuality through the three elements of body, community and divine presence. The function of sacramental activity (as with some proclamatory activity) is redemptive: "the salvific transformation of lived-space or environment"[37] i.e. the removal of constraints, the opening up of the particular or the universal. Sacramental activity expresses the potential for change and transformation (redemption), both actual and ideal and also effects change[38] - change in the sense of sacraments being intense moments, concentrations of God's activity in and with the world.

The function of caring activity (political liberation, individual welfare) is primarily to actualise the expressed potential for change in sacramental activity. It is not enough to express change symbolically, or to effect change through sacramental activity. Caring activity is concerned primarily with actually altering the conditions that get in the way of human well-being. It is, on the broader front, concerned with liberation.

All three types of activity in ecclesial existence in their mutuality and speciality reflect the double orientation - toward

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[37] Farley, E. (1982) p.254

[38] taking due heed of the dangers of understanding sacrament as a transaction - see Capon, R.F. (1975) ch.18

tradition and futurity; and toward determinate community (local) and worldly environment (universal).[39] They reflect the potential constraint/release of tradition, and the paradox of being a universalised existence and at the same time a particularised existence.

The institutionality of ecclesia is relative: whilst it needs some level of institutionalisation (as evidenced above) it is not dependent on any specific forms of institutionalisation. Fundamentally, ecclesia is not inclusive nor is it imperialistic. Ecclesia's relationship with all matters pertaining to institutionalisation is utilitarian, which allows a flexibility to take and use (and drop) different forms as and when useful.

Institutionalisation in The Story

The issue of sacred space is developed in Chapter 4, and a critique of institutional structures is developed in Chapter 5. What is of concern here is in what ways, if at all, our understanding of The Story is enlivened by Farley's description of the relation of ideal and actual ecclesial community.

Persisting throughout The Story is a primary concern for matters institutional; the maintenance (development and preservation) of the church building, the legal process (faculty jurisdiction), correct polity procedure (synodical government), local church tradition (holding onto/letting go of the status quo). It is a concern that is epitomised in a discussion that took place about whether or not to keep a litany desk. What was of

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[39] c.f. "The earth - our mother - and I are of one mind. INDIAN CHIEF: The 'frame' of his response to white demands for territory." Wilden, A. (1980) p.122

fundamental importance to the PCC was: if disposed of, would the family of the person it was given in memory of be offended - and how could they be traced in order to find out? The next anxiety was ensuring the correct procedure for disposal was adhered to (coupled with an interest in its financial value). Worship and prayer, and the place and purpose of the litany desk in them, were not perceived as fundamental issues - at least not for them (cf. the "religious bit" p.42 above).

In The Story, the burden throughout is the institution. Institutional elements persistently get in the way of, take precedence over, obscure the essence of *ecclesia*. The consistory court dealt with the institutional issue of ensuring a properly ordered church building through the institutional process of legal precedent. What it clearly did not deal with were the ruptures in face-to-face reciprocity and the idolatry that were fundamental to the controversy. The legal process, the burden of tradition, the confusion of church polity - instead of helping the local church to be itself, to be *ecclesia*, in fact deflect or are used by the local church to deflect itself from the more crucial issues. In The Story, far from being utilitarian, the institution is largely an end in itself. In this respect, St.Catherine's is of course by no means unique. Putting The Story through the sieve of Farley's concept of institutionalisation reveals Farley's naive and superficial view of institutionalism, his failure to enter into the complexity of social structures, and his failure to address the complex issue of "symbol".

D.   CONCLUSION

Farley's development of phenomenological method as a theological tool raises far more questions than it answers. As has already been noted, some of those questions are to be pursued in the following chapters. Because Farley postpones serious

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engagement in his third dimension of ecclesial reflection (the concrete situationality of the individual and social contemporary situations), his work is inevitably limited in its application to the actuality of The Story. The value of Farley is in penetrating appearance and exposing some of the underlying strata, thus encouraging further exploration. As with phenomenology itself, it is a continuing process, an attempt to shed new light and to provide deeper foundations for our understanding of what it means to be the church.

CHAPTER 4

CHURCH BUILDING AS SYMBOL

        Two boys fairly swiftly contract the eyelids of their right
eyes. In the first boy this is only an involuntary twitch; but the
other is winking conspiratorially to an accomplice. At the lowest
or the thinnest level of description the two contractions of the
eyelids may be exactly alike. From a cinematograph-film of the two
faces there might be no telling which contraction, if either, was a
wink, or which, if either, was a mere twitch. Yet there remains
the immense but unphotographable difference between a twitch and a
wink ... Perhaps, being new to the art, he winks rather slowly,
contortedly and conspicuously. A third boy, to give malicious
amusement to his cronies, parodies this clumsy wink. How does he
do this? Well, by contracting his right eyelid in the way in which
the clumsy winker had winked ... our parodist, to make sure of
getting his parody pat, may in solitude practise his facial mimicry
... our winker himself might report that he had not, on this
occasion really been trying covertly to signal something to his
accomplice, but had been trying to gull the grown-ups into the
false belief that he was trying to do so ... The thinnest
description of what the rehearsing parodist is doing is, roughly,
the same as for the involuntary eyelid twitch; but its thick
description is a many-layered sandwich, of which only the bottom
slice is catered for by that thinnest description.[1]

... our relationships with places are just as necessary, varied and
sometimes perhaps just as unpleasant, as our relationships with
other people.[2]

And don't go mistaking Paradise
For that home along the road.[3]

Some years ago I was commissioned to study the organization of some
of Britain's schools. I went to visit some typical big city centre
comprehensive secondary schools. I remember that my first 'getting
to know you' question on those cold November mornings was always
"How many people work here?" I always got the same sort of
numbers, between seventy and ninety people. When I mentioned this,
in some surprise to a Chief Education Officer, he exclaimed, "Oh
dear, they left out the cleaners." "No," I replied, "they left out
the children."[4]

A. INTRODUCTION

        Having developed a method of depth perception from

phenomenology generally, and from Farley's phenomenological

approach to theology in particular, we are now in a position to

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[1] Ryle, G. (1971) pp.480-482

[2] Relph, E. (1976) p.141

[3] Dylan, B. (1974) p.417

[4] Handy, C. (1989) p.172

apply this method to particular elements in The Story. The process of change in a church building concerns, at the very least, issues of cultural, historical, legal, liturgical and theological import. Just as the (apparently simple) wink is subject to "thick description", so much more the complexity of the process of changing a church building requires archaeological examination: a careful digging into and exposure of the various overlays of what is involved. The notion of symbol provides a particular 'handle' as we enter into the thick description. The intention of this chapter is to subject the church building undergoing change (as described in The Story) to the concept of symbol to see if there is anything more than bricks and colour scheme to enliven our understanding of what is going on. The issue to be addressed is how manipulation and alteration of the visible can be related to the manipulation and alteration of the invisible.

To understand the local church building as symbol, a preliminary survey of the broad concept of symbol is required. Current anthropological and theological definitions of symbol, particularly religious symbol, will then open the way for more detailed discussion of the particularities of the local church building as symbol. These particularities will include symbol in religious architecture and the sense of place - both as people's habituations and also as connecting with the invisible.

B. SYMBOL

The word symbol derives from the Greek words *sym* meaning "together", "common", "simultaneous", and *bolon* meaning "that which has been thrown". "Symbol", therefore, has the active notion of the throwing together of things which have something in common. In ancient law, the arrival of a messenger or guest bearing the matching half of the host's ring or tablet or staff, validated the visitor: the two halves being *sym bolon*, brought together, showed

the visitor was legitimate. "Symbol" consequently came to have the meaning of "treaty". Hence its traditional use in theology, where "symbols" are the articles of faith, the creeds. In this sense, the symbol somehow participates in something beyond itself. The symbol is ontological to the extent that it shows what is invisibly present. For example, a creed recites the story of things invisible. However, the symbol is more than the reality it shows:

> the symbol does not refer to something else. A reality appears in it - in 'the other of itself' - which is there and present but not fully exhausted by this appearance.[5]

The direct correlation of a symbol with that which the symbol symbolises is fetishism or idolatry. The failure to recognise the reality of that which the symbol symbolises in the symbol itself, is to reduce the symbol to a mere sign.

The local church, as "*sym bolon*" or "treaty" shows the invisible God. In this sense, the local church building might be described as "the house of God". When the local church building is perceived as an end in itself (when people "go to church" rather than "worship God") it is no longer a symbol but has become an idol. The holding in veneration objects of worship in themselves rather than what they point to is a further example of such idolatry. In the discussions concerning change to the building, there were those for whom the building was an end in itself, it was the object of veneration, and such was the direct correlation that any alteration to the building would be tantamount to changing God. Those who perceived the building as a mere sign were also alarmed at the proposed changes for fear of losing touch with God: changing the building for them would be tantamount to turning a road sign round so that it pointed along another road or over a hedge and through a field.

The German word for symbol, *sinnbild*, is less dynamic but describes the expansiveness of symbol. *Sinn* means "sense",

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[5] Rahner, K., ed. (1970) vol.6 p.199

"meaning", and *bild* means "image" - which makes symbol "meaningful image". "Symbol" in its dynamism and expansiveness does not allow for simple description (i.e. what Ryle (1971) might describe as **"thin"** description). Symbol is many-sided in definition and a particular symbol is often many-layered in what it defines. The latter led Turner to write of the "multivocality", the "polysemy" of symbol.[6] The word "symbol" is used to mean a considerable variety of things, often several at the same time. As both *sym bolon* (participating in something beyond itself) and *sinnbild* (meaningful image) the church building is multivocal. The elements that comprise the building itself, its contents (i.e. the fabric and ornaments) and the complex variety of people who comprise "the church" (i.e. the regular worshippers, occasional worshippers, parishioners, to say nothing of the colossal variety of attitude and understanding of those individuals) are ample evidence of its polysemy.

In popular usage, symbol is often indistinguishable from the conventional sign (for example, in recent years green has come to "symbolise" environmental concern). Again, it is anything that signifies something else (red sky at night is a "symbol" of good weather to come). This confusion of symbol with sign is understandable in that both are means to comprehend and order information, but it is also most unhelpful. Whilst acknowledging that there is considerable overlap in definitions, conventional distinction is worth adhering to.[7] Signs are the product of closed-system, reductionist thought. Signs are concerned with a stripping down to direct, unambiguous black and white forms of connection. Symbols are expansionist in form, invoking and allowing for imagination, indeterminates and polychrome probabilities. Thus, they are the figurative expression of something that cannot be expressed directly or literally - as in the poetic image for

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[6] Lessa, W.A. & Vogt, E.Z. (1972) p.166

[7] "The symbol is closer to the thing signified, and is less arbitrary than the sign." This definition "serves to indicate the meaningfulness of the symbol, in contrast to the sign which merely points to something else". Rahner, K., ed. (1970) vol.6 p.199

example. In so far as the church building is perceived as sign, the potential for change will therefore be negligible. At the most, change will be refinement of the building resulting in a further narrowing down of its function and purpose. When the church building is recognised as symbol rather than sign, discussion of change is going to be imaginative, radical and far-ranging.

In The Story, the perception of the building as sign is exemplified in the anxiety that whatever is done, the building should remain recognisably St.Catherine's. The freedom that comes from perceiving the building as symbol was experienced by the steering committee, PCC and parish as a fearful thing. The architect's imagination unnerved many. The lighting consultant's suggestion of an imaginative scheme that would provide a variety of levels and foci of lighting to suit a variety of moods and the potential to highlight particular areas (such as pulpit, lectern, font and altar) was lost (at least initially) on the majority for whom the only requirement of lighting was that there should be sufficient to be able to see and read easily.

Symbols are functional: for Geertz,[8] symbols are "tangible formulations of notions, abstractions from experience fixed in perceptible forms, concrete embodiments of ideas, attitudes, judgements, longings or beliefs", for Dillistone, symbolic forms "serve in human experience to relate man to ultimate mystery".[9] Geertz regards symbols as **"vehicles"** for meanings,[10] **"analyzable windows"** onto culture.[11] Turner sees symbols as **operators**: placed in particular configurations for particular purposes, especially in

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[8] Geertz, C. (1975) p.91

[9] Dillistone, F.W. (1973) p.9

[10] Geertz, C. (1975) p.91

[11] see Ortner, S.B. in <u>Comparative Studies in Society and History vol.26</u> (1984) p.126ff.

ritual, symbols are effective in social transformation.[12]   Symbols

carry meaning and also, by thus making the (hitherto) inaccessible

meaning accessible, they are instrumental in causing change.   Thus,

transformation of the local church building in The Story by re-

ordering it, insofar as the building is a symbol, the alterations

will have necessarily been instrumental in causing change in those

affected by the building.   According to Turner's theory, for those

who knew the building previously, the change to the side aisle, the

decoration and the lighting, for example, has a transforming effect

when they enter it.

There is also in "symbol" the sense of boundary: a connecting

and carrying and opening out through it's singularity/simplicity

information of potentially enormous complexity.   "The function of a

symbol is precisely that of revealing a whole reality, inaccessible

to other means of knowledge".[13]   The idea of symbol revealing a

"whole reality", cosmic and otherwise, brings us back to Turner's

"multivocality" which is succinctly expressed in Wolf's description

of The Virgin of Guadalupe:-

> The Guadalupe symbol thus links together family,
> politics and religion; colonial past and independent
> present; Indian and Mexican. It reflects the salient
> social relationships of Mexican life and embodies the
> emotions which they generate. It provides a cultural
> idiom through which the tenor and emotions of these
> relationships can be expressed. It is, ultimately, a
> way of talking about Mexico: a "collective
> representation" of Mexican society.[14]

Whilst the local church building is a far cry from the all-

embracing Virgin of Guadalupe, there is nonetheless the sense of

boundary: by entering the building, one is connected, carried,

opened out by the building itself to an awareness of the divine.

Although the light and space and simplicity of the original

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[12]   see Ortner, S.B. in Comparative Studies in Society and History Vol.26 (1984) p.131

[13]   Eliade, M. (1960) p.177

[14]   Wolf, E. The Virgin of Guadalupe: a Mexican National Symbol in Lessa, W.A. & Vogt, E.Z. eds. (1984) p.153

building have been lost through years of accretion and alteration
to the structure, and through the development and addition of
furnishings and ornaments, there remains a sense of crossing over
from the mundane to the numinous. What needs to be explored in
detail is how and in what way the particular local church building
in The Story is symbolic: what the form and content expresses
symbolically.

Religious Symbols

The specific area of **religious** symbol has already been
touched on and now needs to be developed further, drawing
principally on Paul Tillich's essay "The Nature of Religious
Language" in his book <u>Theology of Culture</u>. Having established the
difference between symbol and sign (unlike signs, symbols
participate in the meaning and power of that which they symbolise),
and explored the function of symbols (to represent and to open up
levels both of reality otherwise hidden and "levels of our soul,
levels of our interior being"),[15] he then goes on to examine the
nature, levels and truth of religious symbols.

The Nature of Religious Symbols

Religious symbols go further than symbols generally in
opening up levels of reality right through to the very fundamental
level of Ultimate Being. The variety of religious symbols is
myriad and understandably so: any particularity in the universe can
be taken as a symbol of God simply because everything is part of
God's creation and as such can be seen as more than a sign of its
Creator. There is in this the obvious danger of idolatry (see
pp.50-52 above),

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[15] Tillich, P. (1964) p.56

The Levels of Religious Symbols

Tillich identifies two fundamental levels of religious symbols: the transcendent and the immanent. In the transcendent level, the symbol is that which "goes *beyond* the empirical reality we encounter".[16] In this sense, the qualities and the acts of God are symbolic. We use symbol to make the connection, in order to relate with God - thus, in this context, the symbol mediates humanity's relationship with God (cf. Jung's definition of symbol as a bridge between the conscious and the unconscious).[17] In the immanent level, the symbol is that "which we find *within* the encounter with reality",[18] in other words, the incarnation (i.e. the appearance of the divine in time and space), the sacramental (which is "nothing else than some reality becoming the bearer of the Holy, in a special way and under special circumstances"),[19] and also 'sign-symbols'

> Many things - like special parts of the church building, like the candles, like the water at the entrance of the Roman church, like the cross in all churches, especially Protestant churches - were originally only signs, but in use became symbols; call them sign-symbols, signs which have become symbols.[20]

The Truth of Religious Symbols

Symbols are independent of empirical criticism: symbols cannot be argued out of existence, they can only cease to exist when the circumstance in which they came into being no longer exists. Further, their truth lies in their adequacy to the religious situation in which they are created. There is the evident danger here of circularity, with no outside means of checking validity.

