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in the Anglican Communion and beyond*

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EDITORIAL

The *Journal's* Spring 2020 issue focusses on Christian ministry and mission, particularly in Scotland. It was curated by Richard Tiplady, who serves as the Director of Mixed Mode Training of the Scottish Episcopal Institute. The issue's articles highlight facets of Christian ministry and mission. Paul Watson's 'A Call to Conversation: Ministry in Charles Taylor's *Secular Society*' underscores Taylor's insights vis-à-vis frameworks of imagery of church attendance and religious life. Richard Tiplady's 'Entrepreneurial Leadership Development in the Christian Church in Scotland' draws from his doctoral research to tease out the characteristics of effective leadership. Gordon Cheung's 'Leadership Lessons from the First Year of a "Missional" Church Plant', is a practitioner's outline after a year on-the-job. Finally, Joshua Cockayne's 'The Cultural Liturgies of Café Church' looks at examples of liturgical life in contemporary settings in Scotland.

This issue, clearly prepared beforehand, comes online amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. All concerned with the *Journal* offer their prayers and draw readers' attention to the upcoming National Day of Prayer across Scotland on Sunday 22 March 2020. People of faith across our nation are encouraged to join in prayerful solidarity with an invitation to light a candle at 7pm in a window of their homes as a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ, our source of hope. There is an accompanying prayer to our Heavenly Father, which we make our own:

*For all that is good in life, thank you,
For the love of family and friends, thank you,
For the kindness of good neighbour and Samaritan stranger, thank you.
May those who are vulnerable, hungry or homeless, experience support,
May those who are sick, know healing,
May those who are anxious or bereaved, sense comfort.
Bless and guide political leaders and decision-makers, with wisdom,
Bless and guide health workers and key workers, with strength and well-being,
Bless and guide each one of us, as we adapt to a new way of living.
And may the light shining from our windows, across road and wynd, glen and ben, kyle and isle, be reflected in our hearts and hands and hopes.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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A special request regarding the late Professor Donald M. MacKinnon

Dr André Muller, who is working on an intellectual biography of Professor Donald M. MacKinnon (1913–94), would be very interested to hear from anyone who knew the Scottish philosophical theologian, or heard him lecture or preach, or corresponded with him, or has any information about him. Dr Muller may be contacted via email (mulan398@gmail.co.nz) or post (14a Arnot Ave, Clouston Park, Upper Hutt, 5018, New Zealand).

Enquiries

Enquires to the Revd Dr Michael Hull
Scottish Episcopal Institute
21 Grosvenor Crescent
Edinburgh EH12 5EE
Scotland-UK
0131 225 6357
dos@scotland.anglican.org

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Revised Friday 17 April 2020

[A Call to Conversation: Christian Ministry in Charles Taylor's *Secular Age*](#)

[PAUL WATSON](#)

Rector, St James the Less (Bishopbriggs)

I remember returning to the UK from Sri Lanka at the end of 2008 and meeting a lady in her late fifties who was so pleased that her three children had found good professional jobs. Then she said something which I had never quite heard articulated before: 'and of course that is what life is all about isn't it?' This is a good illustration of someone who has lived quite successfully what is called the 'stabilised middle condition'. Charles Taylor, a Canadian Roman Catholic philosopher (in his seminal 2007 book, *A Secular Age*), describes it with these words:

There is a kind of stabilized middle condition where we have escaped from a sense of ennui or exile or emptiness without having reached fullness (but slowly moving towards it). The best scenario, for instance, is where we live happily with spouse and children, while practising a vocation which we find fulfilling and also which contributes to human welfare. For many unbelievers this is the goal, what life is about. To search for anything else after death or for an impossible degree of sanctity, runs away from and undermines this search for human excellence.¹

This is a view of human flourishing to be found within this world only. Indeed, the decline in religious belief is 'not just that belief in supernatural entities become implausible; it's that pursuing a way of life that values something beyond human flourishing becomes unimaginable'.² What lies behind the motivations and lives of many of the very nice people that we come in contact with through church activities, but who are rarely if ever seen on a Sunday is less a worked-out system of thought and more what Taylor calls a 'Social Imaginary'. This is a broad understanding of the way people imagine their collective social life:

Social Imaginary is much broader and deeper than intellectual schemes. [It is] the ways in which they can imagine their social

¹ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 7.

² *Ibid.*, p. 437).

existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows. It is a largely unstructured and inarticulate understanding of our whole situation, within which particular features of our world show up for us in the sense they have.³

Church attendance and religious belief will often have little if no place within such an imaginary for many people today. There may even be a caution about association with the Church due to scandals, perceived authority structures, general irrelevance but most of all because all this takes place within what Taylor calls the 'immanent frame'. Such a frame emphasises our immediate reality and in its closed form excludes any meaning or purpose of a transcendent nature, life is fully lived out in this earth-bound context. 'It is in the nature of a self-sufficient immanent order that it can be envisaged without reference to God.'⁴

A lot of people make a pretty good fist of living with a social imaginary within an immanent frame. The church needs to work with these realities and take time to creatively listen and learn. A conversation in a regular men's group one evening in Aberdeen really brought this home to me. They were all working within the oil and gas sector and said to me: 'Paul you need to realise that for budget and health and safety reasons we hate mystery. In the North Sea we have to eradicate all possible unknowns.' The penny dropped for me as I realised why these men found faith so difficult.

Church and the Christian 'perspective of a transformation of human beings which takes them beyond or outside of whatever is normally understood as human flourishing'⁵ has no significant place for many. At the most they 'may retain an attachment to a perspective of transformation which they are not presently acting on, like a city radio station in the countryside whose reception fades in and out'.⁶ It is in this latent sense that there may be something that can offer an opportunity for what Taylor calls a conversation across our un-thoughts.

An un-thought is usually not articulated but yet may have a powerful influence on someone's life and decisions. A combination of experience, friends and family, exposure to those who are different, religious influences etc. all go into shaping who we are, in ways we would find difficult to articulate. Much of this is shared with others in our peer group along the lines of the social imaginaries that Taylor is referring to. One of Taylor's key

³ Ibid., p. 171, 173.

⁴ Ibid., p. 543.

⁵ Ibid., p. 430.

⁶ Ibid., p. 521.

insights is that there are multiple modernities that function as different social imaginaries – recent divisions in the UK over Brexit and in the USA over President Trump are just two examples of this.

As Christians we also operate with a social imaginary and un-thoughts of our own. We see Christian faith as a genuine, independent, irreducible motivator for human action and social life, which can lead to a vision of human flourishing that we find richer and fuller than that offered by purely closed immanent accounts. This may though involve certain renunciations at times, which doesn't negate the value of flourishing. This remains a fundamental tension in Christianity – flourishing is good, nevertheless it is not our ultimate goal.

In direct contrast to this, Taylor points out that 'the sense of being menaced by [religious] fanaticism is one great source of the closure of immanence'.⁷ Although most people today would associate fanaticism with Islam, Taylor is really focusing on Christianity. This is not only true of mainland Europe which is what he is referring to, but also to Scotland where the legacy of religious bigotry and conflict remains even if the facts and history is largely forgotten. Part of the un-thought of Scottish secular social imaginary is that religion is best kept in the private sphere with only carefully circumscribed roles in public. One person's vision of transformation is another person's fanaticism. Being able to dialogue with others therefore is essential.

Takes

A first step in this process is being able to acknowledge that our view of things is a construal, a 'take':

We live in a condition where we cannot help but be aware that there are a number of different construals, views which intelligent, reasonably undeluded people of good will, can and do disagree on. We cannot help looking over our shoulder from time to time, looking sideways, living our faith also in a condition of doubt and uncertainty.⁸

We are challenged to recognise the contestability of our 'take' on things, and even feel the pull and tug and cross pressure of the alternative: or we'll fail to recognise that ours is a 'take' and instead settle for 'spin' – an overconfident picture within which we can't imagine things being otherwise and smugly dismissing those who disagree. What Taylor calls 'spin' is a way

⁷ Ibid., p. 546.

⁸ Ibid., p. 11.

of ‘convincing oneself that one’s reading is obvious, compelling, allowing of no cavil or demurrals’.⁹

For adherents of a closed reading, ‘it’s not a reading. The false dichotomies of militant secularists and staunch religionists comforted in their positions by the thought that the only alternative is utterly repulsive, miss a good part of the spiritual reality of our age’.¹⁰ I believe it’s possible for a vibrant and transformative faith to inhabit what Taylor calls a ‘Jamesian open space’ (after William James and his pioneering ‘Varieties of Religious Experience’). We can be nurtured and inspired by God’s revelation of himself as the incarnate Word, respond to the costly call to discipleship and allow the Bible to challenge us and yet know that we inhabit a bigger space than can be contained by our beliefs. Our attempts at apologetics are often aimed at reasoning people to a place of belief without acknowledging the situatedness of all knowledge, including our own. ‘Our take is not something ‘reasoned to’ as much as it is something ‘reasoned from’. It is an overall sense of things that anticipates or leaps ahead of the reasons we can muster for it. It is something in the nature of a hunch, or what we might call anticipatory confidence’.¹¹

Opening up a conversation with our unbelieving friends and neighbours may be more constructive if we start with trying to help each other discover what is the position we are reasoning from and why. By being willing to acknowledge, for argument’s sake, each other’s perspective as a ‘take’, or a hunch, softens and loosens the hard edges of disagreement and allows for a lighter and even more playful discussion and mutual exploration. Mark Oakley puts this well:

Truth is a tricky business and it might be best, as we set out to discover it, not to talk about what might or might not be ‘true’ but instead to begin to talk of what is or isn’t honest. We need a new script, a new way of relating, rather than binary fights of what is or isn’t the case.¹²

In engaging with our neighbours then, our approach should be one of an exploratory conversation, trying to get a feel for how they see things, what they value, for their story.