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[16] Tillich, P. (1964) p.61

[17] "Jung's own definition of symbol can be summarised as referring to the best possible formulation of a relatively unknown psychic content that cannot be grasped by consciousness." Samuels, S. (1985) p.94

[18] Tillich, P. (1964) p.61

[19] Tillich, P. (1964) p.64

[20] Tillich, P. (1964) p.65

Of the two fundamental levels of religious symbols identified by Tillich, it is the immanent level that is relevant to our discussion of the local church building as symbol and sacrament. Having argued that symbols are born and die, their existence dependent on the "collective unconscious",[21] Tillich's concept of "sign-symbols" highlights unintentionally the fine line between symbol and idol. Sign-symbols also highlight the confusion of understanding experienced by many. Rather than the Jungian "collective unconscious" giving birth, there is in the local church the strong likelihood of habituation generating extremely confused "sign-symbols". For example, the fact that the two candle-stands to light the coffin at a funeral were left at the front of the nave out of idleness, over time, gave them a significance far deeper than the want of finding storage space. They began to be lit for celebrations of the eucharist, and to the extent that people in the congregation noticed them, were presumed to have some special (unknown) significance. Signs of indolence, they had become small symbols of the numinous. Once their history was exposed, a cupboard was found to accommodate them between funerals.

Taking the expansive, dynamic notion of symbol, the sense that it is, and also differs from, that which it symbolises, its function being to reveal a "whole reality, inaccessible to other means of knowledge", and noting the nature, levels and truth of religious symbols as outlined by Tillich, it is now possible to subject the church building as symbol to aesthetic, cultural and theological scrutiny.

C. CHURCH BUILDING AS SYMBOL

According to the Roman architect Vitruvius:

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[21] Tillich, P. (1964) p.58

There are three departments of architecture: the art of
building, the making of time-pieces and the
construction of machinery. Building is, in its turn,
divided into two parts, of which the first is the
construction of fortified towns and of works for
general use in public places, and the second is the
putting up of structures for private individuals.
There are three classes of public buildings: the first
for defensive, the second for religious and the third
for utilitarian purposes. .. All these must be built
with due reference to durability, convenience and
beauty.[22]

In Temples, Churches and Mosques (1982), Davies provides his

own scheme for the appreciation of religious architecture.

Acknowledging the work of Sir Henry Wotton (1568-1639), Davies

takes DELIGHT as his fundamental theme. Wotton himself was clearly

influenced by the Vitruvian trinity of *firmitas, utilitas* and

venustas:-

In Architecture as in all other Operative Arts, the end
must direct the Operation. The end is to build well.
Well building hath three conditions: Commodity,
Firmness and Delight.[23]

Whilst delight will stand alone, an appreciation of the aesthetics

of a building may be enhanced by an understanding of the "fit" of

the design to the purpose of the building ("commodity"), and the

choice and use of materials ("firmness"). Thus, Davies explores

ten defined areas of religious architecture[24] on the basis of

delight, which is amplified by a critique of commodity and

firmness.[25] The result is a scheme for the fundamentals of

architectural appreciation which may be summarised as follows:[26]

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[22] Morgan, M.H. trans. (1960) pp.16-17

[23] Wotton, H. (1968) p.1

[24] The Temples of the Nile, Aegean architecture, the Sanctuaries
of Classical Greece, the Hellenistic and Roman Periods, Early Christian
and Byzantine, Mosques and Madrasas, Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance
and Mannerism, Baroque and Rococo.

[25] "Awareness of ... categories and types is important because
without knowing the particular one to which a church or temple belongs,
the essential character can escape detection and appreciation will be
impaired." Davies, J.G. (1982) p.242

[26] See Appendix (1982) pp.240-248 for Davies' own summary.

1. The Two Main Categories of Building: Path and Place

Most buildings conform either to the one or the other or some combination of both. Path buildings suggest motion and travelling, place buildings suggest a centring and calm. Path buildings are dynamic, place buildings static. A **path** has strong edges, continuity, directionality, recognizable landmarks, a sharp terminal and end-from-end distinction. A **place** is concentrated in form with pronounced borders, a readily comprehensible shape, limited in size, a focus for gathering, capable of being experienced as an inside in contrast to a surrounding exterior, and is largely non-directional.

Occasionally, a religious building does not conform to either category. A classical temple for example is neither path (having no directionality) nor place, because a place is a venue to be experienced inside, whereas the Greek temple is "essentially an external sculptural object".[27] Because religious activity goes on outside the building, the building itself providing a focus and a backdrop, the temple with the related and adjoining area comprise a **"domain"**. This idea finds further expression in Rombold who as it were turns the outside inside by suggesting the possibility of the church being an *agora*:

> Is the congregation chiefly oriented towards worship? Or does it have other functions, like coming to grips with contemporary problems inherent in the Christian belief, and, thirdly, the daily task of serving one's fellow man? If one accepts the Biblical trinity of functions - *leitourgia*, *kerygma* and *diakonia* - one must also draw the consequences for the use of churchly interiors. Hans Blankesteijn, for example, is of the opinion that the church ought to be an "*Agora*": a public site where one can clearly see what the congregation has to say regarding important questions of public import".[28]

Indeed one could go further and suggest the church building be a public site in which the general public as well as the congregation could together air local and wider issues.

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[27] Davies, J.G. (1982) p.62

[28] Davies, J.G. ed. (1976) p.99

2. The Three Primary Types of Building according to emphasis on Mass, Surface or Space

In a mass-positive building, it is the overall structure that appeals. Greek temples provide an obvious example. Because of the quality of sculpture that the building evokes and follows, experience can be both visual and tactile.

In a surface-positive building, it is the two-dimensional that appeals, the planes that together form the building (i.e. primarily walls).

In a space-positive building the essential quality is to be found in the space enclosed by the floor, walls and roof. Its essence is experienced through movement: physical and visual. Space-positive buildings can be subdivided into space-traps: solid shells which enclose space inside and separate it from outside space; and space-frames: shells which reduce the separation between outside and inside, giving a sense of through-flow.

3. The Three Principles of Composition

Whatever the class, type or form, the religious building conforms to one of three principles of composition: addition, division or fusion. With addition, the separate parts comprise the starting point. When combined they retain a certain independence. Elements placed side by side is addition by juxtaposition. Elements placed on top of one another is addition by superimposition. Successful addition requires the skill of putting together components to comprise an evident totality which at the same time allows some independence to each of the elements.

With division, the starting point is the unity of the whole, in which the parts are subdivisions having little self-independence. These fragments are subordinate to the whole. Division by inflection is modification of parts to improve the sense of connectedness and wholeness. Division by penetration is

modification by overlap or permeation, again in the interest of
unity of the whole.

> The principle of fusion is inflection taken a step further:-
>
> One method of achieving fusion is *pulsating
> juxtaposition*, the adjective serving to distinguish the
> phenomenon from the placing side by side that is
> characteristic of addition. Take a square that expands
> into its corners while its sides are contracting
> inwards; and then place circles on either side: the
> effect is that the circles seem to spread into the
> central figure while it contracts under the impact of
> the juxtaposition - the whole pulsates.[29]

4.   Ingredients of Design

Ingredients of design, including structural elements,
sculpture, ornament, colour, texture and materials, and light, play
an important part in determining the general character of a
building and in evoking delight.

5.   Aspects of Design

Finally, aspects of good design (proportion and scale, rhythm
and movement, contrasts and accentuation, axiality and symmetry)
add further to the enjoyment and appreciation of a building.

Davies, in his preface, explains that his aim is "to provide
an introduction to the most rewarding ways of looking at
architectural masterpieces" [my underlining].[30] In other words,
there are severe limitations to his work. Davies offers nothing
directly on how better to enjoy the delights of mongrel confections
produced in some Victorian church architecture. He confines his
critique to examples of singular splendour - buildings that are
just Gothic, or entirely baroque, or purely Minoan. How best to
delight in the cumulate nature of most parish churches is not
addressed. Such churches, depending on their age, include more
than one style, as well as Reformation and/or Victorian renovation,

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[29]   Davies, J.G. (1982) pp.243-244

[30]   Davies, J.G. (1982) p.ix

and now modern reordering to accommodate changing styles of worship and changing understanding of the use of the building. The incompetence, cited by Dillistone,[31] to recognise and build on the symbolic power of a building can also be levelled at many Victorian and present-day reformers and re-orderers. More positively, changes and development in a church building however out of tune, haphazard and thoughtless of architectural integrity actually reflect a striving, living and present-looking (if not forward-looking) church people. Sadly, Davies' work does not encompass these aspects.

The church building in The Story was built in the Neo-Gothic style and initially completed in 1843. It has been added to, architecturally, ever since. It is therefore important to note that not only does Davies not explore the multi-(architectural)-style church building, he also does not offer any critical appraisal of the Neo-Classical and Neo-Gothic styles that arose in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries experienced a great social upheaval in Britain: the relatively stable agrarian economy quickly gave way to the rise in industrial economy. With the rapid growth of a new scientific outlook, architectural design developed according to **functionalism** and **romanticism**. Choice of site, materials and design was governed primarily by practical requirements. Church buildings were not exempted from this utilitarian approach:

> churches began to be built to provide maximum seating
> for the minimum of expenditure and to ensure the
> necessary facilities for preaching, singing and
> fellowship, the religious activities which meant most
> in the rapidly growing cities with their populations
> drawn from near and far.[32]

This functionalism was tempered, at least in some places, by romanticism. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were also a

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[31] "Probably few of the Reformers realised how great was the symbolic power of a total building. ... That a building in itself could be a microcosm of a total religious outlook was seldom realized." Dillistone, F.W. (1973) p.90

[32] Dillistone, F.W. (1973) p.92

period of great enthusiasm for historical research. In the field
of architecture this led in the nineteenth century to the
exploitation of two notable styles: Neo-Classical and Neo-Gothic.
In a period of rapid change, when confidence in human ability was
supplanting confidence in the divine, people looked back in history
to perceived periods of heroic virtue and of divine supremacy, and
enshrined those attributes by reproducing the architecture of those
times.

In church architecture, functionalism was the response to the
rapid growth of new communities; romanticism was the attempt to
maintain some continuity with the past, to make the connection
between the worship of the living Christ in past generations and
the present generation. A century on, it is easy to caricature the
inadequacy of such an approach, but it is wishful thinking on the
part of Dillistone to state:

> It is a solution ... which could not gain acceptance
> today. Bare functionalism and nostalgic escape are
> alike antithetical to our present understanding of
> God's activities both in nature and in history.[33]

Many of the church buildings erected in the eighteenth and
nineteenth centuries are still standing today and still exerting
the influence of their "bare functionalism" and "nostalgic
escapism", moulding the understanding of faith in those who visit
them and worship in them accordingly. St.Catherine's church
building is a typical example. In other words, the legacy of those
styles, and the effect of them, is still very much with us at the
end of the twentieth century.

St.Catherine's Church Building as Symbol

Having acknowledged some of the limitations of Davies' work,
and noted, briefly, the development of church architecture in the
eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, we are now in a position to

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[33] Dillistone F.W. (1973) p.93

explore the particular example of St.Catherine's, which was built in 1840 and is a historically hybridised, organically grown church building, and to examine its delight and habit. Built in the Victorian understanding of Early English Style, St.Catherine's Church comprised a nave and shallow sanctuary. In 1877, a south side aisle was added. In 1884, the sanctuary was extended to include a chancel large enough to accommodate a choir, space for a pipe organ was added to the north side of the chancel and a clergy vestry to the south side of the chancel. In 1960, an annex was added onto the west end of the church. In the present re-ordering scheme, the side aisle has been emptied of pews and a glazed screen installed between nave and side aisle to create a meeting room and entrance lobby.

Whilst the building is described as Victorian Early English, it bears little similarity to what is understood as Gothic. There are, for example, stepped buttresses to add to the sense of height, yet the building remains stocky in appearance and actuality - despite the main roof being raised a further six feet when the side aisle was added. Originally the windows were plain glass. Over the years all but two have been replaced with stained glass which mostly **represses** light and texture and movement (the exact opposite of what was intended by the use of stained glass in Gothic architecture). Consequently, a comparison between St.Catherine's Church and Davies on Gothic architecture is likely to be unfruitful. What may be of value is to take Davies' scheme of categories, types, principles, ingredients of design and principles of design, and address them to this particular building.

Concerning the two categories, St.Catherine's is both path and place. As path, there are strong edges, continuity, directionality, a sharp terminal, and end from end distinction, leading physically and visually from entrance to altar. Whilst the building as a whole is not particularly place, there are elements of place in it, in particular the foci of font and altar. The path

leads off to the first and culminates in the second. Both foci are set in their own space with easily identifiable borders and are a focus for gathering. Now that the sanctuary has been enlarged, much of the sanctuary furnishings removed, and the altar brought out from the east wall to which it had been affixed, the free-standing stone altar set in to the middle of the sanctuary provides a centre and a stillness. Despite having a path through its centre the nave also has a sense of place. Though contrary to one of Davies' requirements of place (the nave is largely **not** non-directional), it **is** bounded (by wall, chancel screen and glazed screen), concentrated in form, a readily comprehensible shape, limited in size, a focus for gathering.

The building is space-positive, encouraging movement and sharpening direction. Even when none of the windows had stained glass, the glass was plain but opaque, thus preventing visual connection between outside and inside. In the present re-ordering scheme, because the row of arches between aisle and nave are infilled with plain, see-through glass, the screen provides a new flexibility: by careful use of lighting, the screen can be either space-frame with the one space flowing into the other and vice-versa, or it can be space-trap separating the one from the other.

In the principles of composition, the ambivalence of the mixed pedigree and naturally cumulative growth of architectural style continues. The original form of the building was of two compartments: nave and sanctuary. This was progressively added to; side aisle, chancel, vestry, organ space, and annex. As with the initial two components, the relation of each to the whole was apparent whilst each part also retained its own identity. The glazed screen, complemented by the lighting, allows for fusion of nave and side aisle. But, the principle of division is also much in evidence: the side aisle is now divided into meeting room and entrance lobby and the meeting room can be divided from as well as fused with the nave.

The design of the building is functional in content, simple in aspect, and economical in both. Linear rhythm is established for example by the arrangement of windows in the side walls, regular in shape and spacing, and in the regimented rows of pews. These two provide an apparent symmetry. The symmetry is, however, only apparent because of the **single** side aisle. Furthermore, the centre aisle is offset by approximately twelve inches, providing an unsettling asymmetry to the eye with the chancel arch, chancel aisle and the altar at the east end being dead-centre, and the door at the west end similarly. The contrast and dissonance caused by the one side aisle and off-centre centre aisle counters the strong possibility of monotony.

All of this may be summarised thus: St.Catherine's inspires physical and visual movement with moments of place at the altar and font; it has a nave which is both path and place. The building has grown over the decades by addition, with some of the parts divided. The rhythm and movement is saved from monotony by the dissonance of a single side aisle and slightly offset centre aisle.

The question now arises as to what implication the form of the building has for those to whom it belongs. How are people shaped by this particular building? For those who enter for the first time the question is: what is the delight? For those who know the building well, who have lived with it for many years, the question is not so much about delight, but about habituation: what is the homeliness, living-in-ness, habit? The ambiguity of the nave as place and path is likely to provoke both restless calm and halting movement. Either way, there is likely to be a hesitancy and dis-ease. As the path is from entrance to altar, clarity of building as path could be regained by removal of the chancel screen, thus restoring the clear pre-1920 visual directionality. More radically, the nave could be established unambiguously as place by relocating the altar in it in a relatively central position. The present arrangement is more like a gated road

through chancel screen and beyond altar rail, than open highway to the altar. Whilst the building remains as it is, the facility of the glazed screen (see below) offers useful insight on how the tension might be constructively exploited.

The prime motivation in the present re-ordering is to make the building more accessible, to get away from the clubhouse for the congregation concept. Engendering accessibility is about a building awareness of the intimate connection between the worldly and the divine. This thesis is very close to that put forward by Rombold (see p.69 above) though broader and more openly embracing. The glazed screen as space-frame acknowledges and promotes crossover between activities in the two spaces. Within the building itself then, a market place atmosphere is created, encouraging debate between religion and issues of public interest and concern and delight.

Historically, the principle of composition has been addition. The present re-ordering is primarily by division. This suggests that addressing issues from the public domain is not an extra to faith but integral. That the screen can be either space-trap or space-frame is of practical import and also reflects the present tentativeness in making the connection.

Despite the romanticism that gave rise to St.Catherine's Church being built in Neo-Gothic style, the utilitarian approach is abundantly evident in the solid construction and thin aesthetics. It is a typical example of Bonomi's "cheap churches". However, the gradually-building patina of time can lead to a present-day form of romanticism. It is a perception of the building now 150 years old which, as with the Victorian adoption of Neo-Gothic style, attempts to maintain a connection between the worship of past generations in that particular building with the present generation. In other words, it is a contemporary provincial romanticism. It is a romanticism that is blind to the progressive change and development

the building has undergone since it was first 'completed'. It is also, clearly, a romanticism that is going to be most unhappy about any change, practical or aesthetic, to the fabric or structure of the building.

Examining the commodity and firmness of a religious building as a means to greater delight of it opens up some of the particularities of the **building** as symbol. However, it is not simply the church building as a piece of religious architecture that is a vehicle for meaning. We should now address the land and the place that the building occupies and how **they** operate as symbol.

D. LAND AND PLACE

To examine land as symbol our guide will be Brueggemann, and our guide for place as symbol will be Lilburne. Brueggemann's thesis derives from his understanding and working of the literature of the Old Testament. Lilburne starts from the Australian Aboriginal world view and both Old and New Testament themes of place. Neither is directly concerned with the piece of ground or place the local church building occupies as such, but their reworking of biblical texts, coupled with Lilburne's drawing on Native Australian "Dreaming", does have some clear if sideways application. At the very least the church building is on a piece of land, it occupies space. What further relevance there might be requires a critical examination firstly of Brueggemann's thesis that "land is a central, if not THE CENTRAL THEME of biblical faith".[34]

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[34]   Brueggemann, W. (1978) p.4

Brueggemann dismisses the existentialist and salvation-
history themes that have dominated Biblical theology as being no
longer adequate: the existentialist for its individual-self
approach, especially in the pursuit of meaning;[35] and the salvation-
history (the "mighty acts of God in history") approach for its
contextlessness: the emphasis here is on the covenantal
relationship between God and his chosen people, without any
grounding. Consequently, the salvation-history approach has
serious implications for Christian faith: "An inordinate stress on
covenant to the neglect of *land* is a peculiarly Christian
temptation and yields to a space/time antithesis".[36] Both
approaches, he feels, are no longer credible. Brueggemann contends
that the crucial issue is not finding meaning but discovering our
roots. Concerning the limitations of salvation-history, he insists
there can be no history without place.[37] Brueggemann notes that the
theme of land in biblical theology may well be apparent now because
of the current realisation that the urban promise of detached,
individual, mobile, unrooted lives with endless choice, no
commitment and no accountability is now seen to have been a
failure. (This observation makes his claim that land is **the**
central theme of biblical faith neither more nor less valid.)

It is now clear that a SENSE OF PLACE is a human hunger

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[35] "The existentialist perspective in response to a comprehensive
and containing idealism saw *emancipation* as the central human agenda,
"freedom to be me", in self-assertion apart from a larger totality. In
more popular form, the human agenda, in postwar romanticism, has been a
pursuit of *meaning* which is peculiarly appropriate to the individual.
This hermeneutic then in romantic terms, in response to the terrors and
failures of Western ideologies, located the possibility of faith in the
realm of private decision-making which placed enormous burdens on the
individual and which articulated promises, if there were any, in
private terms. Brueggemann, W. (1978) p.186

[36] Brueggemann, W. (1978) p.187

[37] "There is rather STORIED PLACE, that is a place which has
meaning because of the history lodged there. There are stories which
have authority because they are located in a place. This means that
biblical faith cannot be presented simply as an historical movement
indifferent to place which could have happened in one setting as well
as another, because it is undeniably fixed in this place with this
meaning." Brueggemann, W. (1978) p.185

which the urban promise has not met .. a sense of place
is a primary category of faith. It is ROOTLESSNESS and
not MEANINGLESSNESS which characterizes the current
crisis. There are no meanings apart from roots.[38]

Whilst **space** is freedom and neutrality, **place** is positively loaded
with purpose, identity, commitment and unavoidability:

Place is space which has historical meanings, where
some things have happened which are now remembered and
which provide continuity and identity across
generations. Place is space in which important words
have been spoken which have established identity,
defined vocation, and envisioned destiny. Place is
space in which vows have been exchanged, promises have
been made, and demands have been issued.[39]

Having located place in space, and identified the vitality of land,
the importance of people "owning" their history - in time **and place**
becomes apparent. Brueggemann then develops the theme of land in
the Old Testament, confident that the symbolic and literal aspects
of land will hold each other in check:

A symbolic sense of the term affirms that land is never
simply physical dirt but is always physical dirt
freighted with social meanings derived from historical
experience. A literal sense of the term will protect
us from excessive spiritualization, so that we
recognize that the yearning for land is always a
serious historical enterprise concerned with historical
power and belonging.[40]

According to Brueggemann, for the people of Israel there are three
histories of the land. These are not to be understood simply as
clear-cut, separate entities, but also as untidy, interwoven and
overlapping. The three histories are: the history of promise into
the land (e.g. the journey out of slavery to the Promised Land),
the history of management of the land (e.g. the Judges and the
Kingship periods, with the progressive deterioration in land
husbandry that led to Exile), and then thirdly, the new history of
looking forward (that begins in exile and leads to the promise of
the kingdom). Throughout its history, Israel has been on the move,
travelling from one place to another, driven by promise of land,
management of land and land management failure.

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[38]   Brueggemann, W. (1978) pp.4-5

[39]   Brueggemann, W. (1978) p.5

[40]   Brueggemann, W. (1978) pp.2-3

The issue of land is brought into sharp focus in the moments Israel stands at the crossroads. So, for example, there is the moment at the Jordan, that is between the end of the endless wandering in the wilderness and the beginning of fulfilment that is the Promised Land. The occasion is so momentous that the Israelites pause to take stock. In Egypt they never wanted for food: that is why they went there in the first place, and the memory is that once there, there were always the plentiful fleshpots. In the wilderness they never wanted for food either, though the circumstance was very different: when *in extremis* there were the God-sent quail and the manna, never too much but always enough. And now, just the other side of the river there is food in abundance: a land flowing with milk and honey, a land that also comes with all the means for producing food too. With such easy living the temptation is to forget their dependency on God, who brought them out of slavery, who fed them and led them through the desert. The temptation is to forget that the promised land is a gift from God, and to live happily ever after in the believed but false security of their own apparent ability to manage the land. That is why they are urged to remember. To remember is to acknowledge one's own history. And to acknowledge one's own history is to accept there is continuity and discontinuity. To remember is to make the connections that join **then** to **now**. To remember is also to recognise change from how things were then to how things are now. To remember is to recognise development and loss and yearning and the precariousness of life.[41]

The call from the other side is to forget history. Once settled on the land, in this case the promised land, there is no edge: instead of the striving and the risk-taking there are only institutions to maintain, and more of the same as season follows season, harvest follows sowing. Instead of the restless movement

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[41] To remember is also a highly subjective, haphazard and varied venture: just as there is no one truth, so there is no one memory, but many versions, all of them bearing more or less 'truth'.

and looking beyond there is predictable routine and a dulled
acceptance and satisfaction with how things are.

It is the awareness of such temptation as Israel stands on
the brink that leads to the demand that she remember her history
and keep the commandments. Brueggemann describes the Torah as
"guidelines for land management".[42] Torah exists to ensure Israel
does not forget history, that she remembers the land is a gift from
God. In the Decalogue, the prohibition of images addresses
directly the temptation of the settled: management of the land
leads to management of people which leads to management of the
divine.

> Surely images are a peculiar temptation to the landed.
> Characteristically when one is able to plan and manage
> everything else, one yearns to make a comfortable place
> in life even for ultimate values which can be managed.
> Thus mystery is reduced to manageable size. God is put
> at the disposal of his people. Transcendence is
> domesticated ..[43]

It has been well said that many parish churches operate rather like
a Rotary Club at which God is occasionally an invited guest,
sometimes asked to speak and rarely listened to.

The commandment to keep the sabbath runs wonderfully counter
to all efforts to manage life and land to one's own best advantage:

> Landed people are accustomed to managing things. And
> as we manage things we would manage people. We manage
> them by taxation and interest rates, by debts and
> mortgages and soon everyone is either owner of others
> or part of the owned. .. Sabbath in Israel is the
> affirmation that people, like land, cannot be finally
> owned or managed.[44]

Very similar constraints are advised when Israel is standing at the
crossroads between Judges and Kingship (see Deuteronomy 17:14-20).
God concedes kingship but with three crucial provisos:-

a) The king is to be one of the people - this is not simply a

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[42] Brueggemann, W. (1978) p.60

[43] Brueggemann, W. (1978) p.62

[44] Brueggemann, W. (1978) p.64

racial, chosen people issue, the concern here is that the king should be a person who knows and understands Israel's storied past.

b) The king is not to multiply horses or wives or silver and gold - because horses are for warfare and the acquisition of more land, extra wives are for self-indulgence and also signify political alliances, and silver and gold are for self-enhancement. All three are ways and means of becoming secure on one's own terms instead of trusting in God.

c) The central activity of the king is to study the Torah, because the way to manage land is to be focused always on the memories and vision of Israel.

When these fundamentals are ignored - as in the case of Solomon, who divorced himself from his people by setting up programmes of forced labour and taxation districts, who increased his fortifications, arms, garrisons and royal wives - even God is manipulated:

> In the Solomonic period even God apparently has no claim on the land. He is guest and not host. Religion becomes a decoration rather than a foundation.[45]

The moment between wilderness and Canaan, and the conditions for kingship are just two of many aspects that Brueggemann explores in detail in his book The Land. The book ends with some (not very convincing) suggestions about the land in the New Testament and a final chapter "Concluding Hermeneutical Reflections" in which he offers a summary of his thesis and a number of ways in which it might enliven our understanding of late twentieth century culture. To see if Brueggemann's thesis, through the two aspects of it explored here, provides for a broader understanding of the local church building as symbol, we shall examine two areas: the rootedness of the church building, and church building and land

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[45] Brueggemann, W. (1978) p.87

management.

a)   The Rootedness of the Church Building

Brueggemann dismisses existentialism and salvation history in favour of the theme of land. The theme is developed out of an understanding that people have a need to belong: that people-history is rooted in place as well as in time. In order to test the theme let us paraphrase and then examine a passage already quoted (see p.80 above):

> a symbolic sense of the church building affirms it is never simply a building but is a building freighted with the storied past and present aspirations of the townspeople. A literal sense of the church building will protect us from excessive spiritualization i.e. revering the building in itself - attending to the vehicle rather than to what the vehicle lends meaning to.

What is at stake here is the rootedness of the church building, the sense of belongingness that a group of people have to the church building. The church building is an important and acknowledged place where the stories of the Christian faith are recited. In so far as the church building is used by local people to pray for and celebrate significant events in their lives, it is both a focus and a repository for the hopes and fears of the locality. Furthermore, the physical building itself with all its changes and developments, and contents, carries the stories of local people - gifts donated, war memorials erected, extensions added: all articulate the storied past of the people of that particular locality. And that is why we should heed Rombold's warning[46] against the sort of re-ordering that makes a clean sweep of the building and thus leaves it sterile and uncomfortable. Rombold is speaking from an architectural-aesthetic point of view, but it can also be seen as a warning about the danger of losing parts of the story. People need to belong historically, and that means having a place where that history is

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[46] "What has been the result of most of the projects which have aimed hitherto at re-ordering churches? ... Too radical has been the removal of supposed "old junk", which in many cases actually made the room in question "liveable" since the insistence upon strict and sober purism in interiors cannot be endured for longer periods. The watchword cannot be a pure and simple "clearing away"." Davies, J.G. ed. (1976) p.98

cherished. Accepting Brueggemann's thesis of the rootedness of
people to place and how that appears to apply to the local church
building, the resistance to change as evidenced in The Story
becomes more understandable. Change to the building in this
context will understandably evoke the fear that parts of the
storied past will be adulterated if not lost by alteration and
development of the building. This anxiety is borne out of a static
understanding of time and place.

However, Brueggemann's definition of place as "space which
has historical meanings",[47] and of land as "physical dirt freighted
with social meanings derived from historical experience",[48] need to
be taken further. The land the Israelites yearn for is freighted
with God's association with them: the land roots the promises and
covenants and vows between God and his people. The land generally,
and particular identifiable places, comprise the geographical arena
for God's relationship with his people. There is the direct aspect
of this concept: places of acknowledged theophany are remembered as
special, holy places. But there is another level, the level of
symbol. On this level, the place that is the land which Israel
yearns for, is a symbol of God's relationship with her.

Applying this symbolic sense of place to the local church
building requires further examination of the sense of church
building as sacrament, picking up Tillich's second element in
immanent religious symbolism ("some reality becoming the bearer of
the Holy in a special way and under special circumstances" - see
p.66 above). Given that sacraments are intense moments,
concentrations of God's activity in and with the world, just as the
bread and the wine of the eucharist sacramentalise the activities
of life, so the church building sacramentalises the place. That
is, the church building is symbol of God's presence and activity in

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[47] Brueggemann, W. (1978) p.5

[48] Brueggemann, W. (1978) p.2

the parish. As such, Davies' enthusiasm for not separating the secular from the holy is entirely sensible:

> To treat a church as a holy place, set apart from the secular, is tantamount to treating the eucharistic species as the body and blood of Christ apart from the reality of the bread and the wine. The eucharistic analogy ... thus confirms the thesis of the unity of sacred and secular and of the validity of multipurpose churches.[49]

Sadly, this is not the popular understanding of the function of a church building. Much more general is the view that it is a habitation of God, a shrine of the divine presence, a holy place set apart from the world. On that basis the concept of a church building as a multipurpose construction is going to be quite unacceptable.

In The Story, the way the steering committee operated was to divest itself of the 'religious bit', leaving that to the incumbent, and to concentrate on the practicalities of the re-ordering. In other words, the steering committee's chosen way of operating was precisely the separation that Davies condemns. What is also of significance from The Story in this issue of separation is the sort of God the building exemplified and engendered before it was re-ordered. It was precisely the wild blue beyond transcendent God that the re-ordering sought to change. No wonder then that the re-ordering kindled such heated discussion and emotion. The lack of a sense of St.Catherine's Church building as a symbol of God's relationship with the people there was perpetuated by a building to the transcendent God in which close-packed pews filled the nave and side aisle in neat rows that required the people to face east and not each other, and an altar against the east wall that meant the president at the eucharist was similarly unable to face the people. St.Catherine's was a building in which it was hard to get close to one another, let alone get close to God.

People need to belong historically, they also have a need to

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[49]   Davies, J.G. (1968) p.263

belong to one another and to God. The church building provides a recognised venue, an ordered place, for that belongingness to be experienced - through the building's very existence (i.e. through simply recognising that the place is there), and also by entering into the building. It is not the church building in itself that somehow has these attributes but rather, the building is vehicle for the attributes people invest in it. Which brings us to the second half of the paraphrase: the hedge against spiritualization. The church building is not an edifice to be revered in itself but a trigger to faith. Spiritualization of the church building is the result of restricting the roots, i.e. a pot-bound faith. (N.B. idolatry that is the result of the symbol being mistaken for that which it symbolises - see p.65 and pp.50-52 above). The spiritualisation of the building leads to an exclusivity, creating a sense of belongingness among the few church attenders that excludes the majority, even God becomes an extra, an outsider. Instead of the church belonging to the town it is appropriated by the Sunday St.Catherine's people - with all the inherent dangers described by Brueggemann of land management leading to people management leading to management of the divine.

b)   Church Building and Land Management

Between wilderness wandering and Canaan settlement, the Israelites pause. Throughout the continuing risk and not-knowing of their time in the desert, God keeps covenant with them. Faced with the prospect of becoming established in the promised land the inherent dangers of complacency in managed land are rehearsed as a warning. Movement and settlement are of course reflected in Davies' two categories of religious architecture: path and place, though our concern here is rather different. The question to be addressed here is whether there is any sense in which the church building can carry at one time the dialectic of striving and fearfulness, and at another management and indifference. Entering the Promised Land on Brueggemann's reckoning is one long slide into exile, achieved through a failure to remember, a failure to keep

the sabbath, and a turning to images. It's all down to how the Israelites fail to look after their God-given gift of land. On a superficial level: nationally, the Solomonic enthusiasm to box God in, to domesticate God and make him subordinate to the land-governing regime is never far away, as is seen in the furore surrounding the Falklands War Memorial Service. Similarly with the local church building: contemporary Solomons in The Story wanted for instance to keep the church building as it was as a means of managing God, of fencing God in to fit their routine and understanding of faith.