⁹ Ibid., p. 551.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 509.

¹¹ James K. A. Smith, *How (not to be) Secular* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), p. 96.

¹² Mark Oakley, *The Splash of Words* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2016), p. 135.

Age of Authenticity

Taylor calls the post 1960's the Age of Authenticity:

The social imaginary of expressive individualism, the understanding that each one of us has his or her own way of realizing our humanity, and that it is important to find and live out one's own, as against surrendering to conformity with a model imposed on us from the outside. This social imaginary is crystallized in terms of authenticity.¹³

The place of the spiritual in the Age of Authenticity is that it must not only be my choice, but it must speak to me, it must make sense in terms of my spiritual development as I understand this. 'Deeply felt personal insight now becomes our most precious spiritual resource [...] let everyone follow his/her own path of spiritual inspiration. Don't be led off yours by the allegation that it doesn't fit with some orthodoxy.'¹⁴

Taylor explores what he calls the 'nova effect', the explosion of multiple worldviews and value systems all driven by the search for authenticity and facilitated by our connected world in which previously obscure and even esoteric worldviews and activities now have a global audience courtesy of the internet age. Postmodernity going mainstream in the early nineties and the growth of the online world with access to more information than ever before super-charged the search for authenticity which had begun in the 1960s. The Age of Authenticity and the nova effect mean that for many people now there is no difference qualitatively between living your life according to Star Trek Federation values, being into yoga, following a paleo diet or believing in the Resurrection. The nova effect is a great leveller and is the latest manifestation of the postmodern scepticism of any kind of metanarrative. Orthodoxy of any kind is a dirty word. I had a young professional man say to me just recently after a number of conversations on faith and meaning that he would find it really difficult to tell his friends he was a Christian as he would be so embarrassed to be seen as credulous enough to fall for it.

This puts issues of transcendence in a very tenuous place, highly contestable and largely subjective. One can't have a public truth with such fragile credentials and flimsy proof of evidence. I have found that people are often happy to talk about spirituality in terms of its effect on mindfulness, inculcating morals to children and underpinning an environment ethic. But not really as something which operates at the metanarrative level anymore

¹³ Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 486.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 489.

and certainly not something that would have a claim on their lives or an effect on their decisions, including what they do with their time.

Taylor shines further light on this by exploring the way in which we have moved from the medieval 'porous self' to the modern and postmodern 'buffered self'. By the porous self he means the way in which the medieval person was fully open to the supernatural, that there was a permeability between the human world and the world of the spirits. A large part of the role of the Church, including in using what he calls white magic – non-orthodox beliefs in good-luck charms, the power of relics etc. – was to protect the porous self from the darker forces surrounding their community. Witches and heretics had to be burned because they endangered the whole community and the destination of people's souls. The fear of damnation went hand-in-hand with the porous self.

The Thirty Years war and the excesses of the Inquisition and Calvinist means of social control left a deep imprint in European society which not only gave fertile ground for the Enlightenment but also a deep distrust of religion taken to excess. In Scotland this has been particularly deep and has lasted into the twentieth century with the sectarian tensions in the west of the country. The buffered self gradually evolved by downplaying the more controversial theological claims and distancing these beliefs from the motivational springs of human behaviour. Faith became more and more relegated to the private world and religious actions and beliefs were increasingly unable to really touch people in any way that really mattered:

People are willing to have their children baptised but are pretty sure tap water has no power to bring life out of death. Happy to take the bread and wine, hearing the words 'This body broken for you', they also know it is store bought.¹⁵

One would think that the nova effect and the excitement of being set free from the restrictions of metanarratives and orthodoxies would have a liberating effect on people. The buffered self actually says otherwise. A helpful metaphor that Andy Root has used describes the twenty-first century buffered self as like a mansion, set back from the road and surrounded by walls and hedges. This is a defensive disposition, protecting the inner self from anything that would threaten, restrict or subvert. The buffered self 'allows for an inner space within which we can disengage from the outside world, to see itself as invulnerable, as master of the meaning of things'.¹⁶ It

¹⁵ Andrew Root, *The Pastor in a Secular Age* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019), p. 31.

¹⁶ Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

is fascinating that Root suggests that psychology is able to get into touch with that inner self but leaves the buffers in place. Challenging the buffers of scepticism, detachment, levelling of all truth claims, knee jerk resistance to any form of curtailment or lifestyle challenge is extremely countercultural today and very, very difficult for the Church. It is of course well and truly within the Church too; the buffered nature of church members is one of the reasons pastors find it so difficult to do their job properly. It is recovering addicts, who have had their buffers torn down and mansion ransacked, who can be our guides today. They know the journey to full health and emotional wellbeing necessitates taking the risk of removing the buffers, of opening ourselves to a wider range of emotions than we may feel comfortable with and of becoming vulnerable once again with people.

It is significant that in recent research from the University of Chester it was found that non-churched people who find their way to church are surprised by:

a kind of porosity. By this I mean an ability of a group of people in church to accommodate the behaviours and questions of non-churched people. This facilitates an inculturation in which questions can be asked and the conversion process can continue in a healthy robust fashion – such churches are porous and not hermetic.¹⁷

In the Age of Authenticity and buffered selves such an environment is important to gain the trust and assuage the fears of searching people.

The Body

In the eyes of some:

By inviting us to transcend our humanity Christianity actually mutilates us, asks us to repress what is really human. By holding out promises that the world could be otherwise, religion tends to bowdlerize reality – papering over the difficult aspects of nature.¹⁸

Many people in Scotland today look at the legacy of both Calvinism and Roman Catholic Christianity as repressive of natural human instincts and

¹⁷ [G. Jones, *Finding faith in the 21st century among the non-churched: preliminary findings*](#). A plenary paper presented to peers at Gladstone's Library, Hawarden, January 2020, p. 3.

¹⁸ Smith, *op. cit.*, p.109.

desire for flourishing. It is very difficult to convince them that Jesus came to bring life in all its fullness. The Church is not a place they would immediately associate with human flourishing. For the local church to have credibility we need to learn not to paper over cracks (young folk can spot that a mile off) and yet point to reliable sources of hope and life.

We must ensure though that we bring our own theological riches to this conversation:

According to the spiritual/transformational hermeneutic even our best normal is going to be beset by tensions and unease. Our problem is not some penumbra of illness pressing in on our 'good' normal; our problem is our normal. On the spiritual register, the normal everyday beginning situation of the soul is to partly be in the grip of evil.¹⁹

The middle condition that was referred to in the opening paragraphs is itself the source of our difficulties. This is the 'bad news' part of the good news that needs to be heard. Badness is not located somewhere else, only in extreme cases, but is a virus affecting all of us.

This can be difficult for people to hear, but it reflects the seriousness with which the Church talks about our humanity. We need to be able to talk about sin and, in the words of Francis Spufford, our Human Propensity to F*** Things Up (HPtFtU). He is worth quoting here: 'The HPtFtU is in here, not out there. The bad news is bad news about us, not just about other people. If you don't give the weight in your chest its true name you can't even begin.'²⁰ Our friends and neighbours know this about themselves, even if they find it hard to admit. Part of our engaging in a deeper conversation is for us to come clean about where the Church has got things wrong and our own personal struggles and failings too. People are far less likely to be convinced by traditional apologetics now and more by some decent honesty from a Christian who they have grown to like who despite his or her failings (or perhaps because of them) still persists in believing in a fuller transcendent human flourishing.

Christians can be people who are able to face the harsh realities of the world and their own limitations and HPtFtU and yet still have a hope and confidence that in some fashion 'God's got this'. This also responds to the coming of age metaphor that sees faith as somewhat childish and not fit for the real world, that to be adult is to leave these things behind. To have a humble confidence in a God who is the beginning and end of our existence is

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 108).

²⁰ Francis Spufford, *Unapologetic* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2012), p. 35.

a compelling story for a society that values individual choice and spiritual authenticity. Jones's research into non-churched people is that many have a rather childish view of faith, perhaps a residue from primary school assemblies or even Sunday school. 'Their surprise when arriving at church as adults was a very different presentation of faith – one which was both serious and engaging and one which required engagement and commitment.'²¹

Cross pressured

Taylor is very effective in showing the limitations of the closed immanent take on things to give people a satisfactory sense of purpose and flourishing. He talks about people being cross pressured 'between the draw of narratives of closed immanence on one side and the sense of their inadequacy on the other'.²² 'We are torn between an anti-Christian thrust and repulsion towards some extreme form of reduction.'²³ I have met very few out and out atheists in my many conversations with people over the years. People are very aware of the problems with Christian faith (as they perceive them) but they are also often underwhelmed by the alternative presented to them in a closed immanent frame.

This is how Andy Root describes the experience of being cross pressured:

We doubt what we long for. We doubt that what we long for is sensible. Almost all of us long for poetry instead of prose, for mystery over cold transparency and yet we feel the need to face the facts. At times our experience becomes so full, so oddly interconnected that at times we doubt that we should doubt.²⁴

Root argues that spiritual direction is something that people are searching for today and that the sharing of our own stories of being cross pressured can break open the closed immanent frame.

Though we can never be free of the immanent frame we can share our stories of weakness and longing as both believers and non-believers and encourage people to be curious about the arc of their lives and key moments in them and the seeming coincidences that can take place from time to time:

It's almost impossible to retell events with which we identify and not use words of encounter, mystery, possibility, hope fullness

²¹ Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

²² Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 595.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 599.

²⁴ Root, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

and despair. Saying 'God only knows why I said that', or 'I'm not sure why I was there', or 'I felt overwhelmed, almost outside myself.'²⁵

Jones, in his research into non-churched people who are finding faith, reports that, for many, transcendent moments happen of which they can make no sense, and which pass away again. 'As they begin to find a faith understanding, these transcendent moments appear to have significance in the conversion narratives and church becomes a place to make sense of them'.²⁶

There is a fundamental discomfort with materialism that leads to an unwillingness to settle for its closed accounts. Taylor presses the question of whether closed takes on the immanent frame have sufficient resources to account for fullness. 'Can you really give ontological space for those features short of admitting what you will want to deny, for instance, some reference to the transcendent, or a larger cosmic force or whatever?'²⁷ 'For example, can they account for the force of Bach or Dante or Chartres? Here the challenge is to the unbeliever, to find a non-theistic register in which to respond to them without impoverishment.'²⁸ 'Or what ontology do we need to make sense of our ethical or moral lives?'²⁹

What Taylor is saying here is that a transcendent take on things gives a fuller and richer narrative which is more adequate to support the desire for flourishing that lies in the human heart. Quite simply we have a better story and we should be confident to tell it. He lays the challenge to what he calls exclusive humanism (i.e. it denies contestability) to come up with a narrative that responds to beauty and an ethic that can lead to the greater good. In both cases it comes short of what can be offered from a theistic perspective. Our discussions with our neighbours should be about trying to be realistic about human nature yet offering a genuinely hopeful vision of human flourishing.

Taylor puts us all (nihilists, closed and open humanists, believers in transcendence) on the same playing field of contestable and limited construals, facing common challenges, even though we may experience life quite differently. None of us has all the answers. It is in the sharing of this different experience that Christians have much to offer, the horizon of hope, the ethic of service, the release of forgiveness, the call to agape. We are all

²⁵ Ibid., p. 226.

²⁶ Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

²⁷ Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 605–06.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 607.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 608.

trying to work through difficult stuff in life and we all need any help we can get – a twenty-first century version of one beggar telling the other beggar where to find food. An example of when I have found this works well is when people get together regularly as we did for many years in Aberdeen. Unemployment, cancer, deaths of parents, industry downturns, difficulties with kids, depression along with all the national turmoil of those years – all were shared together, and I was the only church goer in the group:

The [Christian's] role in a secular age is to join the cross pressure, welcoming the cross pressure as the very location of ministry, to lean into the darkness and brokenness to see the connections and actions of God's moving. We can help people expectantly wait, invite them to lean into the coincidences and uncanny experiences.³⁰

Closed world structures

Taylor is also trying to displace the spun confidence of some closed accounts. This is particularly true with the scientific paradigm. The un-thought here is what Taylor calls a subtraction narrative which sees the decline of religious belief and the rise of science of the last 500 years as simply the removal of superstition and unhelpful beliefs so that people can now see what was there all along:

It comes across as an obvious discovery we make when we reflect on our perception and acquisition of knowledge. Descartes, Locke and Hume have finally 'seen' what was there all along. But from the deconstruction of Heidegger et al, this obviousness is actually a massive self-blindness. Rather what happened is that experience was carved into shape by a powerful theory which posited the primacy of the individual, the neutral, the intra-mental as the locus of certainty.³¹

Taylor is not being anti-science here but is challenging its totalising claim and assumption that it simply uncovers what is there. This can in fact lead to bad, value driven science:

The story of unveiling, discovery and 'facing up to reality' masks the fundamental invention of modernity. What this view reads out of the picture is that western modernity might be powered

³⁰ Root, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

³¹ Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 559.

by its own visions of the good, that is, by one constellation of such visions among available others, rather than the only viable set left after the old myths and legends have been exploded.³²

What pretends to be a 'discovery' of the way things are, the 'obvious' unveiling of reality once we remove (subtract) myth and enchantment, is in fact a construction, a creation. I know from my work among young people that many of them do not even begin to see Christianity or a transcendent view to be worth considering on the assumption that science explains how things really are. The dominance of the totalising view of scientism in our society means that many do not even get to first base when it comes to considering the transcendent. Taylor calls this a Closed World Structure:

CWS's in a sense 'naturalizes' a certain view on things. It tells us, as it were, that this is just the way things are, and once you look at experience without preconceptions, this is what appears. Those who inhabit CWS see no alternative that's what gives them their strength.³³

As we saw earlier secular spin is the denial of contestability. We gain a foothold by showing this to be the spin it is.

Taylor goes on to claim this fails to honour the cross pressure that inhabitants of Secularity 3 feel. Under his taxonomy, Secularity 1 is secularised public space, Secularity 2 is the decline of religious belief and practice and Secularity 3 is the new conditions of belief, a new context in which all search and questioning of the moral and spiritual must proceed.³⁴ Secularity 3 is the lived context of the western world today, in which all belief is contestable. Secular spin denies we are in Secularity 3 and leaves us in Secularity 2.

In his book Taylor doesn't try to prove Christianity to be true but seeks to undermine the confidence of the closed secularist 'take' on the world, showing it to be a 'take', a construal, a reading. He tries to convince secularists to admit that they are living in Secularity 3. The actual experience of living within western modernity tends to:

Awaken protest, resistances of various kinds. In this fuller, experiential sense, 'living within' the frame doesn't simply tip you in one direction but allows you to feel pulled two ways. Both believers and unbelievers inhabit the immanent frame and so a

³² Ibid., p. 507.

³³ Ibid., p. 560.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 20.

very common experience of living here is that of being cross pressured between the open and closed perspectives.³⁵

I believe this is a time of great opportunity for the Church to be a conversation partner in this experience of being cross pressured. Part of bridging the gap between ourselves and our non-church going friends and neighbours is to cultivate a common identity, an experience of context we both share that has some significance amongst the various identities we have. This common ground, 'Jamesian' open space, from our side allows us to admit that in our believing we have many doubts, and for our friends they are safe to say that in their unbelieving they yet have many questions that point to the possibility of faith. Jones's research into non-churched people found that often 'people appear to be open to re-calibrating their worldviews when flux is happening and we find ourselves in liminal seasons. This is a feature of many conversion narratives.'³⁶

The rumbling in our hearts

There are many who would like to believe but just can't make themselves, what I would call 'wistful hearts'. Taylor does not focus on the logical inconsistencies of the closed immanent position, but suggests the closed take is unable to get rid of a certain haunting, a certain rumbling in our hearts. The 'spectre of meaninglessness'³⁷ 'generates unease'³⁸ and 'restlessness':³⁹ 'The upshot is that Christianity, the open take, can provide a better way to account for this, not necessarily to quell it, but a way to name it and be honest about this dis-ease'.⁴⁰ I have certainly found this in conversation with young parents who want a good life for their children, but in a very uncertain world, are not sure what foundations to build on. The wistfulness is there sometimes in a singing time during a Messy Church, or a Christingle service. This is also the case in weddings, so many of which are between young people of no or little faith. By making the day not just about them, but by framing their story within a bigger and grander story a hint is given of this eternal dimension to their lives and hence their cosmic significance. This richer and fuller story catches people by surprise.

Even in a secular funeral there is a stubborn desire for eternity. 'This doesn't show that faith is correct, it just shows that the yearnings for eternity

³⁵ Ibid., p. 555.

³⁶ Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

³⁷ Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 717.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 711.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 726.

⁴⁰ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

are not [the] trivial and childish things.’⁴¹ ‘Something important is lost when we forget this, the sense that there is something more presses in.’⁴² Taking a funeral for an agnostic or unbelieving person is a tremendous privilege for a Christian minister. Passages such as Ecclesiastes 3 speak well to the human condition and it is perfectly possible to honour the memory and perspectives of the deceased and yet frame all our lives within this sense that there is something more:

In the impatience of our secular age, where any waiting quickly turns into disbelief, the pastor in a secular age holds a space to wait for God’s becoming, to attend to revelation. The revelation is never in a vacuum but always in a context of decisive impingement. The conditions are right for God’s arrival, Israel is crushed, Jesus is dead. It is in these impossible impingements that this God arrives, this God who has a personal name.⁴³

At these times of impingement when we feel the realities of life and our own human frailty encroaching on us, the Christian finds a language of hope and resurrection. Faith has a dimension of brokenness in it and perhaps our failure to convince others has been due to an over-confidence that comes across as naïve or that we lack the limp of authenticity that comes of wrestling with God.

Agape

One of the hallmarks of the Christian faith has been the care for the weak and marginalised. This also remains an important part of our own denominational commitments and perhaps is one we should make more of in our partnering with wider society. Our faith should certainly take us beyond where reason will go when it comes to caring for our fellow humans and indeed for our planet. Here we have the power of the transformative perspective which gives Christians a larger vision than our own human flourishing. Being a Roman Catholic, Taylor is keen to ‘point to the exemplary lives of certain trail blazing people and communities.’⁴⁴ In this sense the saints *are* the apologetic.

This takes Taylor then to a discussion about the centrality of agape in the Christian ethic:

⁴¹ Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 722.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 727.