There is also a more subtle level concerning the issues of transition and change. It raises the question as to whether the church building is a dynamic place or a habit place (we are back again with Davies' categories of path and place), how the place is perceived and how it is used. A church building for ever in need - of decoration, repair, new hymn books and money - whose future is uncertain, can be vehicle and expression of people on the move, struggling with the dialectic of trembling hope and fear of abandonment. A church building financially prosperous, physically and aesthetically comfortable, with a settled and content congregation is far more likely to be vehicle to God-less, self-centred management. The interregnum was a settled period when the members of the Sunday congregation were content in their respective feuding cliques. With money in the bank, a steady income and more of the same as the interregnum dragged on, a self-centred management swiftly became the norm. The new incumbent arrived and almost immediately there was the prospect of major change to the building (which had hitherto been symbol of the settled, self-centred management) with the vast financial burden and therefore uncertain future such change would necessarily incur. Overnight, this habit place was being challenged by the prospect of dynamic place. In the moment of transition - whether it is the nation of Israel at the river Jordan, or in the re-ordering of St.Catherine's church building - the issues are more exposed and the people more

vulnerable.

The admonitions at the Jordan are to remember, the
prohibition of images and to keep sabbath. To remember
St.Catherine's church history is to acknowledge how things were -
for example the walled churchyard around the building and the west
entrance to the church - and how things are - the walls razed, the
headstones removed and in place of the west entrance an annex. To
remember St.Catherine's Church history is to remember the pre-war
slump in the coal industry, its wartime and post-war recovery, and
the closure of the pits in the '60s. It is also to remember
weddings in the building with the baptisms that followed and the
funerals - and all that those moments encapsulate. In other words,
to remember is to acknowledge change. Acknowledging change is to
accept the dynamism of the place. However, memory is not that
straightforward: memory is largely selective, providing a different
subjective recollection in each individual. More accurately,
therefore, to acknowledge change is to acknowledge these different
versions of the past (which is extremely difficult for those who
are sure that their version is **the** truth).

To have no images is also to accept the dynamism of place,
because images fix and contain, they pin down and control. If, in
the building, people can reach out to God, if the building is where
people are able to **express** their hopes and fears then it is a
wilderness place. If the building itself and the contents are what
people are attracted to, if this is where people's hopes and fears
are **managed** then it is a settled place with all the inherent
dangers. It is of course not the building *per se*, but how people
respond to it and use it. Assessing the extent to which the
building is where people express their hopes and fears and how much
it is a place where they are managed is not simple. Simply because
as much time was spent in the PCC discussing the minutiae of the
re-ordering plans as examining the precepts that lay behind the
scheme, it does not necessarily follow that St.Catherine's is for

them a settled place. The minutiae of colour schemes and where to
hang pictures and what sort of kitchen sink (all elements in the
overall scheme) are familiar domestic issues and as such are more
accessible than concepts such as transcendence and immanence (which
were also elements in the re-ordering). Enthusiasm for the
building itself and its content may, therefore, simply reflect this
familiarity. But, to perceive the church building and furnishings
in terms of home life is also to domesticate the church building
and is thus a perception of it as settled space: the major issues
of immanence and transcendence are put to one side in favour of
more **manageable** parts of the scheme.

Keeping sabbath (for Brueggemann) is ultimately a hedge
against overwhelming management of people as well as land. It is
an affirmation that human beings cannot presume total ownership of
land or other people. In terms of keeping sabbath and
St.Catherine's church building, issues of management and expression
of hopes and fears have already been touched on in the context of
prohibition of images. The issue also touches exclusivism: with
the physical fixity of the church building which occupies a
particular place there is always the temptation to manage it in
such a way that the giftedness from God (which the building
signifies) is lost. The building is **managed**: it becomes the
"property" of the regular church attenders who then perceive non-
regular and non-churchgoers as intruders "using" the building for
their baptisms, weddings and funerals. The gift from God, which
the church building is vehicle to, is for **all** the people who are in
the vicinity of that particular symbol. It is a gift that is
easily and often forgotten - just as the Israelites once in the
Promised Land were forgetful of the Jordan statement of
inheritance.

Management of the church building also finds expression in
the proliferation of church organisations: the Mothers' Union, the
Men's Society, the Church Lads' and Girls' Brigade, the Sunday

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School, the Church Study Group, the Church Flower Arrangers.
Despite the many constructive and valuable elements these various
groups undoubtedly possess, the overall result is management by
selection/deselection of people and the domestication/fencing in of
God. The persistent danger of church organisations is that they
become self-serving. Enthusiasm for, and habits of, church
organisations lead to the neglect of equipping people to celebrate
the gospel and serve those in the locality - i.e. to recognise the
universality of God's gift.

Place as Symbol

Whilst Brueggemann is concerned with land as symbol, Lilburne
examines place as symbol. In his book A Sense of Place Lilburne
attempts a theological recovery of place. It is not the intention
of this thesis to offer an exhaustive critique of Lilburne's work,
but rather to address one of the fundamental issues, if not the
issue as to how the divine is earthed in place, how there is in the
sense of place a connection with the invisible. My approach is to
outline his progression from Brueggemann's position, his
development of Davies' "christification" of space, and his
indebtedness to Australian Aboriginal thought on place; and then to
test Lilburne's position alongside Relph's (tempered) assertion
that the sense of place is simply defined by people's habituations.
Having explored Lilburne's sense of place and some of its
limitations, we shall then address these to The Story to see if our
perception of it is enlivened and deepened.

Like Brueggemann, Lilburne understands land to be a central
issue in Hebrew faith. It was land that was promised to the chosen
nation - a land that was reached after forty years of travelling in
the wilderness. It was the same land that was wrested from them,
and in time it was that land that they were eventually able to
return to. After the exile, however, it was no longer the land

that was the focus of national identity, but the temple. Lilburne argues that this was not so much a shift in focus as a "refinement and intensification"[50] of the theme of land. The experience of exile, with the displacement and scattering of the chosen people, brought the further realisation that God could be worshipped in other places. Even Naaman's parcel of soil became redundant.

As with the exile experience for the Israelites, so it was with the rapid expansion of the early church, only more so: the swift and geographically widespread growth of Christianity meant that instead of the holy **land** being a central issue, instead of the holy **place** (i.e. the Jerusalem temple), holy **space** became a matter of expediency if not convenience, so that "the people of faith find God is with them in the places they find themselves".[51] This is not so much a universalising as a relativising of holy place, though there is a further possibility that the sense of holy place becomes internalised by the individual, of the holy being located no longer geographically but intellectually.

Despite Lilburne's disclaimer against universalising, his statement that "the people of God find God is with them in the places they find themselves" needs some further qualification. Angel Clare's Sunday cabbage leaf conversation,[52] along with the oft-stated "you don't have to go to church to be a Christian", show how easily holy space can become individuated, privatised space. However, the contingent utilitarianism of starting from present circumstance is a valuable reminder of how faith is borne out of rather than brought in from outside of everyday experience.

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[50] Lilburne, G.R. (1989) p.57

[51] Lilburne, G.R. (1989) p.69

[52] "[Angel Clare's] aspect was probably as un-Sabbatarian a one as a dogmatic parson's son often presented; his attire being his dairy clothes, long wading boots, a cabbage leaf inside his hat to keep his head cool, with a thistle spud to finish him off. 'He's not going to church," said Marian. Angel, in fact, rightly or wrongly ... preferred sermons in stones to sermons in churches and chapels on bright summer days." Hardy, T. (1958) p.174

Alongside this perceived refinement of holy land through holy place to holy space is Lilburne's development of Davies' "christification" of space.[53] Lilburne takes up Davies' concern that the Son of God became human in time and **space**,[54] noting theology's enthusiastic quest for the historical Jesus, but its persistent failure to examine in detail the geographical Jesus. This "placing" of Jesus is central to Lilburne's book.

The Jewish faith that Jesus was born into was concerned with the particular moments in time **when** God acted in the life of their people **and where** that divine activity occurred. The scriptures map out the history of divine activity, and the geography. Thus, for example, where Jacob wrestled with the angel, where Lot's wife became a pillar of salt and where Saul met with his witch are carefully identified and placed, the locus of the Decalogue is identified as Mount Sinai, the site of the Exodus is identified as the Red Sea. Particular places where God had acted had religious significance for Jesus and his contemporaries, and they of course continue to have their significance (cf. the continuing popularity of Holy Land tours).

Davies argues that places in Palestine gained a further Christian religious "charge" through the knowledge and belief of the historical Jesus's presence and activity there: the birth at Bethlehem, the sea of Galilee as setting for much of Jesus's

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[53] "Christ has become for Paul the "locus" of redemption here and in the world to come. "The land" has been for him "Christified". It is not the land promised much as he had loved it that became his "inheritance", but the living Lord, in whom was a new creation." Davies, W.D. (1974) p.213; cf. also p.368: "In sum, for the holiness of place, Christianity has fundamentally, though not consistently, substituted the holiness of the Person: it has Christified holy space."

[54] "The emergence of the Gospels - kerygmatic as they may be - witnesses to a historical and, therefore, geographic, concern in the tradition, which retains for the *realia* their full physical significance. The need to remember the Jesus of History entailed the need to remember the Jesus of a particular land. Jesus belonged not only to time, but to space; and the space and spaces which he occupied took on significance, so that the *realia* of Judaism continued as *realia* in Christianity. History in the tradition demanded geography." Davies, W.D. (1974) p.366

ministry, the baptism in the river Jordan, the road to Emmaus and so on. Spatial as well as temporal details were carefully recorded in the accounts of the gospel to make the physical reality of the Son of God abundantly clear. It is as if the place having taken on that peculiar significance becomes what it signifies. In other words, there is a coming together of the actual and what it stands for (cf. symbol as somehow participating in something beyond itself - p.61 above).

The fleshly person Jesus belongs to a past time and a past place: the quest for the historical Jesus is essentially the pursuit of understanding who Jesus **was**. The question remains as to who Jesus Christ **is**. And, just as understanding the historical Jesus requires knowledge of where as well as when, so who Jesus Christ IS demands "placing" too.

Paramount in the Son of God's earthly ministry was his preaching and teaching about the kingdom. In majoring on the temporal aspects and paying scant attention to the spatial, theology has dealt with the kingdom much as it has with the person Jesus. With the enthusiasm for now and not yet, the drawing near and the end of time, and the many nuances in between, the similarly complex question of venue has remained largely unaddressed. Jesus, in his preaching and teaching, declared that the kingdom was where he and others enjoyed meals together, and also the kingdom would be found in a future place where he would be with people again. Between the resurrection and the parousia there is the gift of the Holy Spirit in fulfilment of Jesus's promise: "Lo, I am with you to the end of time" (Matthew 28:20). The future fulfilment remains but so also does the present reality. The fleshly presence of the Son of God ended with the crucifixion, but his presence continues in the person of the Holy Spirit. Thus the kingdom is to be located wherever people meet together in Christian fellowship: "wherever two or three meet together in my name I am there among them" (Matthew 18:20). The kingdom is therefore present in each of

the particular locations where this is occurring.

A theology that is contextual in its method, that is concerned with what is actually going on in the **local** context, and in the sum of local contexts is, to borrow Turner's word, "multivocal", and thus provides a robust counterbalance to an abstract universalism - which is to present not a fragmented but an integrative approach. Contextual theology embraces the history and the locus, i.e. it is a theology that is moulded by the particularities and peculiarities of the who, the what, the how, the when **and** the where. With its emphasis on time **and** place, contextual theology is also incarnational theology.[55]

The kingdom therefore is not just present in each of the particular locations where two or three meet together in Our Lord's name, it is also present, for Lilburne, in the sum of those particularities. Recognising the kingdom in an individual, particular location ensures an understanding of the kingdom as concrete and actual. Recognising the sum of the particular locations ensures a checking balance. As before, the direction here is an opening out, expansionist movement rather than a narrowing down, lowest common denominator approach, and thus echoes the respective distinction between open system and general system theory.

Whilst it is difficult to make connection between Western culture and Australian Aboriginal culture, there does seem to be a link, though Australian Aboriginal understanding of land goes much further and is far too complex to be accused of an identification that is mere idolatry. Aboriginal thought sees each element and aspect of all land as sacred because it doesn't just signify it, it

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[55] "If God became human in Jesus Christ, as Christianity has always maintained, then God became human in a particular time and *a particular place*. In seeking a theology which is local, that is, a theology which develops the images of the local context, we are doing no more than calling for a truly incarnational theology." Lilburne, G.R. (1989) p.87

is the world of the Dreaming.[56]

Extrapolating heavily from Aboriginal thought, Lilburne asserts: "a sense of place is as much a function of the nature of the places themselves as it is of human activity".[57] The problem is that the function of the nature of a place is so elusive as to be unverifiable. Furthermore, there is here the danger of self-fulfilment, just as the person who goes to the doctor to see if he/she is ill has already made the decision that he/she is experiencing sufficient dis-ease to warrant seeing the doctor. In other words, as going to the doctor is itself an acknowledgement of already existing illness, so it is with the assertion of a "spirit of place". At this point, Lilburne moves beyond Brueggemann, whom he regards as having re-established the importance of land in theology but only in the restricted sense of land being solely defined by human activity. However, this placing of the Son of God involves more than identifying sites where Jesus was or did.

Whilst the dimensions of Aboriginal dreamtime provide valuable insights, Relph's mundane insistence on human agency alone is far more convincing.[58] But then Relph goes on to admit a "spirit of place" that exists beyond the physical setting of the

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[56] ""The Dreaming" is then a plurivocal term with a number of distinct though connected meanings. First, it is a narrative mythical account of the foundation and shaping of the entire world by the ancestor heroes who are uncreated and eternal. Second, "the Dreaming" refers to the embodiment of the spiritual power of the ancestor heroes in the land, in certain sites, and in species of fauna and flora, so that this power is available to people today. Indeed, one might say that "for the aboriginal his land is a kind of religious icon, since it both *represents* the power of the dreamtime beings and also effects and transmits that power". Third, "the Dreaming" denotes the general way of life or "Law" - moral and social precepts, ritual and ceremonial practices, etc. - based upon these mythical foundations. Fourth, "the Dreaming" may refer to the personal "way" or vocation that an individual Aboriginal might have by virtue of his membership of a clan, or by virtue of his spirit-conception relating him to particular sites." Charlesworth, M., ed. (1984) pp.9-10.

[57] Lilburne, G.R. (1989) p.28

[58] "The meanings of places may be rooted in the physical setting and objects and activities, but they are not a property of them - rather they are a property of human intentions and experiences." Relph, E. (1976) p.47

place, the activities therein, and the meanings given to the place. This spirit of place is "subtle and nebulous, and not easily analyzed in formal and conceptual terms".[59] This spirit of place is capable of surviving considerable change to its setting, activities and/or meanings.

For Relph, time is a crucial element in our experience of place:

> ... places themselves are the present expressions of past experiences and events and hopes for the future. But ... the essence of place does not lie either in timelessness or in continuity through time. These are simply dimensions, albeit important and unavoidable ones, that affect our experience of place.[60]

Thus, Lilburne's extrapolations from pre-industrial religious societies (i.e. Hebrew and Aboriginal) to comprehend contemporary Western non-religious society, whilst informative, are not altogether convincing, primarily becaue of the radical differences as defined by Mircea Eliade between religious and non-religious societies.[61] The significance of place in contemporary Western culture is far more complex and haphazard even than Lilburne admits.

We are now in a position to see how any of this might be applied to the provincial particularity of The Story.

Holy Place, Holy Space, and the "Christification" of Space in The Story

In 1840, some of the people of God who found themselves in

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[59] Relph, E. (1976) p.48

[60] Relph, E. (1976) p.33

[61] "Eliade distinguishes between religious and nonreligious societies. In religious societies religion forms the basis for social structure and human life. In nonreligious societies, such as our own, religion is one factor among others, serving specific functions in the lives of some individuals but not forming the substratum upon which whole society is founded. Such societies, sometimes called advanced or industrial, are marked by a pluralism of religious beliefs and a range within each belief system from true believers to nonbelievers." Lilburne, G.R. (1989) p.38

the rapidly burgeoning locality of Crook chose to cease turning to what was up until then the parish church in Brancepeth (some six miles distant) as holy place. Circumstance (i.e. a newly developing coal town) dictated a local holy place. Thus, a parcel of land was taken out of the ancient parish of Brancepeth and designated Crook parish. St.Catherine's church, a new local holy place, was established in the town centre. At about the same time, places of worship of other denominations were also established in the town. Undoubtedly, the provision of the church building provided considerably towards the overall sense of place and belonging for the people of Crook.

Thus, the spirit of place that is St.Catherine's church may be seen to have survived with the passage of time through physical change to itself and its surrounding, and change in its activities as the town has variously developed and declined.

Time clearly plays an important part in the quality of "charge" to the holy place. The venerability of age is dependent on a wide variety of factors, but generally speaking, for example, in a medieval church building still in use, the feel of sanctity is often more apparent than in a nineteenth or twentieth century church building. The history of moments, events, activities and people in that locality compose a patina on the building so long as it continues to be perceived and understood as a holy place. St.Catherine's was built when the town was first developing one hundred and fifty years ago. As one of the few remaining buildings from that period, and being located in the town centre, it is endowed with the story of the town, at least in so far as people continue to recognise such in it.