⁴³ Root, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

⁴⁴ Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 643.

I think this (agape) can be real for us but only to the extent that we open ourselves to God, which means in fact overstepping the limits set by exclusive humanisms. If one does believe that, then one has something very important to say to modern times, something that addresses the fragility of what all of us, believer and unbeliever alike, most value in these times.⁴⁵

This is a very profound and inspiring challenge to the church today. How much have we allowed the conditions of our moral life to be set by exclusive humanism and thereby 'have shut down our openness to transformation'?⁴⁶ To what extent have we lived out the radical generosity of agape? What Taylor seems to be saying here is that we need to step beyond the social imaginary of exclusive humanism, especially what it defines as human flourishing (remember the lady I quoted at the start of this paper). Only in being opened to God can we find the Spirit that allows us to live that life that addresses 'the fragility of what all of us [...] most value in these times'.

I find in this last phrase a very poignant and prophetic call to the church to sit down with others and discover what indeed we all value most in these times. We can be the junior partner in that discussion, learning from some of the impressive people in our neighbourhood as we explore what we most value. And this will return again to our visions of fullness, of human flourishing. And there is a fragility here indeed, cross pressed as we are and living in a world with great challenges, we are truly out of our depths. Perhaps as Christians what we contribute is being able to name this out-of-depth-ness, we are people that rely on grace (or at least should do) and know that agape is beyond all of us. Having a transcendent perspective allows us to acknowledge our human limits because it was never about us anyway.

Agape takes us beyond the bounds of any existing social bonds, as the Good Samaritan parable powerfully demonstrates. The power of this parable rests also in the role that contingency and accident play in the story: my neighbour is someone I come across bleeding in the street. Such 'accidents' can be the opportunity for rebuilding human relations. I saw this time and again with Street Pastors serving whomever needed help on the streets of Scottish cities, often younger generations who would rarely if ever darken the door of a church ... accidental encounters nudging people in a slightly different direction perhaps.

Agape transcends the mutual obligations of the humanist social imaginary and the Church remains one of the few places where people from very diverse political, social and economic backgrounds will mix. Perhaps,

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 703.

⁴⁶ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

rather than allowing ourselves to be seen as a closed group, we need to demonstrate our diversity. This is particularly true of the Anglican Communion and our very varied provinces and even within our own SEC the tensions of difference can actually be a positive witness to agape.

Humanist social imaginaries see our highest goal in terms of a certain kind of human flourishing, in a context of mutuality, pursuing our happiness on the basis of assured life and liberty in a society of mutual benefit. Agape 'goes way beyond any possibility of mutuality, a love which is not bound by some measure of fairness'.⁴⁷ We are called as Christians to open ourselves to the transformative power of this love and live lives thereby of a certain difference. Agape is both our path and our destination.

Conclusion

Taylor's apologetic (if you can call it that) is:

1. Level the playing field by pointing out shared dilemmas.
2. Show the inadequacy of purely immanent accounts, creating a space for Christianity to get a hearing.
3. Show how a Christian take might offer a more nuanced or comprehensive account of our experience.⁴⁸

This brief paper has not done justice to the depth and complexity of his argumentation and there are whole areas I have not touched on at all. He builds a compelling case for levelling the playing field. He repeatedly states that he is not trying to argue the case definitively for transcendence but to show that it should be at least considered seriously.

In our relating to contemporary Scottish society as the Church, Taylor has offered us a toolkit, as it were, of concepts, metaphors, perspectives, arguments and visions. These include: the stabilised middle condition, the immanent frame, social imaginaries, un-thoughts, expressive individualism, the Age of Authenticity, systemic mistrust, construals, takes, human flourishing, Secularity 3, cross pressure, contestability, vibe, Closed World Structures, the nova effect, porous self, buffered self, Jamesian open space, modernity as adulthood, myth of unveiling, agape, playing fields and so on. These can help us in some small way to understand not only what lies behind the decisions and priorities of our non-believing friends but also what lies behind our own. Much of our attention to mission has not taken this background seriously enough, partly because we have not had the tools to

⁴⁷ Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 430.

⁴⁸ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

do so. We have often been addressing symptoms rather than causes, and as a result we have found ourselves discouraged.

The Scottish Episcopal Church has a relatively open disposition to engaging in matters of truth and different takes on things:

None of us can escape the immanent frame but we can inhabit it differently. Taylor is not trying to secure an analytical truth, but to appeal to a sense, a feel of things, a gut feeling, a vibe. In this sense Taylor is a Romantic.⁴⁹

This is a 'vibe' that I think the SEC in many ways already has. Even within our own denomination there is a variety of 'takes' which lead to a sense of feeling cross pressure at times. One could even say that our commitment to the interaction of Scripture, Tradition and Reason means that our lived experience is closely aligned to much of what Taylor has been describing. Episcopalians allow for contestability, that there must always remain openness to the possibility of things being otherwise. Such openness is an invitation to others to engage on issues that matter.

I would suggest however that we should extend this openness to engaging with our liturgical forms and structures. The beauty of the liturgy is of great value to many in our church and a source of stability and unity as well as inspiration and hope. However, if we are serious about engaging with people in an Age of Authenticity it may perhaps be worth considering whether we have got the balance right between formation and expression. It could be that we should allow a little more experimentation and creativity, not just in occasional Taizé or Iona style services but our main eucharistic worship too. How we as a liturgical-based church which values tradition engage with the quest for authentic spiritual expression and encounter is an important conversation it could be time for us to have.

Another finding in Jones's research into non-churched people is the importance of:

Credible guides in a secular context who are credible in the manner in which they live, sometimes radical and different, but also vocal about their faith. This seems particularly important to non-churched people who do not have the church family links of previous generations.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 132.

⁵⁰ Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

Coming mostly from the fairly liberal perspective for which the SEC is known, humble but confident testimonies, I would suggest, carry more weight. Episcopalians are good at living with messy boundaries and human frailties, as our journey in the area of human sexuality has shown. We can partner this with a rediscovered confidence in talking about our faith, including honesty about our HPtFtU, in a positive and hopeful way, aware fully of all the alternative takes there are. Mark Oakley again puts this cross pressed nature of faith well:

We are so often being asked to side with one of two fundamentalisms. But many of us are poised somewhere in the balance – uncomfortable, difficult to articulate but the place of integrity for us – unafraid to reason, unashamed to adore-thinking critically and trying to live faithfully.⁵¹

These are words that I know a lot of Episcopalians will identify with. Taylor again:

I think what we badly need is a conversation between a host of different positions, religious, non-religious, anti-religious, humanistic, anti-humanistic and so on, in which we eschew mutual caricature and try to understand what ‘fullness’ means for the other. I know that we can have a widely based overlapping consensus on the value of this conversation.⁵²

Once again, I believe the SEC is well placed to engage in such discussions as our vision of human transformation is very sensitive to the claims of the ordinary and the bodily realities of our lives. We can make the most of our nuanced and sensitive approach to the history of bodily repression in the Church and the temptation to go for quick answers. Our incarnational theology, affirmation of our bodily nature and human desires for flourishing make us a constructive conversation partner with wider society on a whole host of issues.

The challenge is not letting go of the vision of transformation, but acknowledging God’s love in our failure. The eucharistic celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus reminds us that:

It is the events of God’s perceived absence that sets the stage for God’s coming presence. This is the jujitsu move that uses the

⁵¹ Oakley, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

⁵² Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

opaqueness of divine action in our secular age against itself claiming that when things get impossible and God seems absent, ready yourself to receive the event of God's arriving.⁵³

The Scottish Episcopal Church has used the 'indaba process' to facilitate our own discussions on issues of difference, and I wonder if this is not something we can utilise more to open up discussions with the communities we are set within. I have pointed to various ways in which we are well suited to such fluid conversations. In a time of greater fracturing in our nation, being aware of what lies behind our decisions and priorities has become more important than ever and the call to an agape that goes beyond mutuality, fairness and social bounds is rarely more needed.

From a place of growing institutional weakness, we need to draw on the reality of prayer and the deep wells of Scripture and our faith journey. We can be honest that the nature of faith, allows for alternatives, for contestability. The particularity of Christ's life, death and resurrection, can indeed be a scandal in their exclusive claims, but it is the core of the Church's story, it's the distinctive voice we have to offer our society. Perhaps there is a way of trusting these amazing claims he made and the Church has built on over the years, but doing so in a way that acknowledges the mystery that yet remains in the 'God who was reconciling the world to himself in Christ'.⁵⁴

⁵³ Root, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

⁵⁴ II Corinthians 5. 19.

Entrepreneurial Leadership Development in the Christian Church in Scotland

RICHARD TIPLADY

Director of Mixed Mode Training, Scottish Episcopal Institute

My doctoral research was motivated by changes faced by churches across Scotland and the need to consider the implications for the training and re-training of current and future Christian leaders. Many such leaders recognise that the context in which they serve is changing, and they want to lead their churches or organisations through change in response to this. We are not short of initiatives in this area – Forge Scotland’s pioneer training course, the Church of Scotland’s *Path of Renewal* programme, the Scottish Episcopal Church’s *Mixed Mode* training programme, the work of the *Scottish Fresh Expressions Network*, The Free Church of Scotland’s *Generation Mission* initiative, and the work of *Twenty Schemes*, are just a few of the activities that could be mentioned.

Initiatives in this area are commonly referred to as ‘pioneer ministry’, but the language of entrepreneurship is used on occasion. The 2015 *Transforming Scotland* report observed that:

Because the current situation is so desperate, the church must become more accepting of risk, more open to new strategies, and more willing to fail. An entrepreneurial approach to mission is ready to acknowledge when activities or projects are not achieving the hoped-for results, and willing to shut them down in order to try a different approach.¹

But such a shift will not be easy to achieve. One of the people who was interviewed for my research was also quoted in that same report:

I don’t think the church culture or the way our Scottish society works is very good at taking risks and letting things try and fail. I think there’s high pressure, when setting up something new, to make it work. That attitude is one of the biggest challenges that

¹ [Barna Global, *Transforming Scotland: The State of Christianity, Faith and the Church in Scotland*, 2015, p. 19 \[accessed 10 September 2017\].](#)

stifles growth, that stifles innovation, that stifles spiritual growth.²

Entrepreneurial leadership in the Church is a legitimate area of research interest, if only because it is happening to some degree and so we might as well try and find out how to do it well. But a stronger case can be made. The Church has, throughout history, sought renewal and change for enhanced impact or to navigate changing circumstances. And the renewal and reinvigoration of the Church is more than an exercise in organisational self-preservation. As those for whom the good news of Jesus Christ is something that we build our lives upon, we have the motivation of wanting to find better ways to express and embody this in a changing culture. In addition, the Cinnamon Network estimated in 2015 that the social impact and benefit of the Church's voluntary work in the UK was worth over £3bn per annum.³ Christians do still make quite a difference; we do manage to act as salt and light (Matthew 5. 13–16), however fleetingly and vulnerably. In *The Minister as Entrepreneur*, Michael Volland describes entrepreneurial ministers as a significant factor in the renewal of congregations and denominations.⁴ So interest in this topic is legitimate and timely, and it is worth asking about the conditions that help to bring it about (or to hinder it), and how to best support individuals and initiatives of this type.

What do we mean by 'entrepreneurial leadership development'?

Firstly, we need to look at leadership development, and then ask whether and in what ways entrepreneurial leadership is distinct and has its own unique means of development.

Leadership development. Leadership is a highly situated practice, that is, it depends very much on its context. What it takes to lead in one place varies with what it takes to lead in another (as those who have had a career in the private sector and then transfer to leadership in charities often find out too late). Having said that, there are also transferable leadership skills that can be acquired. In most cases, leadership development is about developing the person. Coaching and mentoring, shadowing, and peer support (e.g. action learning sets) all play key roles. Learning in practice is key; one learns to lead by leading, not by reading about it or attending

² Ibid.

³ [Cinnamon Network, Cinnamon Faith Action Audit](#) [accessed 30 November 2016].

⁴ Michael Volland, *The Minister as Entrepreneur* (London: SPCK, 2015).

seminars. The latter, while helpful, only really work for someone who is already trying to work out what this leadership 'thing' looks like.

The curriculum content for a leadership development programme needs to be fairly flexible and able to respond to the actual needs of the participants, not some generic 'ideal leader'. People should be trained to think about how to implement change, and to build their capacity (and that of their organisation) for unforeseen futures. Contextual analysis, people management, and understanding how teams and organisations work, are all useful.

Organisational support is essential if leadership development is to be successful. All too often, people are sent on leadership development courses but the organisational context isn't prepared to change in any way to accommodate what they have learned. Ruth Boaden of Manchester Business School has commented: 'although organisations say that they want to develop leadership, they fail to understand the implications and do not create an environment in which leadership can thrive'.⁵

There is a growing distinction being made between leader development and leadership development. Leader development refers to the development of individual leaders; leadership development refers to the development of groups within which leadership might emerge in different ways.⁶ In both cases, social capital is seen as a useful concept. For the individual leader, this is about having a broad network of contacts from which they can draw knowledge and information, as well as accessing resources for their organisation. In the group, social capital not only refers to these external contacts but also the internal relationships that allow people to spark off one another and to generate ideas and creativity. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that this latter concept of social capital is something that features strongly in the literature on entrepreneurial leadership development.

Entrepreneurial leadership. Two basic definitions of entrepreneurship were used for this research:

⁵ Ruth Boaden, 'Leadership Development: does it make a difference?', *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 27 no. 1–2 (2006), 5–27 (p. 9).

⁶ D. Dalakoura, 'Differentiating leader and leadership development', *Journal of Management Development*, 29 no 5 (2010), 432–41; D. Day, 'Leadership Development: A Review in Context', *Leadership Quarterly*, 11 no 4 (2001), 581–613; P. Iles and D. Preece, 'Developing Leaders or Developing Leadership? The Academy of Chief Executives' Programmes in the North East of England', *Leadership*, 2 no 3 (2006), 317–40.

1. Bringing innovative change in stuck contexts.
2. Responding well to external changes and taking hold of the opportunities they bring.

The first concept goes back to the Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter.⁷ He described entrepreneurship as ‘creative destruction’, something which brings renewal in a system which is otherwise tending towards stagnation. Volland states that ‘entrepreneurial ministers are a force that prevent denominations and individual churches from ‘running down’ and becoming stationary’.⁸ The second definition sees entrepreneurship as a distinct form of leadership behaviour that is suitable for highly turbulent, challenging and competitive environments, in which a person can recognise opportunities, step into a new venture creation, and cope with the challenges and problems. Volland comments that ‘entrepreneurs are a gift of God in a time of rapid and discontinuous cultural change’.⁹

At first glance, the two definitions appear to be contradictory. Does the entrepreneur bring ‘creative destruction’ into stagnant systems, or do they surf the white-water rapids of change and seize the opportunities that emerge? Perhaps they should be held in tension. In different circumstances, each can apply, but both seem to be relevant to the Church in Scotland at this moment in time.

Regardless of which of these two definitions is preferred, three different approaches are taken to try and answer the question of ‘so, how do these people do what they do?’

1. Psychological theories – what are the personal characteristics of entrepreneurs? Normally this includes things like resilience, a positive and optimistic outlook, high levels of energy, a need for achievement, and a desire to be in control (rarely, as commonly assumed, a desire to make money). One essential prerequisite is the ability to spot an entrepreneurial opportunity.¹⁰ Fiet calls this a ‘special knack’ but laments that ‘the limitation of luck and intuition is that we do not know how to teach either of them’.¹¹

⁷ Ha-Joon Chang, *Economics: The User’s Guide* (London: Penguin, 2014).

⁸ Volland, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁰ A. Ardichvili, R. Cardozo and S. Ray, ‘A theory of entrepreneurial opportunity identification and development’, *Journal of Business Venturing*, 18 (2003), 105–23.

¹¹ J. Fiet, ‘The Theoretical Side of Teaching Entrepreneurship’, *Journal of Business Venturing*, 16 (2000), 1–24 (p. 1).

2. Leadership and management approaches – these view entrepreneurship as a learned skill, not an innate ability. Skills like opportunity analysis, resource acquisition, people management, and business planning can all be learned.
3. Contextual approaches – here, the wider environment is considered, and the degree to which it helps or hinders the emergence of entrepreneurial activity. The importance of relationships, network, and social capital, which promote trust and access to resources, is emphasised. Governance issues also matter, to maintain a tension between the management of what already is and supporting the emergence of what could be.

From this, we then need to ask the question of whether there is any difference between entrepreneurship and leadership. Augier and Teece think they are the same: ‘Schumpeter’s view of entrepreneurship nicely encapsulates our idea of leadership as an inherently entrepreneurial activity’.¹² But others take a wider view. Dover and Dierk see leaders as catalytic, creating the environment within which the entrepreneur can flourish.¹³ Fløistad describes entrepreneurial leadership as the creation of circumstances within which creativity can emerge,¹⁴ and Currie *et al* suggest that entrepreneurial leaders concentrate more on the process of ensuring that innovation happens rather than on innovating themselves.¹⁵ So, while some prefer to use the term entrepreneurial leadership to describe the leadership of entrepreneurial ventures, others use the term to focus on the creation of conditions within which entrepreneurial innovation can emerge. This is another tension to hold on to, since both definitions are used within my research.

The development of entrepreneurial leadership. Having accepted that entrepreneurial leadership is a distinct subset of leadership practice, one which is suitable for bringing innovation in stuck contexts or taking hold of

¹² M. Augier and D. J. Teece, ‘Reflections on (Schumpeterian) Leadership: A report on a seminar on leadership and management’, *California Management Review*, 47 no 2 (2005), 114–136 (p. 117).

¹³ P. A. Dover and U. Dierk, ‘The ambidextrous organisation: integrating managers, entrepreneurs and leaders’, *Journal of Business Strategy*, 31 no 5 (2010), 49–58.

¹⁴ G. Fløistad, ‘Entrepreneurial Leadership’, *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 12 no 7 (1991), 28–31.

¹⁵ G. Currie, M. Humphreys, D. Ucbasaran and S. McManus, ‘Entrepreneurial Leadership in the English Public Sector: Paradox or Possibility?’, in *Public Administration*, 86 no 4 (2008), 987–1008.

opportunities that emerge in rapidly-changing environments, are there any differences in how it is developed, compared with the broader leadership development approaches described above? The answer is, a little. There is almost no consistency or agreement about the curriculum content for entrepreneurial leadership development programmes,¹⁶ but it is still understood as being best learned in real-life contexts (i.e. by doing it, and learning as you go). Mentoring and coaching are still valuable. Formal management and leadership skills are important, but ‘expert’ knowledge should not supplant the entrepreneur’s own instincts and insight.