So far, the "charge" of the building has been described in terms of familiarity, attachment, rootedness and "spirit of place". We now turn to Lilburne's incarnational theology and in particular his concern to locate the contemporary presence of Christ. Here,

he is much more convincing. As with Relph's "sense of place", the presence of Christ "wherever two or three are gathered in His name" is similarly beyond easy analysis in formal and conceptual terms.

In the particularity of The Story, identifying people's habituations in the church building is relatively straightforward. There is the generational imprint, the major change to the building more or less every twenty five to thirty years, and there are the memorials for example in the stained glass and the chancel screen. The local church building is the place where many births, marriages and deaths, and civic occasions are acknowledged through formal acts of worship. As one of several places of worship in the town, the church building is identified and designated by people generally as a place of God, largely because of the human activities it houses and the human intention that shapes its form and content. There is here a familiarity with Brueggemann's land management and the "Rotary Club" approach (see p.82 above): God is a firmly maintained, at arm's length **transcendent** God.

However, Relph's admission of a "sense of place" that is somehow more than human intention and activity and experience, and Lilburne's insistence that where two or three are gathered in Christ's name He is with them, take us beyond Brueggemann's rootedness of people in place. The eagerness of the steering committee to off-load the "religious bit" onto the incumbent is an abdication of responsibility but it can also be understood as being in some sense an acknowledgement of the involvement of the divine. The generational imprint on the building and in particular the process of re-ordering described in The Story, are expressions of dissatisfaction with how things are. Change to the church building is borne out of a striving to improve worship of God, though of course this is inevitably influenced at the very least by contemporary societal and local culture, and current denominational, diocesan and local church thinking. In The Story, the re-ordering grew out of social concern **and also** a concern for

better communion with God:

> The Church is first and foremost a place of worship
> that belongs to and is for the use of the community.
> As such it should a) direct us to the MYSTERY OF GOD;
> b) provide a climate of FELLOWSHIP/HOSPITALITY.[62]

The initial stage of the re-ordering work, the re-siting of the stone altar, was intended to open up the sense and experience of divine immanence. To what extent that intent was realised by the change in altar position and the resulting change in worship it made possible is difficult to assess. One of the results of this particular change (though this is admittedly impossible to separate out completely from the overall process of change) is a gradually strengthening sense of fellowship.

What is becoming increasingly apparent here is the difficulty in teasing out the delicate intimacy of what is human and what is divine. The employment of ecclesiastical law further highlights the problematic of this intimacy. The issues that led to the calling of a Consistory Court Hearing include (in Lilburne's terms) the involvement of God (the local church building being precisely one of those particular locations where two or three gather in Christ's name). The law can only prescribe the requirements for being human, it requires the gospel for full interpretation of the world, hence the inadequacy in this respect of ecclesiastical law, an issue to be developed in the next chapter. Our concern here is that the prescription of ecclesiastical law in the form of faculty jurisdiction as a means of resolving differences of opinion, gets in the way of any attempt to identify and own the local church building as symbol of the divine presence.

In an attempt to achieve some measure of clarification Lilburne suggests the sum of particular locations will provide a governor against excessive human habituation and a pointer in the

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[62] The first of five precepts presented to the PCC in the preliminary discussions - see pp.14f. above.

identification of divine presence.[63] Unfortunately, in practice, the structures of the Church is its denominations, and the position of the parish church in its locality, often do not provide sufficient counterbalance. The present polity of the Church of England is largely administrative in nature, concerned principally with maintenance, staffing and money. Despite local initiative and effort, denominational congregations remain highly suspicious of one another. And the more the local congregation turns in on itself, the more estranged the local church and locality become from each other.

All these elements and more are clearly evident in the particular location that is St.Catherine's church. This isolation becomes even more apparent when the local church addresses itself to change. Synodical government is a primarily administrative structure. Although there are hints of small change, the DAC remains primarily reductive: narrowing down the possibilities of development of the building - advising on the constraints rather than the potential. The DAC is advisory to and for the diocesan legal department which itself operates according to the constraint of precedent. Cross-congregational dialogue on a local, deanery or interdenominational basis is usually constrained by competition, disinterest, lack of resources. This insularity is further compounded by a withdrawal by the local congregation from issues and other people in the locality. Not surprisingly, some of the greatest enthusiasm for the proposed changes to the church building, some of the most exciting suggestions for change, have come from non-church people.

All of this knocks Lilburne's balance between the particular

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[63]   "... the kingdom of God has both a primary and local meaning and a secondary universal meaning. Each is needed in the life of Christian communities. The assurance that Jesus Christ is here, that God chooses to dwell with this community in this place, is the basis for a local incarnational life style. But equally the knowledge that God's kingdom is ultimately inclusive of all localities gives us a healthy reminder that our local life style must mesh with the needs of other localities." Lilburne, G.R. (1989) p.102

location and the sum of particular locations out of kilter. And, given that the sum of particular locations is not simply from here and now, but from out of all time and space, the devastatingly common straitjacket of parochialism typified in St.Catherine's church is all too evident. This raises a serious question about apprehending the quality, depth and reality of the experience of the kingdom in the particular location. The guidance to be derived from a commonality of shared particularities is, in reality, an idealism in extremely short supply. It is then a short step from the isolationism of the particular location to a privatisation which locates holy space intellectually between the individual and God.

E. CONCLUSION

Lilburne's development of the concept of holy space seems to work well on the secular aspects of a particular location, but the mechanism of the counterbalancing sum of particular locations, whilst sound in theory, does not work at all well in practice. This limited success and gap between theory and practice may well be the price of placing attributes of religious society on non-religious society.

LEGAL, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES

Rules are by definition generalizations of some degree, and generalizations inevitably involve data reduction. The concrete case always needs something of interpretation and adaptation, embellishment or thoughtful omission.[1]

Power rests in the conjunction of what the individual perceives of his own internal being, what he perceives in the world about him, and how he relates these perceptions to establish his relations with other human beings.[2]

Fuchsia cordifolia ... a straggling shrub from three feet in height up to that of a small tree, which at times is epiphytic.[3]

A company of porcupines crowded themselves together one cold winter's day so as to profit by one another's warmth and so save themselves from being frozen to death. But soon they felt one another's quills, which induced them to separate again. And now, when the need for warmth brought them nearer together again, the second evil arose once more. So that they were driven backwards and forwards from one trouble to the other, until they had discovered a mean distance at which they could most tolerably exist.[4]

A. INTRODUCTION

Lilburne's theory of the particular location being balanced by the sum of particular locations has been shown to be of limited value. In order to address the question as to how the local church operates as an organisation, and how the local church relates and fits into the diocese/national church, we need a working definition of the term "local church" and a description of Anglican ecclesiastical law, particularly as it pertains to The Story. We will then be in a position to turn to the work of social sciences on organisational structure and polity.

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[1] Katz, D. & Kahn, R.L. (1978) p.532

[2] Adams, R.N. (1975) p.xiii

[3] Jennings, K. & Miller, V. (1983) p.138

[4] Schopenhauer quoted by Mattinson, J. (1975) p.24

As social scientists, both Adams[5] and Katz & Kahn[6] provide frameworks for comprehending the complexity of human organisation. Both recognise the limitations of such frameworks: that despite careful definition of terms, concepts such as power and leadership have the potential as it were for a life of their own over and beyond the specifics defined. Consequently, despite careful definition of terms a slipperiness remains, boundaries are blurred and there is usually an overlapping of boundaries. They are also clear that as the slipperiness, blurring and overlap are integral in the actuality of societal organisation, so they are necessarily integral to their formalisations.

Having established the detail of Adam's and Katz & Kahn's theses, we shall then use them as lenses through which to re-view The Story, and in particular the circumstance that brought about the Consistory Court Hearing. Two hypotheses will be tested in the process: (1) that in this particular instance the application of canon law was misdirected, and (2) the blurring of boundaries is so dense in the subsystem structure of the Church of England that the church's ability to function (as a national church and as a local church) can be seriously impaired.

The "Local Church"

As the intention is to examine how Katz & Kahn might illuminate our understanding of The Story, it is important that "the local church" is carefully identified further. "The local church" can describe:

    a) the **building** that is the parish church ("our church"),

    b) the building and the **activity** that goes on in it - i.e. primarily worship, but also socialisation, education, etc. (we talk about "going to church" meaning going to a particular church building to worship),

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[5] Adams, R.N. (1975)

[6] Katz, D. and Kahn, R.L. (1978)

c) the people in their involvement in the activity that occurs in the building (i.e. the "regular worshippers", the "congregation", "church people") - these people are identified as the local church primarily by their commitment to and involvement in what goes on in the building,

d) the people in the locality who (centred on the parish church building) seek to celebrate and proclaim the gospel,

e) whatever individuals in a locality understand "local church " to be, i.e. any of a) - d), or any combination/permutation of a) - d);

a) and b) are the symbolic of c) and d); a) and b) are the activities by which c) and d) occur.

Acknowledging Geertz's assertion "cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete"[7] no attempt will be made here to go in quest of the last turtle (see p.1 above). For the purpose of this essay, "the local church" is understood essentially in terms of c) and d). As Hasenfeld and English point out:[8] the goals of an organisation are far easier to describe in principle than to make operational and put into practice. Whilst the **goal** is d), in practice "the local church" is that group of people who come together to worship in a particular building, who play (to extremely varied degrees) some organisational part in the life of the church in terms of its production, maintenance, development and management.

B. ECCLESIASTICAL LAW

As part of the general law of England, ecclesiastical law is drawn from three sources: common law (that part of the law which is based on common custom in this country), canon law (which is based

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[7] Geertz, C. (1975) p.29

[8] quoted by Katz, D. & Kahn, R.L. (1978) p.150

on the law of the Church of Rome adopted in England before 1533 -
either expressly by Church of England canons, or by common consent
and custom - and the canons and constitutions passed by national or
provincial synods of the Church of England before 1533), and
statute law (that part of the law which is contained in Acts of
Parliament and in Measures of the National Assembly, now the
General Synod, of the Church of England). Ecclesiastical law, so
described, is binding on all, whether lay or clerical, a member of
the Church of England or not - except for those parts in it that
specify otherwise. As well as this old established law, there are
the Canons which bind the clergy in spiritual matters. The Canons
of 1603 have been repealed and replaced by a new code by the
General Synod of the Church of England.

Since the sixteenth century, the jurisdiction of the
ecclesiastical courts has been gradually eroded by 1) transfer to
the temporal courts e.g. the transfer of divorce and matrimonial
causes in 1858, 2) abolition by statute, and 3) obsolescence owing
to change in moral or social attitude. The Ecclesiastical
Jurisdiction Measure, 1963, was a thorough revision of
ecclesiastical law and has had the effect of restricting
ecclesiastical jurisdiction even further.

The Church of England exercises a system of representative
government. The Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure, 1921,
later replaced by the 1956 Measure of the same name, effected a
fundamental alteration in responsibility for the financial affairs
of the local parish by transferring control from vestry and
churchwardens to the newly formed PCC. Electors of PCC members are
restricted to those on the local church's electoral roll. Electors
of churchwardens comprise all those over eighteen living in the
parish. Hence the persistence of two separate annual meetings: the
Annual Vestry Meeting open to the parish to elect churchwardens,
and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, open only to those on the
church's electoral roll. Thus, the Parochial Church Councils

(Powers) Measure, 1921, and 1956, effectively disenfranchised parishioners. The shift of power previously invested in churchwardens to PCC effectively weakens the electoral power of parishioners generally and places it in the hands of the much smaller number of at least nominally committed church people.

Faculty jurisdiction is, effectively, the in-house planning control concerning church buildings, their fabric and construction and ornaments. The requirement of a faculty is laid down in Canon F13 (1969). A parish church

> belongs not to any one generation, nor are its interests and condition the exclusive care of those who inhabit the parish at any one period of time. It is in entire conformity with this aspect of the parish church that the law has forbidden any structural alteration to be made in it, save those which are approved by a disinterested authority in the person of the Ordinary.[9]

Furthermore,

> the contents of a church - the furniture and ornaments - are equally placed by law under the care of the Ordinary.[10]

Dale goes on to note[11] that whilst it used to be the case that small matters did not require application for faculty, a stricter view tends to be taken today. He offers no reasons or explanation for this development.

Permission from the Ordinary is given by means of the granting of a faculty by the Chancellor of the diocese. The Chancellor is appointed by the Ordinary (i.e. the diocesan bishop). As judge of the bishop's court, the Chancellor is by definition also an Ordinary because he has jurisdiction in his own right - although appointed by the bishop, once appointed, he acts independently.

When the local church wishes to effect a change to their

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[9]   Lord Penzance, quoted in Dale, W. (1989) p.96

[10]   Kempe, A.B., quoted in Dale, W. (1989) p.96

[11]   Dale, W. (1989) p.97

church building, the Parochial Church Council seeks advice on technical and aesthetic matters from the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the care of churches and then applies to the Chancellor for a faculty authorising the work. The Chancellor, on receiving the application, seeks advice on technical and aesthetic matters from the DAC and, if he then deems it suitable, will agree to grant a faculty subject to there being no objectors. In the event of objections being submitted, it usually follows that a Consistory Court Hearing is held to decide the case. Faculty jurisdiction is permissive only, it has no power to make a mandatory order, and it cannot be exercised punitively.[12]

Faculty jurisdiction, as with law generally, operates according to legal precedent coupled with interpretation of the law. Thus, whilst the Chancellor is constrained by what has gone before in law, as Ordinary he also has the freedom to exercise his discretion in judging the particularity of the case before him. Despite the complex background of ecclesiastical law, its primary purpose was to maintain the common order, to maintain the well-being of the church. With the progressive erosion of its authority, it appears that faculty jurisdiction is now concerned primarily with technical and aesthetic offence, and not with more fundamental issues.

Application to The Story

In The Story, by granting citation, the chancellor signified his willingness to accept the application for faculty to go ahead with the re-ordering work. Because objections were received and two not subsequently withdrawn, the Chancellor called a Consistory Court to decide the case. Objections can only be made on details submitted in the application for faculty. This meant that in The Story the objections could only be made on aesthetic or technical grounds. Thus, from the outset the Court Hearing is defined within

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[12]   see Dale, W. (1989) p.125

very specific parameters. One objector objected a) to the cost of the proposed work, b) that parishioners had not been sufficiently consulted, c) that the building already had sufficient facilities. The second objected a) that the work would "shrink" the building, b) relegate the windows in the side aisle by virtue of the side aisle being as it were downgraded from being 'real' church, c) that the wall-mounted, wooden war memorial should remain where it was originally placed (i.e. on the east wall of the side aisle). Given that one of the objectors, a retired health visitor, was the former churchwarden who had occupied a key power position during the interregnum, it was apparent to many that the aesthetic and technical aspects of the proposals were in fact vehicle to a struggle that was actually about power and authority. However apparent that might have been, it was beyond the remit of the Consistory Court Hearing. The only sub-text acknowledged and brought to bear belonged to ecclesiastical law itself: the intent to maintain common order and to maintain the well-being of the church. Thus, the Consistory Court Hearing, at its most positive, was to air publicly the stated issues of objection in order that the Chancellor might adjudge accordingly, so that the Church as institution should be seen publicly to be acting fairly in the interest of serving and building the well-being of the particular local church of St.Catherine. However well-intentioned ecclesiastical law evidently is, it is fundamentally flawed. Whilst necessary, it is intrinsically insufficient: the law can only prescribe the requirements for being human, recourse to the gospel is required for a comprehensive interpretation of the world. Ecclesiastical law scratches the surface but hardly enters the complexity of political and organisational structures.

C POLITICAL STRUCTURES

Acknowledging that politics is the distribution of responsibilities and justice is the **proper** distribution of

responsibilities, we now turn from the juridical structure of the Church to the next layer down: the political.

In his book <u>Energy and Structure</u>, Adams's governing theme is power.[13] He begins with the problem of recognising "real" control - which is essentially the problem of how to determine the validity of a proposition. Adams acknowledges

> one really never knows about the real control of actors until after the fact, and even then it may remain somewhat problematic.[14]

As a means of addressing the theme of power, Adams artificially separates reality potential from cultural potential in order to provide an analytic tool.[15]

Reality potential

> Reality potential is

> the actual potential of the [operating] unit to operate in some specific way in a real environment, given its composition, history and physical circumstance.[16]

In other words, reality potential is **that which is** or, more accurately, "that which in fact turns out to be the case".[17] As with reality, reality potential is never fully knowable, and to the extent that it is, it is only identifiable after the event.[18] Because we cannot fully know reality we rely on what we think is reality.