Perhaps the biggest single difference is that the literature on entrepreneurial leadership development places an even stronger practical emphasis on the value of social capital than the broader leadership development literature. This includes the usefulness of ‘weak ties’ (acquaintances and networks) for opportunity spotting and information sharing, as well as ‘strong ties’ (friendships and close relationships) for the acquisition of the required human and financial resources.¹⁷ Peredo and Chrisman describe a new venture as a ‘networked temporary coalition’¹⁸ and in such as these, relationships matter.

How was the research done?

The most important question for me in this research was not ‘what should happen?’, but ‘what is actually happening?’. How is entrepreneurial leadership being shown within the Church in Scotland, and how did those who are doing it get that way? Only then can we ask, how can we get more of this (since I am assuming it is a good thing and more of it would be nice)?

I interviewed entrepreneurial Christian leaders serving across Scotland. I was interested in those serving in or through the Church. I used a broad definition of the word ‘Church’, and interviewed church leaders, church planters, and those who had started Christian charities or social enterprises. Not all the social enterprises self-identified as Christian, but those who had founded them did and their values permeated their organisation and its goals. The research was limited to people and organisations located in the Third Sector.

Interviews were conducted with a number of open questions, including but not limited to ‘What were the circumstances that led you to start (your thing)?’, ‘What or who helped you in the process?’, ‘What or who

¹⁶ Fiet, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ Ardichvili, Cardozo and Ray, *op. cit.*

¹⁸ A. M. Peredo and J. J. Chrisman, ‘Toward a theory of community-based enterprise’, *Academy of Management Review*, 31 no 2 (2006), 309–28 (p. 310).

were the biggest challenges?', 'Was there any particular support, resources or training that made a difference to you?', and 'What have you learned through this process?'. Not all questions were used with every interview. I wanted to give people the opportunity to tell me their story. But in most cases, these questions were answered during the interview, even if I didn't ask them directly.

From the interview transcripts, I identified common themes and grouped them accordingly. Then I tried to make sense of what was going on and come up with a theory to explain it. It is known as a 'grounded theory', since it is grounded (based) in what the research participants tell you, not on any prior theoretical understandings.¹⁹

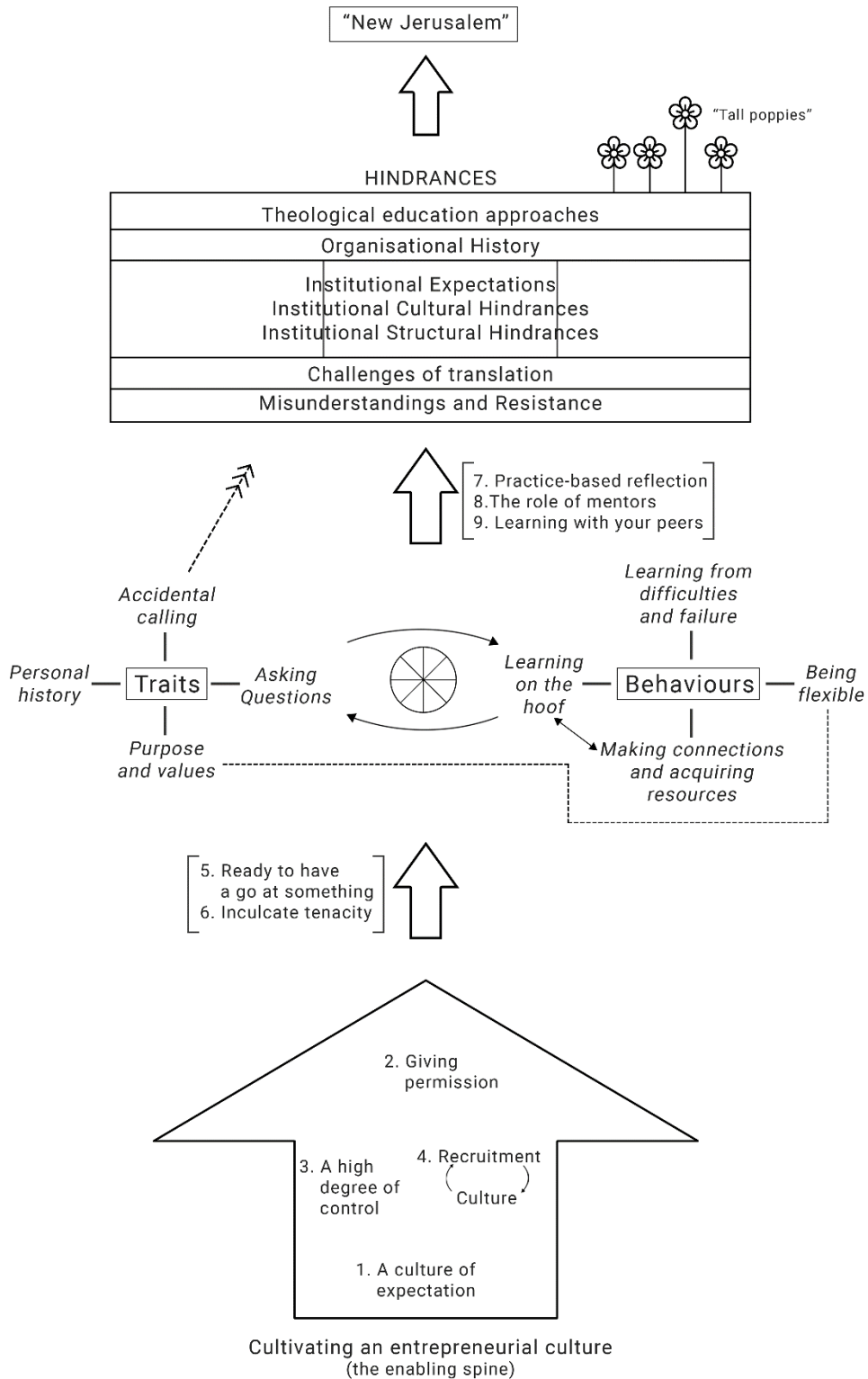
The concept of a theory has a specific meaning, that is, a constructed set of interrelated propositions that enable researchers to make sense out of observed events. The relationships between concepts within the theory are key to its ability to describe and account for what is going on. Ideally, the theory has explanatory power and tells a story of how things happen. The aim is not only to focus on individuals but on the unfolding of actions, on how things happen in social settings. Well, that's the theory, anyway.

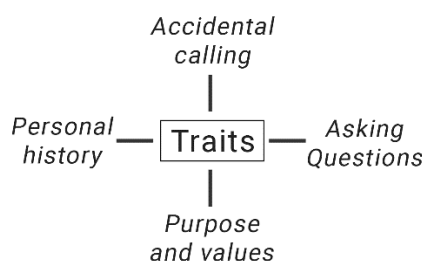
Grounded theory differs from the traditional approach to doctoral research in that it doesn't begin with an extensive literature review, after which some aspect of reality is compared to it. Instead, an initial literature review is conducted, to give the researcher some awareness of the landscape. Then the research is done, and the theory is constructed. Only after this is the theory compared to a much more detailed analysis of the existing literature. The aim of this is to prevent the researcher from being too constrained by existing ways of thinking, and to encourage them to use their intellectual imagination and creativity in the development of a theory. It is particularly useful in under-researched areas, of which this is one. The above summary of the literature reflects part of that initial review. What follows is the theory that I have constructed, which is then related more deeply to relevant aspects of the wider research literature. All unreferenced quotations are taken directly from the interview transcripts.

¹⁹ M. Birks and J. Mills, *Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide*, 2nd edn, (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2015); K. Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 2nd edn, (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2014); J. Locke, *Grounded Theory in Management Research*, (London: SAGE Publications, 2001).

The theory – what’s going on?

Entrepreneurial Leadership Development in the Church in Scotland



Traits (who they are)

The people I interviewed were those who asked questions. They were questioners of the status quo; ‘it came from asking questions about what is working, what isn’t working, why it isn’t working, and what needs to change’. They described a feeling of ‘holy dissatisfaction’. They see things from a different perspective, ‘outsiders’ and ‘out-of-sync’. This perspective is valuable; ‘they look at an opportunity and see a different thing about it’. And they clearly want to improve things, ‘to do something significant’, to be ‘where they would make the biggest impact’. They are agitators and activists, not just analysts; ‘you might see us as a really helpful agitator to innovate in a pretty stuck sphere’. To use the earlier terminology, they are Schumpeterian innovators.

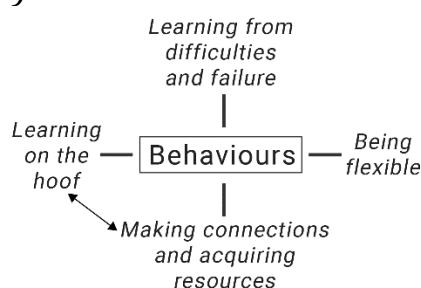
As well as responding to perceived external opportunities, they had clear internal motivations and drivers. Clarity of purpose was important – ‘having a clear mission’ or ‘a clear DNA’ – and this helped to sustain them when things got difficult; ‘I’m doing this because I truly believe in it’. Theological values were not referred to as much as I had expected. Some were implicit in the values mentioned; ‘building a sense of community and family’, ‘we love each other’, ‘authentic Christian life’. The only explicit theological concept that was referred to (by quite a few people) was the Kingdom of God, in the sense of the in-breaking and liberating reality of the reign of God. This wasn’t surprising, as it connects closely with the above traits of challenging the system and wanting to do things better, and provides a strong theological basis and motivation for doing so. But which came first? Did the theology provide the motivation, or did the prior motivation find it a helpful theology? I suspect that it is not possible to answer that question. The one reinforces the other.