Cultural potential

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[13] "In dealing with social power ... we are concerned with ... *the control that one actor, or party, or operating unity exercises over some set of energy forms or flows,* and, most specifically, over some sort of energy forms or flows *that constitute part of the meaningful environment of another actor.*" Adams, R.N. (1975) p.12

[14] Adams, R.N. (1975) p.15

[15] "reality potential is not a separable feature but an analytic concept which becomes significant when compared with cultural potential" Adams, R.N. (1970) p.49

[16] Adams, R.N. (1970) p.48

[17] Adams, R.N. (1975) p.15

[18] Adams, R.N. (1975) p.15

Cultural potential is **what is believed to be the case**: it is
about expectation, aspiration, possibility:

> What people believe is the potential of the unit, the
> rules, the prescriptions, the proscription, and the
> special values they attach to it, in light of the
> environmental conditions as they are received.[19]

Given that reality potential is about (1) the actual **what-is**
in the operating unit itself, and (2) the **what-is** in the
environment the operating unit is part of, it follows that **change**
in the reality potential can be from two directions: change in the
internal organisation of the operating unit, and/or change in the
environmental setting of the operating unit.

However, Adams acknowledges "it is difficult to treat reality
potential apart from cultural potential of a unit".[20] Furthermore,
the cultural potential of a unit changes as the understanding of
the definition of the unit by its members changes, and/or as the
understanding of the definition of the unit by those outside the
unit changes. Also, changes in definition by either group "will
always be signalled by changes in form", and is likely to be
signalled by "changes in ritual, in external, perceptible, formal features".[21]

The effect of reality potential on cultural potential in an
operating unit is basically reality-testing. The effect of
cultural potential on reality potential in an operating unit is a
form of reverse-reality-testing. As such, the latter can produce
self-fulfilling prophecies: (1) "a machine will not work unless
people believe it will and therefore start to operate it", and (2)
"belief and knowledge may define some particular reality
performance as being necessary and the actual composition of the
event will be experimented with and changed until its performance

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[19]   Adams, R.N. (1970) p.48

[20]   Adams, R.N. (1970) p.49

[21]   Adams, R.N. (1970) p.49f.

does approximate that dictated by the cultural potential".[22]

> Adams provides the following illustration:-
>
> A significant change in the expansion of a unit at any
> level takes place when the unit finds that it is
> beginning to adapt to a higher level. The
> entrepreneurial peasant who has been successful in
> buying up land locally and using his neighbours as
> hired help not only begins to confront the village
> storekeeper as a credit agent, but also moves to the
> departmental capital or center and confronts others who
> operate at the regional level. From there, success
> places him increasingly in contact with those who
> operate at the higher levels. As this occurs, his
> enterprises expand, becoming more valuable, and he
> becomes more powerful; of course there is in all this
> the contrast between the cultural and reality
> potential. If real power does not match the cultural
> potential then he may find suddenly that he has gone
> bankrupt or that someone with greater power has
> discovered his weaknesses and has taken advantage of
> them .... along with the movement upward, the
> individual or unit must also learn the devices that are
> appropriate to and peculiar to the higher levels. He
> has to learn the ways of banks before he can
> effectively exploit them; in order to marry into a
> wealthy family, the individual must show some ability
> to manage the manners and customs of that level of
> society. All this is part of adaptation.[23]

It seems reasonable to assume that the importance of the matching

of cultural with reality obtains whether the adaptation of the unit

is to a lower level or a sideways move, as well as to a higher

level as in the illustration.

Operating Units

Adams engages in a developmental style of approach to the

structure of organisations, identifying a progressive increase in

the variety and number of levels of power - from the separate,

independent power of members of an operating unit to identified

commonality, and in that commonality from members granting power to

members allocating power, developing to central independence and

central delegation. These levels of power are evident to an

increasing degree in four primary classes of operating units:

fragmentary, informal, centralised and formal.

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[22] Adams, R.N. (1970) p.50f.

[23] Adams, R.N. (1970) pp.79-80

By "operating unit", Adams means

> .. a set of actors sharing a common adaptive pattern
> with respect to some portion of the environment. The
> pattern involves collective or coordinated action and
> some common ideology expressing goal or rationale.[24]

The fragmented unit is characterised by collective (not

coordinated) action e.g. supermarket shoppers.

The informal unit is characterised by coordinated action which is

entirely dependent on coordinated independent power e.g. the

porcupines achieving warmth without injury.

The centralised unit is characterised by having a central

figure/authority, where members may/may not be independent of that

authority.

And the formal unit is characterised by having a central

figure/authority which has power independent of the independent

power of the members.[25]

These four classes spawn further classification:

fragmented units

individual/aggregate units

These are the bottom line units ".. when a series of

individuals manifest parallel or complementary behaviors with

regard to some aspect or facet of an environment".[26]

identity units

These arise when the individuals in an individual/aggregate

unit **recognise** their commonality. Such identity provides a further

dimension: that individuals, through recognising their identity,

may then **choose** to continue or discontinue their association.

Fragmented units may be virtually any size: obviously, with

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[24]   Adams, R.N. (1975) p.54

[25]   see Adams R.N. (1975) p.55

[26]   Adams, R.N. (1975) p.56

an aggregate unit measurement is not possible, identity units can

be measured by simply asking individuals whether or not they

belong. Fragmented units have no overall specific control to

coordinate them, there is no body functioning as decision-maker for

the unit. And so it follows that fragmented units have no basis of

power - only "the organized collectivity of individual independent

power".[27]

informal units

coordinated units

These are the bottom line of informal units: common identity

is recognised by the individuals that comprise the unit. It is on

the basis of common identity that shared decisions are made.

Coordinated units are likely to have hazy boundaries because a)

membership is fluid: people are at liberty to come and go at

individual will, and b) individuals being at liberty to behave

independently, coordination is bound to vary between different

individuals.

consensus units

Consensus units are slightly tighter than coordinated units:

power is **allocated** and decision-making centralised - the both of

which lead to a refinement and more clearly defined division of

labour. However, as with coordinated units, fluidity remains:

members can choose to withdraw their allocated power. (Many

organisations in the voluntary sector can be defined as consensus

units.)

majority units

These are consensus units plus ".. a loyal majority that can

provide the leader with additional independent power to support the

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[27] Adams, R.N. (1975) p.59

exercise of the power allocated to him".[28] Majority units go

further than consensus units in that all members recognise there is

a correct code of conduct that obtains and is to be enforced for

all its members.

formal units

corporate units

Corporate units enjoy all six features of power.

Not only do the rulers have independent power and
delegate it, but the members have independent power and
allocate it, as well as sharing varieties of power-
granting networks and holding common identity with
other members.[29]

administered units

These are of a specialised nature. They are to be found in

larger corporate units such as nation-states and multi-national

corporations and are characterised by administrative bureaucracy.

Administered units usually lack one or more of the six features

that characterise the corporate units, for example, organisations

that recruit by force (e.g. conscription to the armed forces,

imprisonment of criminals, sectioning of individuals deemed

mentally unhealthy) provide little or no opportunity for members to

grant or allocate power.

Reality Potential and Cultural Potential in The Story

With the arrival of the new incumbent to the parish, a

greater emphasis has been placed on incarnational theology. This

is being done by change in both the internal organisation and the

environmental setting. Internally there has been a change

developed among members to be outward rather than simply inward-

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[28] Adams, R.N. (1975) p.63

[29] Adams, R.N. (1975) p.67

looking. This change is being realised in part by the decision to re-order, to change, the church building (to re-orient worship and provide a venue for arts-based activities). Externally, (a) the operation of canon law in the person of the Chancellor and form of faculty jurisdiction leading to Consistory Court, and (b) support from several outside agencies in the form of major financial contributions toward the cost of re-ordering the building, have enabled such change to take place.

> Adams warns,
>
> of particular importance in the cultural potential is the fact that the form and meanings of units can change in response to elements that do not *directly* affect the reality potential ... units, in short, can constantly change their forms and meanings with no corresponding change in reality potential of adaptation.[30]

Clearly, cultural potential is extremely powerful.

In terms of our illustration, the warning seems to be about what the reordering is. It might be the result of cultural influence from outside which might include the current recession and related cut-backs in funding and provision for the arts, local/county council political aspirations to building community, the "Beamish factor" (the creation of living museums that describe how certain elements of present society wish to "realise" their remembered recent past), the marginalising of organised religion, etc. If that is so, then it could well be that the hoped for change in the reality potential has not taken place. Indeed, historically there is clear evidence of reality potential resistance to change: from being of low church tradition since its inception, the church was changed to high church tradition by the previous two incumbents. Despite the sound, consistent and determined teaching of high church tradition by those clergy over a period of twelve years, despite the many trappings of high church practice introduced into the building, there was virtually no understanding of it by the people.

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[30] Adams, R.N. (1970) p.50

The Consistory Court, in its adjudication of public opinion, exposed what had been the cultural potential. With the Chancellor finding entirely in favour of the faculty application, the post-Consistory Court challenge is: how to swing cultural potential behind reality potential.

Adams warns of the gap between "a *reality potential* of power (that which in fact turns out to be the case; and a *cultural potential* that which actors believe to be true".[31] In the part of The Story presently under re-view (pp.108-109 above) there is (a) a confusion by church members of reality potential and cultural potential in both the incumbent and the retired health visitor - a confusion church members evidently find difficult to resolve; and (b) canon law appears to be mistaking cultural for reality (i.e. addressing the technical and aesthetic instead of issues of power and authority). The point at issue in The Story is not the proposed plans as such, but what they are being made vehicle for. However, that may be to exaggerate the case: to push the analogy, it may be that canon law is being implemented to fine tune the vehicle's engine.

Authority and Legitimacy in The Story

Again, Adams warns against slipshod use of concepts. In citing authority and legitimacy, he suggests that seeking political advice from a film star is one thing, electing him president is quite another: "not all societies let legitimacy and authority slide so sloppily over the cultural landscape".[32] With regard to the local church story, instead of: from film star advice on politics to film star president, read: retired health visitor advice on church matters to local church leader.

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[31] Adams, R.N. (1975) p.16

[32] Adams, R.N. (1975) p.32

This slipping and sliding between legitimacy and authority can be further illustrated by reference to an incident in the life of a local voluntary organisation. For many years the organisation (which is responsible for a nature reserve) was inward-looking. Decisions were made according to the interests of the few vigorous enthusiasts, and often from fear that if the enthusiasts were not supported they would withdraw and the organisation would then collapse. In other words, decisions were not made primarily according to the perceived general welfare of the nature reserve, but in deference to the continued goodwill of the enthusiasts. Consequently, the only progress or development made was according to the idiosyncrasies of the vigorous. A turning point came when relevant grant-making bodies united to make the stipulation that voluntary organisations generally would not be eligible for grants unless their committees first underwent management training and fulfilled certain management requirements. (The organisation depended on grants for its continuing existence.) This requirement led firstly to lengthy and copious blood-letting, and subsequently to becoming a better attuned, better working, more cogent and purposeful organisation. This change of direction was brought about by OUTSIDE intervention. The dependency of the voluntary organisation on outside finance made the transition possible.

Most voluntary organisations, in Adam's typology of operating units, would come under **consensus unit**. In a consensus unit, power is allocated and decision-making is centralised - which leads to a refinement and a more clearly defined division of labour. But, as in the co-ordinated unit, membership is fluid: members can choose to withdraw their allocated power. In this particular instance, with the outside agency influencing a change in the voluntary organisation's direction, it appears to have developed into a **majority unit** where a correct code of conduct is established, enforced and adhered to by the loyal majority.

In the illustration, the local voluntary organisation is

sufficiently dependent to have to conform. In the church, there is the power but not the accountability. As a consensus unit, the local church tends to be sectarian - doing what it wants to do - in so far as it does not see itself as part of the diocese. Often its only reference point with regard to the diocese is in occasionally recognising its diocesan bishop. The church is always struggling to reach consensus - at parish level and at diocesan level (e.g. diocesan synod).

In the operating unit which we describe as 'the local church' (see pp.104f. above for further clarification of who/what comprises 'the local church') there appears to be a crisis of unit identity: it is not clear whether the local church is a consensus, a majority or a corporate unit (i.e. whether it is to be understood as an informal or formal unit). In so far as the local church relies on voluntary help and support, it might be termed a **consensus unit**, and, as such, our understanding is illuminated by the nature reserve voluntary organisation episode. Consensus units in the form of voluntary organisations often suffer a lack of sufficient dependability or suitability of members, a lack of formal structure to hire and fire, and have little in the way of job descriptions. Consensus units can become so fluid as to be quite dissolved. Yet, having a code of conduct (canon law), and providing a leader (incumbent) would suggest a **majority unit**. Furthermore, as the code of conduct (canon law) is of the Church of England, and as the appointment/institution of the incumbent is legislated by the Church of England (through the agency of bishop), the local church in its capacity as a majority unit comprises a part of the corporate unit which is the Church of England. And, in so far as the local church has its own code of conduct (as provided for by canon law), its own leader, and facilities for delegating, allocating and granting power, the local church itself can also be described as a corporate unit.

It may be, as with the example above of the voluntary nature

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reserve organisation, that during periods of relative stability, the local church functions as a consensus unit with all the fluidity of a voluntary organisation, and with all the inherent problems of recruitment, commitment, lack of job descriptions, varying notions of purpose, etc. But when faced with crisis, or major change, it is then brought/turns to the aegis of the Church of England and begins to function within that larger organisation as a majority/corporate unit, the larger organisation itself functioning as a corporate unit. This happens partly out of illusion because the larger organisation is no better: when the local church turns to the diocese, it is to the bishop not to the diocesan synod.

Such movement from one type of unit to another requires considerable energy as the unit seeks to re-identify itself and re-invent its status (see pp.123f. below). Hence, the major theme of prevarication in the PCC: the talking and the not-doing. However, that may be to overstate the case. Perhaps what we have here in the title 'the local church' is simply a corporate unit operating variously in its potential six modes.

Operating Units in The Story

The six modes as defined by Adams[33] and their place in the particularity of The Story are as follows:

1. Individuals and aggregate units: members have separate **independent** power.

> Each member chooses independently to be involved or not in church life. Thus members of the local church might be described in this context as those who turn up at the church building to worship.

2. Identity units: members **identify** common membership.

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[33] Adams, R.N. (1975) p.57

Those who have lived in Crook all their lives share the identity of local people whose families are baptised, married and buried at S.Catherine's Church. Members recognise common interest in church through, for example, weekly or occasional attendance at the church building for worship, attendance at the Open Evening, at the AGM; subscribing to the freewill offering scheme, subscribing to the church magazine. They identify their commonality as being either for, against or unsure on church issues and act accordingly.

3. <u>Coordinated units</u>: members **grant** power reciprocally.

In this case, despite a considerable lack of confidence and lack of trust, the resolve and proper responsibility of the PCC has been strengthened through the process that led to Consistory Court and its aftermath.

4. <u>Consensus units</u>: members **allocate** power.

"Members" in the broadest sense (i.e. as applied in 1-3) allocate power by the election of churchwardens at the annual vestry meeting. Interestingly, the considerable power of churchwardens has been eroded during the last seventy years, whilst that of the PCC has been progressively built up.[34] In other words, the direction/authority in the local church is being taken out of the hands of local people and being held onto increasingly tightly by those who **belong**:[35] it is a discernible movement away from common property to club

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[34] see p.120 above, and also McMorran, K.M. (1986) p.83ff.

[35] Delegated power is from one to many, allocated power is from many to one. So far so good, but watch out:"The distinction between allocated and delegated power is an analytic one. In actual complex cases, both types of power will be operative. Returning to our modern democracy, the people can control symbolically and can allocate power for only one day every few years; their rulers then effectively have independent power and proceed to delegate power during the rest of the time. So, while we may, for various reasons, reiterate that a democracy is a system based on the allocation of power from the many to the few, an equally impressive fact is that, as in any complex system, the major operations are carried on through the delegation of power held *independently* by the superordinates." Adams, R.N. (1975) p.44

ownership. "Members" more narrowly defined as electoral roll members, allocate power to the PCC by election of members at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

5. Majority units: the centre (leader) exercises power **independently** of others.

As a governing body of the local church, the PCC does **not** comprise a number of delegates of the electoral roll membership: members are elected to exercise their membership to the council **independently** (i.e. they exercise their vote according to their own decision, they are not beholden to the views of those who voted them in). As the nominal leader of the local church, the incumbent exercises power independently of others for example in the detail of worship, acceptance of the elected churchwardens, etc.