Almost everyone I interviewed had what I have called an ‘accidental calling’. Few, if any, had much experience of doing the things they are now doing before they got started. They seemed to come upon it by accident – ‘it opened my eyes to an existing gap’, ‘chance timing, nice joining-up of things’. This fits with them being outsiders in their current field. But many now describe a sense of calling to the work they are doing; ‘we’re doing what God has called us to do’, ‘the only explanation I have is that it’s calling in spite of myself’. Is this retrospective sense-making? Perhaps. But one’s sense of ‘call’

often develops over time. What is significant is that they had a strong sense of personal agency; they are the kind of people who see a need, think that someone should do something about it, and decide to be that person.

Personal history mattered for a few, but they were the minority. For those who mentioned it, family background or childhood experiences played a part in their entrepreneurial outlook. But for the majority, this wasn't a factor. From a developmental point of view, this is important. If family background or childhood experiences are central, it would make the later development of such an outlook and abilities difficult. Entrepreneurial leaders are made (often later in life), not born.

Behaviours (what they do)



Resource acquisition is a key function for the development of any entrepreneurial venture. Without people and money, you don't get very far. You need both a core team and a wider set of contacts and partners. The ability to inspire and motivate a team to join you in the project was essential, to 'convince people to get on board with it, to get behind it'. The message was 'let's all go on this journey together. Let's all bring what we've got into it.' These connections were also useful in the acquisition of financial resources. The amount of start-up financial capital that was needed was not small but neither overly high; normally within the range of £5000 to £25000. Some were able to develop large organisations with many volunteers and a small central budget.

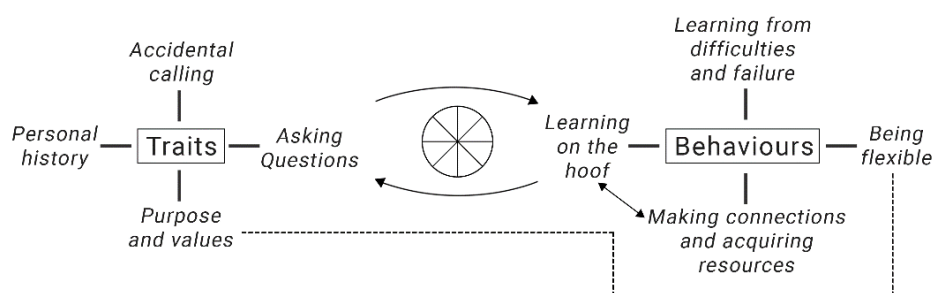
Learning 'on the hoof' was a key behaviour among the research participants. As noted above, they tended to be outsiders who brought a different perspective, rather than experts who already understood the field they were working in. But they are voracious learners, willing to do whatever it takes to acquire the knowledge they need (either by bringing in someone else who has the knowledge or, if they were not available, going off and acquiring the knowledge for themselves). This learning was highly task-focussed and instrumental; 'I have had to learn all about that', and 'they have learned to be learners, they have learned that "I need to know something; what do I need to know?"'. This has been a lifelong habit. Most had degrees; many had postgraduate degrees. This breadth of learning and commitment to ongoing learning helps them to be the kind of people who see things from

a different perspective. They read ‘off the course’. They learn from others (‘it really helped me to rub shoulders with people who challenged and showed me that there were many other ways to look at it’), they learn from outside the Church (‘a lot of learning could be done from things that are going on outside the Church’), and they learned from prior experience (usually the management and leadership experience that they had already acquired, rather than the expert knowledge of their new field of work).

They are flexible. Although there is a focus on a purpose and core values, they were willing to ‘try things and see what works’. They talked about a game plan, about being on a journey, and of continually reassessing what they were doing. ‘We didn’t know if it was going to work or not, so why don’t we just wait and see?’. They learn as they go, and they have to be creative; ‘you have to try and work around and sometimes subvert the structures’.

The danger of risk-taking is that sometimes things go wrong; ‘there has to be a willingness to try new things, some of which will fail’. Difficulties and mistakes are a source of learning; ‘you learn from your mistakes, because that’s the way humans are’, and ‘the Church could do well at learning better from failure’. Sometimes people bounce back; ‘successful people actually don’t feel that they have failed as a person if they have failed. They go, let’s learn from this, and move on.’ But sometimes there is a cost; ‘people get tired, and become more risk-averse’, and ‘in CS Lewis’s term they become the “sensible but disillusioned man” because of the fallout and the breaks’. If we are going to encourage entrepreneurial risk-taking in the Church, we need to think about the cost we are asking someone to pay.

The connections between traits and behaviours



The connection between ‘asking questions’ and ‘learning on the hoof’ is discussed above. The depth of ongoing learning was a surprising discovery during the research process. Although learning in real-life contexts was mentioned in the literature review, this level of ongoing, iterative, goal-driven learning was something of a discovery. And this relates directly to the wider developmental question behind my research. How are

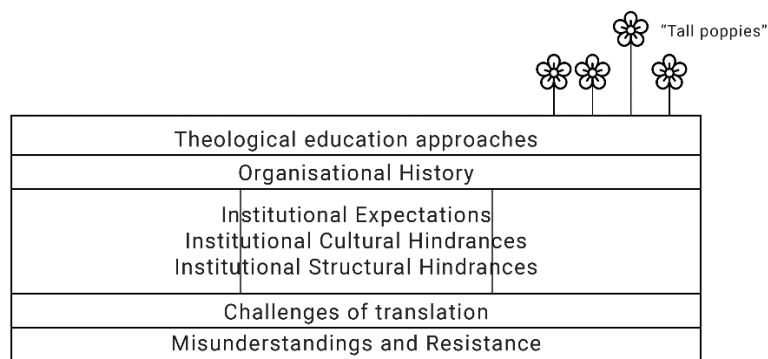
entrepreneurial leaders developed? By their own ongoing learning, which should therefore be facilitated, encouraged, and supported. But there is a caveat to note. This learning, while wide, is consequential, following on from opportunity awareness and the decision to act. It is a means to an end. Wide learning doesn't automatically predispose people toward entrepreneurial behaviour (it can have the opposite effect). However, in those who have an entrepreneurial predisposition for other reasons, it contributes to them being the kind of people who see things from a different perspective and who ask questions about things, and it is this kind of learning that helps them to achieve their goals. This topic of 'entrepreneurial learning' is one of the things that is considered below in more depth in relation to the academic literature.

There is a fruitful tension to maintain between focus on a core purpose and flexibility in how you get there. By concentrating on goals and core values, you can be creative about the means of getting there. The values act as a pivot point and are deeply rooted in the interviewees and their personal Christian faith.

One of my interviewees described himself as 'a relational maverick'. The research participants are mavericks, who see and do things differently. But they are also relational. Relationships matter to them, for both opportunity awareness and resource acquisition. As relational mavericks, they don't fit with the system very well. But they care about the Church, its mission and its future, and this keeps them (more or less) connected to all three.

The combination of traits and behaviours, when connected with the positive and supportive context which is explored below, serve to create an environment of entrepreneurial leadership development. It is the interplay of all three of these that generates the entrepreneurial behaviours in ways that overcome the hindrances. There is also a connection between these and the 'accidental calling'. The serendipitous spotting of entrepreneurial opportunities is likely to be enhanced by the combination of a questioning and learning mindset, a desire to improve things, and the ability to see things from a different perspective. All of these are likely to lead to increased opportunity awareness. High levels of social capital produce the connections (both strong ties and weak ties) that allow a response to be developed, that is, for an initiative to move beyond being simply a good idea.

Hindrances



Hindrances are experienced as being like a brick wall that has to be overcome in some way. It can be difficult to knock down, because other factors reinforce this brick wall, acting like a form of lamination.

Institutional cultural hindrances include a widespread incrementalism (i.e. let's not change too much at once, and just try to improve what we already have), which is contrary to the spirit of 'creative destruction'. This leads to a real sense of frustration; 'I do get really frustrated watching the Church trying to innovate'. In addition, there is passivity in the face of change ('there was an element of 'rabbit in headlights' about this in respect to change, in that people began to see this years ago and didn't know what to do about it'), disagreement over proposed solutions ('I think that change is coming. What there is, is deep anxiety and uncertainty about what form it should take'), and the classic 'rearranging deckchairs on the Titanic' ('it feels like there is an element of displacement going on there').