In the Church of England chancellors are appointed, but they operate independently - in other words, canon law is exercised as a majority unit. In the particularity of a diocese, the bishop appoints his Chancellor (i.e. delegates to him matters of ecclesiastical law); the Diocesan Advisory Committee (who bear delegated responsibility in technical and aesthetic matters) advise the Chancellor, but the Chancellor stands outside, heading the majority unit (in the diocese) that comprises the Diocesan Registry and all that pertains to the maintenance of canon law (which necessarily covers all aspects and personnel of church life).

6. Corporate units: the centre (leader) delegates power.

In the diocese as a corporate unit, the bishop delegates power to the incumbent through institution/collation to the living.[36] In the parish, as a corporate unit, the incumbent and/or the PCC delegate power for example in the appointment

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[36] see Moore, E.G. & Briden, T. (1985) p.41, and Clarke, W.K.L. (1932) p.714ff.

of treasurer, secretary, etc. And the corporate unit by definition also covers all facets of 1-5.

Even if we have here a corporate unit, there is still the question of who/what comprises the corporate unit: Church of England, local church, both? It would seem the local church operates as a corporate unit for most of the time (though whether it is, or whether it is acknowledged or accepted by all members as being such is open to question) and also is part of, belongs to the Church of England which itself is a corporate unit.

The units here described are all drawn from a management viewpoint and are therefore expressions of a centralism ideology, which is not necessarily the best ideology for the Church.

In The Story, the exercise of canon law, in terms of faculty jurisdiction and consistory court procedure, is an exercise to bring about proper ordering, the rendering of consistent behaviour - ie. the self-coordination of the corporate unit (which here is primarily the Church of England). Its purpose is to curb members' deviant behaviour and thus ensure the unit maintains its identity. Whether the local church is moving from one type of operating unit to another and back again, or whether the local church, as part of the Church of England, is part of a corporate unit, functioning now in one mode now in another, energy is expended on such movement. The more energy that goes into examining, maintaining, and/or changing styles of operation, the less energy there will be for work that energises.[37] Not all members have the ability of the chameleon to change the colour of their skin. Besides, with repeated changes of scenery and repeated changes of mood, even the chameleon becomes exhausted. In the sense that the holding of a Consistory Court was seen as a futile exercise, some energy was

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[37] "Energy forms have two energetic aspects: (1) their inherent potential and/or kinetic energy and (2) an energy cost of production and reproduction." Adams, R.N. (1988) p.15

lost. However, there is a danger here of creating a false enclosure: energy only reduces when used from a contained pool. It seems reasonable to assume that in The Story worship in the church building at least has the potential to raise the energy level.

It appears that in his scheme of operating units, Adams does not take account of **extreme individualism** - an important element in the particular story of St.Catherine's. Or rather, he does not take account of the effect of extreme individualism on the various types of operating unit. It might be argued that for an individual to have a powerful effect on any sort of unit, he/she would require the backing of some members. In other words, Adams quite properly does not include extreme individualism because the extremism is of no value without support, which by definition is then an identity unit or beyond. However, the possibility of extreme individualism, of extreme non-structured, remains and as an operating unit is not explored by Adams.

By reviewing The Story solely through Adams' framework, the formal corporate unit (whether it be the Church of England or the PCC or the electoral roll membership of the local church) tends to come into focus as isolated and self-contained. Given that The Story involves the policing of Canon Law, this should come as no surprise: the exercise of ecclesiastical law, despite the interpretive discretion of the Chancellor, is primarily concerned with maintaining what is, the status quo (see Katz & Kahn below); church law (as with other law) generalises and is not geared to deal with the specifics of situational particularity.

It may be that as the purpose of Adam's framework is to provide information on the **nature** of structure, then we should not push it too far on the issue of **dynamics**.

D ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES

By first rehearsing Boulding's[38] work on levels of organisation and the basic tenets of both general systems theory and open system theory, the particularities of Katz & Kahn's theory should be more readily understood.

Levels of Organisation

Kenneth Boulding identified a hierarchy of systems representing levels of increasing complexity:

1. frameworks of static structure, "the geography and anatomy of the universe",

2. the clockworks of physics and astronomy, "the simple dynamics system with predetermined, necessary motions",

3. the control mechanism/cybernetics system (i.e. the level of the thermostat),

4. the "open system"/self-maintaining structure, "the level at which life begins to differentiate itself from not-life ... the level of the **cell**",

5. the genetic or plant level,

6. the animal level, with purposive behaviour and self-awareness,

7. the "human" level, "it is the capacity for speech - the ability to produce, absorb and interpret symbols as opposed to mere signs like the warning cry of an animal - which most clearly marks a man off from his humbler brethren",

8. social organisation.

There is a ninth level of transcendental systems, "there are the ultimates and absolutes and inescapable unknowables and they also exhibit systemic structure and relationships".[39] Boulding believed

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[38] Boulding, K. (1956) pp.11-17

[39] Boulding later refined his hierarchy, increasing the number of levels to eleven: mechanical, cybernetic, positive feedback, creodic (morphogenesis, e.g. egg to chicken), reproductive, demographic, ecological, evolutionary, human, social and transcendental. See Boulding, K. (1985) The World as a Total System pp.18-30

adequate theoretical models had been developed for the first four levels only - which indicates why the natural sciences have dominated thought on systems. It also alerts us to the danger of analogical thinking replacing concepts derived from higher levels of phenomenon.[40]

Closed System Theory and Open System Theory

In outlining Boulding's hierarchy of levels of structure, the theories of closed and open systems are already hinted at. A closed system makes no connection with its environment, its context is completely irrelevant,

> It is a subsystem which, in reality or by definition, is not in an essential relation of feedback to any environment.[41]

Any feedback between variables in a closed system occurs **within** the system and in no way makes connection between the closed subsystem and its environment. The feedback that occurs in a self-regulating mechanism such as the thermostat serves to maintain a predetermined goal. Feedback in a closed system is therefore command and control. Closed systems are mechanical, explicable in terms of energy and matter. Both closed and open systems are subject to the law of entropy - the former to positive entropy and the latter to negative entropy ("negentropy").

An open system actively relates with its environment. It is neither mechanical nor necessarily subject to closed loop feedback. Unlike the closed system, the open system can change its goals by accident or design and can reproduce those changes. Fundamental to open system is its organisation. Organisation, according to Wilden, is "controlled by information and fuelled by energy".[42]

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[40] Boulding's hierarchy offers a safeguard against "accepting as final a level of theoretical analysis which is below the level of the empirical world which we are investigating". Boulding, K. (1956) p.17

[41] Wilden, A. (1980) p.357

[42] Wilden, A. (1980) p.358

Information is the ground of open system negative entropy.

However, the distinction between closed and open system theory is just not that simple: both closed and open systems can be concerned with energy or information or both. The complex details of overlap and distinction is not of concern here,[43] what is of interest, in addressing the structures and polity of the church, and the particularity of The Story, is the realisation that different levels of reality require different levels of explanation (which is why we should treat Boulding's hierarchy of levels of organisation as a valuable guideline rather than as a set of definitively fixed categories).

Whilst a closed system is entirely self-supportive and self-sufficient (though because of the effect of positive entropy is in process of running down), and its context effectively irrelevant, the open system is open to its environment, dependent on it for its continuing existence and survival, and not in control of it. The maintenance source of almost all social systems (i.e. open systems) is human effort and motivation.

Open system theory emphasises a) the intimate relationship between an organisation and its supporting environment, and b) the cycle of input-throughput-output. The transactional nature of the relationship between organisation and supporting environment means that social systems, if not dependent, are related:

> the behavior of an organization is contingent upon the social field of forces in which it occurs and must be understood in terms of the organization's interaction with that environmental field.[44]

Open system theory also includes different levels of systems (hierarchically organised) and their relationships. Unlike natural science, open system theory advocates discovery through looking

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[43] see Wilden, A. (1980) p.358f. for details

[44] Katz, D. & Kahn, R.L. (1978) p.3

upward in the system not a narrowing down approach. In other words, the first step should not be reductionism but an opening up: movement to the next higher level of system organisation. For example,

> if we want to study patterns of co-operation and conflict within an industrial company, our first step would be to study the position of the company in the community and in the industry as a whole, not look at the informal standards in work groups".[45]

In other words, the first step is to look at how the company is perceived, received, accepted and placed in its local environment, how it connects and compares with related businesses, and how the people who work for the company perceive the company and operate within it (as distinct from the official company line).

Common characteristics of open systems include:-

1. input: the importation of energy from the external environment,

2. throughput: the transformation of the energy available to them,

3. output: the export of product from open system into environment,

4. the pattern of activities of the energy exchange (input-throughput-output) has a cyclic character,

5. negative entropy: to survive, open systems must reverse the entropic process,

6. information: input, negative feedback (the need for a regulative mechanism to keep the system on course/bring it back on course), and a coding process (the need for a selective mechanism to filter incoming materials),

7. dynamic homeostasis: **not** a steady state, motionless, true equilibrium, but the preservation of the character of the system through growth and expansion, and through the balancing in constructive tension of (8) and (9) below,

8. differentiation: open systems move in the direction of

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[45] Katz, D. & Kahn, R.L. (1978) p.63

differentiation and elaboration (e.g. the rich get richer and the poor get poorer),

9. integration and coordination: the processes that counter (8) by bringing the system together for unified functioning,

10. equifinality: the principle that a system can arrive at the same result by a variety of routes.[46]

Open system theory developed out of a growing dissatisfaction with general/closed system theories. Closed system theory fails to recognise the dependence an organisation has on inputs from its environment, and that the level of incoming materials and energy is neither constant nor assured. It is vital that the connections between an organisation and the structures that provide economic inputs and support, political influence and societal legitimation be examined.

The word "open" needs qualification: if the system were completely open to its environment that would mean by definition the organisation would not exist of itself - there would be no differentiation. "Open system" therefore, demands both openness and selectivity (see (6) "coding process" above). Further, the selection processes themselves demand analysis as to how and on what criteria the choices are made, and the process involved in the implementation of choices.

Closed system theory over-concentrates on the how and why of internal functioning, the extreme result of which is that the system becomes an end in itself. It treats disruptive external events as error variance - whereas open system theory cannot be understood without including careful attention to the external forces that impinge upon it. Because of this blindness to the relevance of its environment, closed system theory fails to understand and therefore implement and develop the means by which

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[46] See Katz, D. & Kahn, R.L. (1978) pp.23-31

an organisation acquires information about its environment[47] (market research).

<u>Katz & Kahn</u>

In line with Boulding, Katz & Kahn argue that there is an essential difference between organism and society, and for that reason organism models are highly misleading:-

a) social structures are humanly contrived and therefore have imperfections,

b) social structures are held together by psychological rather than biological adhesive - by attitudes, beliefs, motivations, perceptions, habits, expectations of human beings,

c) social structures are patterns of relationships - here it is the relationships, not the relating persons/objects, that provide the constancy,

d) unlike biological systems, social systems do not have fixed physical boundaries, they are much looser, they are therefore much more difficult to locate, bound and comprehend,

e) "partial inclusion": unlike biological systems, social systems are subject to the vagaries of human beings, who drift away, strike, stay at home, develop new interests, etc., "People belong to many organizations and the full engagement of their personalities is generally not found within a single organizational setting."[48]

Katz & Kahn define five basic subsystems in organisational functioning:

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[47] N.B. Just as the "open" in open system theory needs careful qualification, the word "environment" also requires prudent definition: "The concept of environment is itself a kind of arbitrary, organization-centred formulation, which involves a convenient and misleading implication. Everything in the universe, except for the organization under study, is treated under the single category of environment. More specifications and better conceptualizations are badly needed." Katz, D. & Kahn, R.L. (1978) p.122 If this warning is not heeded, the exaggeration of the organisation into balancing the environment is to step back towards the self-centredness and self-containment of closed system theory.

[48] Katz, D. & Kahn, R.L. (1978) p.46

1. PRODUCTION - is concerned with the work that gets done,

2. MAINTENANCE - is concerned with holding/keeping people to
                  their functional roles,

3. SUPPORTIVE - is concerned with procurement of materials
                  and disposal of product, and with
                  institutional relations,

4. ADAPTIVE -   is concerned with organisational change,

5. MANAGERIAL - for the direction, adjudication and control
                  of the subsystems and activities of the
                  structure.[49]

These generic types of subsystem might loosely be described as: 1) doing it, 2) making sure it's done, 3) wheeling and dealing, getting it down on paper, holding the reins;   4) looking out and beyond (chameleon forecasting),   5) holding it all together.

The extent and importance of the different subsystems, and the order of priority, will differ according to the type of organisation and its particular circumstance at any given point of time. But whatever the organisation is, it will necessarily include each of the five categories. Necessarily, because an open system has a throughput and that requires production. If the system is to survive, it needs maintenance. Adaptive structures are necessary to keep the organisation in step with its environment. And all of that needs managing.

The five generic subsystems in detail (describing function, dynamic and mechanisms)

1. PRODUCTION

Production is primarily concerned with the throughput, and,

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[49] Katz, D. & Kahn, R.L. (1978) p.52

following on from that, with task accomplishment. This demands
(technical) proficiency which is achieved through fractionation and
specialisation: i.e. division of labour into "functional units of
meaningful size",[50] and the setting of job specification and
standards.

2. MAINTENANCE

Maintenance is concerned with mediating between task demands
and human needs in order to keep the working structures in
operation. At least in the short term, maintenance is concerned
with keeping the status quo. Pressure for change is usually felt
first of all by those nearest the world outside the organisation
(i.e. sales and marketing), and then by the production people.
Those in maintenance are inward looking (inward on the
organisation, and on themselves as a unit) and the most insulated.
Consequently, maintenance is concerned with self-preservation in
the face of change.

The dynamic of this subsystem is the maintenance of steady
state, of equilibrium; of stability and predictability; of
conservatism and the perpetuation of existing policies, and the
ideal of uniformity. This is achieved through the
formalisation/institutionalisation of activities into standard,
legitimised procedures - for human relations as well as for
production requirements. This leads to decreasing variability and
decreasing change, which then runs the risk of substituting
"organizational ritualism for genuine functionalism".[51] Other
specific mechanisms include the setting up of system rewards,
selection procedures, socialisation/indoctrination practices,
regulatory mechanisms, rules, and decisions according to precedent.

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[50] Katz, D. & Kahn, R.L. (1978) p.85

[51] Katz, D. & Kahn, R.L. (1978) p.86

3. BOUNDARY

3a. PRODUCTION SUPPORTIVE

Production supportive (the procurement of materials and manpower, and product disposal) is concerned with transactional exchanges at system boundaries (i.e. within the organisation and with the environment). It tends to be one way: looking out (for example, marketing and sales is more concerned with the client changing for the product than *vice versa*). Thus, it is concerned with sustaining production cycles as they exist. This manipulation of the organisation's environment is achieved by acquiring control of its sources of supply and by the creation of image.

3b. INSTITUTIONAL

The function of the institutional subsystem is to obtain social support and legitimation. This is achieved by external control and internal change - that is, by societal manipulation and integration. As with (3a) above, the mechanism is primarily that of persuading the consumer to change. But if that is unsuccessful, then the institutional system takes on the secondary function of bringing information into the organisation, the which has obvious implications for internal change.

4. ADAPTIVE

The adaptive is concerned with intelligence, research and development, and planning. The driving force in these circumstances is the pressure for change. The adaptive system is concerned with organisational change, with countering the inwardness and maintenance-ness of (2) and (3a) through adjustment to the organisation to keep it in line with its ever-changing environment. This is done by making recommendations for change to management. A further dynamic, as with (2), is the survival of the organisation. The programme of the adaptive subsystem is vulnerable: because its contribution to the organisation is long term and indirect, it is the first to be cut when major economies are deemed necessary.

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5. MANAGERIAL

The managerial subsystem clearly cuts across all of the other subsystems. It's function is i) to resolve conflicts between hierarchical levels by the use of sanction and control, ii) to coordinate and direct the groups that comprise the organisation through compromise and concession rather than through any major restructuring, and iii) to coordinate external requirements and organisational resources and needs.

Long term survival, optimisation, the better use of resources and the development of increased capabilities are achieved by increasing the amount of business, diversifying, controlling the environment by absorbing it or changing it, and by restructuring the organisation.

Each subsystem has specific functions, but it is the nature of open system theory that boundaries are not clear. Thus, there is duplication of function as well as opposing functions between subsystems. The first provides for potential hazard, confusion, duplication and distress, whilst the second provides for the possibilities of destructive as well as creative tension.

Katz & Kahn go on to categorise organisations according to their function as subsystems of wider society. They identify four functions which they correlate with four types of organisation:-

A. Productive/economic. These organisations provide goods and services. They therefore include such as farming, mining, transportation and communication.

B. Maintenance. Organisations such as schools and churches are concerned with the socialisation and training of people for roles in organisations and in the wider society, i.e. their function is to maintain and promote what is.

C. Adaptive. Organisations such as research laboratories are innovative in character: their aim is to create new knowledge, provide answers to problems.

D. Managerial - Political. The concern of these organisations is to control and coordinate people and resources, and adjudicate between opposing factions.

The complexity of the scheme offered by Katz & Kahn is further compounded by the nature and forms of the concept of leadership. Three forms of organisational leadership are identified: origination of structure (policy formulation), interpolation of structure (the working between the lines of the given policies to meet immediate needs), and use of structure (routine administration: "applying prescribed remedies for predicted problems").[52]

Definitions of leadership are various, perhaps the most useful is that it is "an influence on a matter of organizational relevance"[53] - this includes many routine acts of supervision, but also goes beyond routine to include "influential increment". "Influential increment" is about tapping the bases of power beyond what is laid down by the organisation - where the bases include referent power (personal liking between leader and led) and expert power (the knowledge and ability of the leader).

Input-Throughput-Output in The Story

Fundamental to Katz & Kahn's scheme is the Open System emphasis on the cycle of input-throughput-output.[54] This cycle is relatively obvious in say a manufacturing industry (raw materials -

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[52] Katz, D. & Kahn, R.L. (1978) p.575

[53] Katz, D. & Kahn, R.L. (1978) p.574

[54] "The organisation creates a new product, or processes materials, or trains people, or provides a service." Katz, D. & Kahn, R.L. (1978) p.24

manufacture - product). The cycle is no less apparent in
organisations not directly concerned with the making of objects.
For example, the hospital addresses the health requirements of
people in its catchment area. The analysis of Hasenfeld and
English referred to by Katz & Kahn provides a useful distinction
between **people-processing** and **people-changing** organisations. The
high street Job Centre would be an example of the former, the
psychiatric unit should be an example of the latter. The local
church seems often to be a confusion of the two, the former being
borne out of an expectation that people should be done-to by the
church, and the latter springing from a dynamic of relationship
with God. The distinction here between people-processing and
people-changing bears more than a whiff of transcendent and
incarnational notions of God. People-processing demands the lowest
common denominator with loss of individual identity; people-
changing demands high response from the individual to take
responsibility for self.

Taking Katz & Kahn's example of the hospital addressing the
health requirements of the community as a paradigm, we could regard
the local church as addressing the **faith** requirements of the
community. However, "faith requirements" is an even more vague
statement than "health requirements" and demands further
clarification. In terms of the local church as people-processing,
faith requirements would include the right of parishioners, who are
declared Church of England, to baptism, marriage and funeral, and
access to (regular) worship in their parish church, and the
expectation of some minimal pastoral care and oversight. In terms
of the local church as people-changing, the faith requirements
would be more concerned with the realising of people's worth, the
energising of mission, recognition of the kingdom, the building of
relationship between God and humanity.

As both people-processing and people-changing, the local
church could be described as

input: God, people in the locality, and the world they live in,

throughput: the shaping of the input through scripture, tradition, reason and worship - as expressed/understood by the particular local church, which in turn is informed by the wider church's varied expressions and understandings of these things,

output: people better related with God, other people and the world they live in.

Input-throughput-output is largely linear in the type of organisations that Katz and Kahn concentrate on. It is evident from the above description that actuality has been artificially compressed into the linear. This is because it is very difficult to translate or use this linear assumption that derives from a production line mentality (raw materials at one end, processed in the middle, end product at the other end, and then starting over again). It may be that here we are dealing with a process which is much more spiral, where entering into the spiral and moving on is not repetitive if there is movement through different levels in a spiral process. Entering and re-entering the linear-loop of input-throughput-output-start again through different levels would be an altogether more sophisticated and less mechanical model. With a working description of the term "the local church" and a basic understanding of the (spiral) cycle of input-throughput-output in the local church, we are now in a position to address Katz & Kahn's scheme of organisational subsystems to The Story.

Organisational Subsystems in The Story

Open System Theory "emphasises, through the basic assumption of entropy, the necessary dependence of any organisation upon its environment".[55] The Story provides evidence of this dependence. The research and consultancy by the steering committee, involvement of the DAC, appointment of architect and lighting consultant, the

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[55] Katz, D. & Kahn, R.L. (1978) p.23

Open Evening, the due process of the Church of England's faculty jurisdiction - all these are recognition of the dependence of, in this case, the local church upon its environment. The resistance to the development of the building (by the two objectors) significantly comes from within the organisation. The dilemma of open and closed thinking is well addressed in Katz & Kahn's work on subsystems where it is recognised this can be a creative tension and also a destructive one. Following Katz & Kahn's table of subsystems[56] the complexity of the organisation "the local church" in The Story can be teased out.

The three attitudes described in The Story (see p.14 above) appear to correlate as follows:

"reactive": the maintenance subsystem,

"prevaricative": the boundary systems: production-supportive and institutional,

"proactive": the adaptive subsystem.

Not only is there conflict (potentially creative as well as destructive) between the three main categories, there is also the potential conflict between all of these and the managerial subsystem.

As the managerial subsystem of the organisation "the local church", the PCC in The Story is faced with several issues concerning the maintenance of the working structure: a decrease in the number of regular worshippers during a twelve month interregnum, vital maintenance and aesthetic work on the church building (rewiring and internal decoration), and a growing dissatisfaction with the division of labour. A simmering concern regarding these matters is triggered into a boiling contention with the arrival of a new incumbent. Given that the dynamic of the subsystem these issues spring from is the maintenance of steady state, the prevailing sense of reactive-ness is entirely

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[56] Katz, D. & Kahn, R.L. (1978) p.84

understandable. Given that one of the main functions of the maintenance subsystem is to tie people into their functional roles, the pressure to conform to remembered ways of working is also entirely understandable.

The institutional subsystem (that more or less equates with the "prevaricative") is the let's-check-before-we-do-anything people: the group that would rather that others make its decisions for them. Thus, the PCC is elected to transact the church's business (i.e. manage it), but the prevaricative element in it, the institutional contingent, must needs chase for social support and legitimation - seeking referenda and plebiscites, anxious to know what other local churches have done in similar circumstances, anxious for diocesan direction before making any decisive move. The triumph of the institutional subsystem in The Story was the setting up of an Open Evening and ensuring the Evening's findings became integral in the planning process. It was a triumph that by its very success was also subversive in the resulting enthusiasm for pro-action. As in the production supportive subsystem, the main thrust is in changing the attitude of the client rather than the organisation itself. In other words, its function is to alter the attitude of people not involved/no longer involved in church, rather than altering the local church to fit the non/no longer attending.

The institutional subsystem and its members are highly resistant to any change within the organisation itself, seeing such change as very much a last resort. In The Story, as the research and sifting of evidence has continued there has been an increasing awareness in the institutional subsystem that it is not so much the attitude of the client as the organisation that must change if the organisation as a whole is to prosper and develop. However, the results of that research and sifting have taken a long time to be acknowledged - not because of gaps or inadequacy in the research so much as because of the reluctance to make the transition from

expecting everyone else in the regiment to get in step with Our
Little Jimmy to Little Jimmy acknowledging he is the one who is not
in time with the others.

The production supportive, like the institutional, is a
boundary system. Its main function is to sustain production cycles
as they exist. The "prevaricative" reflects an ambivalence between
the two boundary systems and the interest of both to maintain
standards. In The Story the productive-supportive concern to
maintain standards is the anxiety to keep on with the same number
of people coming to the same number of services holding on to the
same understanding of faith.

The production subsystem in The Story is largely the regular,
week in, week out worshippers and the members of the PCC who get on
with the regular business of S.Catherine's Church.

The recognition by the PCC (as management subsystem of the
local church) of the cracks in job specification and standards led
to questions of organisational change. The work of the PCC's
Steering Committee is therefore the work of an adaptive subsystem
with representation being made to it from all types of subsystem
including production.

The remit of the adaptive is organisational change. In The
Story, the research and planning of the Steering Committee has
serious implications for the day to day life of the local church -
in promoting an upgrading and development of facilities in the
church, in offering an increased number of options in worship, in
the opening of space for the development of socialisation and
education, and in the implicit changes in job specification and
standards (concurrent with the development of the proposals from
the Steering Committee, the PCC is conducting a critical
examination of its constitutional make-up and considering radical
changes). In other words, the Steering Committee is suggesting an

overhaul of the production subsystem.

The novelty of the suggestions is highly provocative to the maintenance subsystem - whose *raison d'être* is preserving the status quo.

The production-supportive is being challenged by internal change, but supported by the Steering Committee's concern to open the local church to a broader spectrum of people (i.e. procurement of materials) and provide the locality with a better image.

As the other boundary system, the institutional is also being both challenged and supported. The challenge again is of internal change, but the Steering Committee are convinced that internal change is necessary to the development of social support and legitimation: only by internal change in the what, the who and the how of St.Catherine's Church will there be opportunity for a growth of credibility and confidence by local people in the purpose and place of the local church in the locality.

The Steering Committee developed out of evident pressure for change which initially was the need to rewire and redecorate the church building. But the Steering Committee then realised the state of the wiring and decoration reflected the fatigue and loss of face of the local church people. And the failure of the local church people to take notice of the state of the building was seen as symptomatic of the local church becoming an end in itself. The work of the Steering Committee has been to alert the PCC (management) to the inwardness and isolated-ness, the maintenance-ness of S.Catherine's Church. The involvement of such agencies as architect, lighting consultant and other technical advisers, the DAC and the diocesan registry, has assisted enormously in working at potential solutions and the replacement of inward-looking-ness with wide-eyed wonder and enthusiasm to recognise the town, the other denominational groups, the wider church (deanery, diocese and

beyond). It is, therefore, not surprising that the Steering Committee (the adaptive) has met with resistance throughout, especially from the maintenance people.

The work of the PCC has been to co-ordinate, coax, control, compromise, compel, its motivation throughout being long term survival, better use of resources and the development of increased capabilities. However, its motivation has never been just that: we are back to the gap between ideal and actual, cultural and realised, official and operational: the PCC comprises representation from all five subsystems which means that the concerns peculiar to each of those are also part of the overall dynamic of the PCC.

The PCC's **co-ordination** has been in bringing together the various agencies concerned - from faculty jurisdiction to the timing of meetings, from publicity to Open Evening, the gathering of information from technical expert, person in the pew and from person down the street. It has exercised **control**: as the body the Steering Committee is appointed by and answerable to, as appointee of architect and lighting consultant, through its legal standing in the Church of England and its exercise of proper faculty procedure. Crucial in the work of the PCC is **compromise** - working with the constraints of finance, plant, personnel - and above all, the conflicting interests (proficiency, stability, environmental manipulation and internal change) of the subsystems outlined above (production, maintenance, environmental support and adaptation).

And perhaps this is the great weakness in the structure of the local church (and indeed of the wider church): that management is not sufficiently distanced or separated: its managerial level is inadequately defined. Instead of listening and taking advice from other subsystems, members of the other subsystems comprise the PCC which as an altogether other subsystem concerned with management is then compromised. The PCC is therefore perhaps better defined as a

conglomerate, a sum of the parts. At best it is a **pseudo-**
management subsystem where members each have several hats and
little sense of millinery etiquette prevails.

When negotiation for compromise fails, as in The Story, the
only option remaining is the due process of faculty jurisdiction
which leads to consistory court. Lack of clarity regarding
management goes some way to explaining the considerable leap from
the intimate fulminations of the PCC of the local church to the
exacting dimension of canon law as exercised by the Chancellor of
the diocese.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Cezanne sometimes pondered for hours at a time before putting down a certain stroke, for, as E.Bernard said, each stroke must "contain the air, the light, the object, the composition, the character, the outline, and the style." Expressing what *exists* is an endless task.[1]

A field is ploughed and some Roman coins are unearthed. In order to attempt to find out more about the coins, an excavation is made. Remains of a third century A.D. Roman villa come to light, tantalising fragments of mosaic are exposed, a large variety of Roman domestic detritus is dug up. A Saxon brooch is found and also a Victorian florin. Each Roman item from the archaeological dig has some bearing on the old coins which provoked the enterprise. Connections are made with other known villas in the vicinity. The coins and other artifacts are dated and set in the wider context of the Roman Empire. Imagination, tempered by evidence and established theory, opens up and develops a much broader picture than the initial and superficial image of a few old coins glistening dully in the furrow. However, it is a process that raises more questions as it reveals more: general knowledge of Roman coins casts some light on the coins ploughed up, but also raises further questions about how those particular coins came to be there and where they came from. Socio-economic theories about third century Roman Britain are illuminating, but because they are general theories, they do not quite "fit" the particularity of the site. Thus, the archaeologists' understanding is developed in two ways: knowledge and understanding of the old coins is developed by digging around - by sifting through what else is exposed and by sifting through appropriate theories. Also, knowledge and understanding of those theories is developed by their exposure to

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[1] Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962) p.323

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the archaeological dig. In other words, this process is a spiral of ever-increasing complexity in which understanding develops enormously but is an endless task. So it is with our understanding of The Story as developed in this thesis.

The complexity and confusion described at the end of the last chapter are further examples of the value and the limitations of the thesis as a whole. A major problem in the methodology, acknowledged in the preliminary appraisal of phenomenology (see pp.28f. above), is a persistent freezing out of temporal movement. Despite the avowed intent to examine as it were the video, the result is an examination of something else: a still, or series of stills, taken from the video. To change the analogy, an archaeological dig reveals a slice of history, extrapolations of varying degrees of scientific rigour and imagination can be made, but the dig remains a frozen slice.

What happened in The Story was a series of events, confrontations, mutual understandings, changes, all of which are ultimately irretrievable. For example, quite what was said and not said at the PCC meeting in which the precepts and proposals were first aired is beyond recovery. Even if the meeting had been videoed, only a fraction of the whole picture would have been captured. Such a video would bear the imprint of the camera-person and editor. Such a video would show very little of the complexity of what motivated the members to act in the way they did; it would show very little of the relevant background of St.Catherine's Church, or of the diocese and Church of England, or of the cultural, political and economic circumstance locally and nationally. These and many other aspects could be examined in great detail, but what actually occurred would always remain irretrievable, just as the quest for the historical Jesus through the examination of the versions of the gospel can never be achieved. The value of the thesis, as in the quest for the historical Jesus, does not lie in reaching the goal but in the

process, in the searching for and exposing of information that will provide a fuller picture.

Thus, the thesis began with a semi-interpretive account of a particular historical event which was the process that led to the re-ordering of St.Catherine's Church. Even as a semi-interpretive account, The Story is very superficial. It requires a lot of illumination and a number of ways in to enliven our understanding of it. The hermeneutic trajectories in the thesis are employed precisely for this purpose, to deepen our insight into The Story. Farley's use of phenomenology as a theological tool provided a means of opening up The Story and of identifying the major dimensions of it. Discussion of the church building and symbolics amplified our understanding of what is involved in re-ordering a church building. This in turn provoked questions about the process and exercise of faculty jurisdiction, and about who the people are and how they interact when faced with the possibility of such major change (i.e. questions about issues of power and authority, and about issues of organisational structure). Moving on to examine these areas resulted in a yet deeper understanding of The Story and also raised further questions about the church building as symbol and about the methodology of the thesis. This spiral of developing complexity is one of insatiable appetite: more could be investigated in all the areas covered.

Not only does the spiral of understanding of The Story develop, The Story itself is a period of time that has been lifted out ("bracketed off") for the purpose of examination, but the story of St.Catherine's Church continues and develops too. Two years after the Consistory Court Hearing, the side aisle is gradually developing as a venue for arts-based activities and public debate. The sense of Rombold's *agora* and Davies' "space-frame" (see pp.69f. above), of the side aisle being a space for crossover and connection between worldly and divine, is now being experienced. The accessibility and sociability the steering committee wanted is

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now being realised through a greater and broader use of the
building by church and non-church people. At the same time, the
intransigence of some to the changes and the disinterest of others
continues. All of which provide further cuts into the
archaeological site, inviting further investigation and offering
the opportunity for broader and deeper insight.

The application of hermeneutic trajectories informs The
Story, which in turn suggests investigation of further areas. So,
for example, more work could be done in exploring the skewed fit of
theory with particularity. Also, in so far as The Story is a
window through which to view the broader question of what it is to
be The Church (see p.36 above), the methodology developed here
could be applied to that broader question.

With more time and more perspective, more could be said about
The Story. The hermeneutic trajectories themselves and their
application to The Story could be pursued further. The development
of the theories through their application to the particularity of
the Story could also be worked on. Because The Story, like any
historical event, is beyond understanding, because the nature of
the investigation is endless, there is no conclusion in the sense
of pulling all the material together. However, by opening up the
multi-dimensional quality of The Story through a multifold
interpretation, a far more rounded and fuller understanding of the
underlying issues of polity, leadership and lay responsibility in a
changing church has been achieved.

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