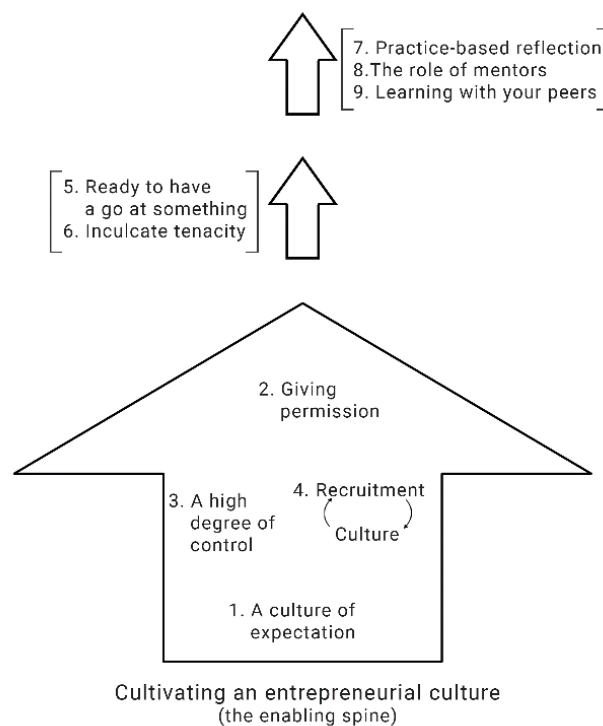
Structural hindrances include the committee-based democratic processes of most denominations. Such systems, and the people attracted to work within them, tend to militate against innovation. On top of this we can add the poor quality or lack of entrepreneurial incubation mechanisms, issues of sunk costs (where money has been spent in the past) and path dependency (if you wanted to get to there, you wouldn't start from here), and lack of access to funding. The high cost and effort of maintaining the status quo leaves little headroom for change or the emotional cost of divestment.

Entrepreneurs encounter misunderstandings and resistance; 'Christian entrepreneurs or Christian pioneers probably suffer sheep bites more than anybody else'. Sometimes, resistance doesn't come from misunderstanding, but from an all-too-clear understanding of what is being attempted. After all, any attempt at change is an implicit criticism of the status quo; 'we're doing shiny new things, and that feels threatening', 'when you're pioneering something that's different, that's a bit edgy, that's a bit threatening', 'we had a lot of nastygrams and backlash'.

The Scottish ‘tall poppy syndrome’ was mentioned, and is best summarised in colloquialisms like ‘Ah kent yer faither’ or the biblical expression ‘a prophet has no honour in their hometown’ (John 4. 44). Whether this is the ‘dark side’ of Scottish egalitarianism or a consequence of Scotland’s historical clan culture, it is a term that several of those interviewed had heard used against them.

The process of a lengthy early investment in theological education doesn’t encourage ‘learning on the hoof’ or the idea acquiring skills and knowledge along the journey. Instead it encourages cautious reflection, and supports the idea of deep preparation before trying anything. This reinforces the above insight that wide learning per se does not create an entrepreneurial predisposition.

Enablers



These provide direction and momentum, which allow the blocking wall of hindrances to be overcome.

Most foundational is an active culture of expectation and permission-giving. The latter is helpful (‘we’re about saying ‘your ideas are not crazy’. Sometimes that’s all they need. They just need affirmation. And sometimes that comes across as permission’) but by itself is not enough. The context needs to be more than neutral, more than ‘not hostile’. The phrase ‘high degree of control’ implies focus. It isn’t about trying to keep everyone happy.

It is about more than permission. It is about prioritisation. It means creating the kind of entrepreneurial culture that not only releases but attracts entrepreneurial types.

There needs to be the deliberate creation and reinforcement of a risk-supporting organisation culture that creates, endorses, and attracts entrepreneurial behaviour. This is active, dynamic, and multi-faceted. While hindrances have been identified and these should be reduced, it isn't just about doing that and letting things flow. It is more deliberate and proactive than that. Senior leaders need to lead, and to create the culture, especially if they are not that entrepreneurial themselves:

It's not just about the thing that you teach, and it's not just about the things that let people have a go at. It's actually about the whole context and the whole way in which we speak to them and we encourage them and we're alongside one another.

A culture of entrepreneurial leadership development will not just wait for people to make themselves known. It will actively go looking for them. They may not be fully ready or fully confident of their own abilities ('we have recruited people who we believe are ready to have a go at something, but haven't yet got the confidence or the skills or the experience to be able to launch it'), but they need people who will believe in them and back them. Part of a developmental culture is to find those with aspiration or potential and to invest in them. They will need tenacity, to deal with the difficulties, mistakes, failures, misunderstanding and resistance, and people asking them who on earth they think they are. Some of that comes from personal encouragement and support ('here's my phone number. When you're totally fed up, call me'); some of it comes through effective leadership development inputs ('you can teach them to persevere, how to keep going. That's why you have mentoring in place').

This mention of mentoring connects with the kind of good leadership development practices noted in the literature review. As well as mentors, connecting with like-minded peers is also important: 'whatever you do, do it with a team. Who you are with energises you, feeds you, challenges your vision, keeps you centred'. Entrepreneurial leaders are not solo operators. They are deeply embedded in networks of trust and friendship. Their social capital is not just a source of resources, it is a source of support, because 'they are talking to people who actually know what it's like; they have lived it, they have experienced it'.

Reflecting further on some of the issues

Entrepreneurial learning. I have already commented on my concept of learning 'on the hoof'. Incidental and consequential learning plays a significant role in the experience of my research participants. This learning is essential because of their relatively limited experience in their chosen field of work (a necessary consequence of being an outsider). Colville supports this, noting that 'genuine ignorance is profitable because it is likely to be accompanied by humility, curiosity, and open-mindedness'.²⁰ The lack of initial experience of many of my research participants has already been noted. This was an asset.

This learning is a form of sense-making, wherein one works out what is going on and decides what to do next. Too often, however, sense-making becomes little more than interpretation, without any real sense of what to do about it (i.e. the clever analyst who has no idea what to do next). Poetic imagery and metaphors are useful in helping to 'convey the essence of the times while retaining a degree of equivocality'.²¹ The aim is to create an openness to possibility and potential, rather than closing things down through simple description. Similarly, Rorty suggests that 'a talent for speaking differently, rather than arguing well, is the chief instrument of cultural change'.²²

'Critical events' are important. These are 'unexpected events that disturb the normal course of activity and are triggers for reflection because they force individuals to combine previous experiences and new insights while thinking existing thoughts and actions'.²³ They are an important part of learning to think and act like an entrepreneur.²⁴ My research participants certainly experienced this: 'I had to figure out how to get my way around that', 'making it up as we go along'. But how does one decide whether something is a 'critical event'? Facing uncertainty and the risk of failure is one way of deciding, but it is also something that develops over time, built upon a breadth of experience and the capacity to reflect on that experience.

²⁰ I. Colville, A. Pye and A. D. Brown, 'Sensemaking processes and Weickarious learning', *Management Learning*, 47 no 1 (2016), 3–13 (p. 11).

²¹ Ibid.

²² R. Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 7.

²³ I. Lindh and S. Thorgren, 'Critical event recognition: an extended view of reflective learning', *Management Learning*, 47 no 5 (2016), 525–42 (p. 526).

²⁴ J. Cope and G. Watts, 'Learning by Doing – an exploration of experience, critical incidents and reflection in entrepreneurial learning', *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research*, 6 no 3 (2000), 104–24.

Sense-making is not simply the preserve of an insightful individual. The collaborative processes of a collective can work in the same way, either through communities of practice or the concept of open innovation, where external and internal resources and ideas flow across organisational boundaries (a bit like the concept of open-source software). Nor is it random; it 'develops step-by-step in a continuously-evolving path to pursue the learning objective while avoiding the obstacles it encounters'.²⁵ In other words, it is an intentional and deliberate process. 'Design thinking' is a concept that has been suggested for this purpose. Over-familiarity can be a problem, and prior experience in the field of interest can hinder learning, imagination and creativity. Design thinking seeks to reframe a stale problem by drawing on new perspectives, using analogical thinking (taking ideas from elsewhere), abductive reasoning (developing hypothetical solutions), and mental stimulation (imagining alternative futures).²⁶ In this way, it provides a structured way into the process of entrepreneurial opportunity identification, helping people to see things from a different perspective.

Although the focus of my research project was on entrepreneurial individuals rather than group processes, the concepts of open innovation and dispersed communities of practice can be seen in their willingness to learn from others and learn from outside the Church. The research literature at this point moves us to the question of the kinds of organisational structural and cultural processes that might facilitate innovation and learning.

The role of organisational culture. It is helpful to make a distinction between the organisation's processes and policies (and the degree to which they support or hinder innovation and risk-taking), and the autonomous, extra-role, change-oriented behaviour of its personnel. The ideal is to have both. In the absence of the former, the latter can still happen (albeit not as effectively). One can also have the former but not the latter, in which case not much will happen. Having the right policies is good, but having the right people is essential. Organisational culture creates the context within which certain practices are encouraged or discouraged, but it is not enough in itself to generate the entrepreneurial behaviours discussed in this report. You

²⁵ R. Bissola, B. Imperatori and A. Biffi, 'A rhizomatic learning process to create collective knowledge in entrepreneurship education: Open innovation and collaboration beyond boundaries', *Management Learning*, 48 no 2 (2017), 206–26 (p. 207).

²⁶ M. Garbuio, D. Lovallo, A. Dong, N. Lin and T. Tschang, 'Demystifying the genius of entrepreneurship: how design cognition can help create the next generation of entrepreneurship', *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 17 no 1 (2018), 41–61.

need more than the right systems and culture; you need those whose entrepreneurial aspirations already exist, independent of the culture of the organisation.

Entrepreneurs rarely succeed on their own. Both individual initiative and group collaboration are needed. A degree of 'moderate individualism' is probably about right. But there has been a move away from the popular notion of the heroic entrepreneur towards a more balanced approach that sees them operating in, belonging to, and requiring connections across a wide social context. There is 'an ongoing reinterpretation of entrepreneurship as not so much an individualistic self-interest-driven phenomenon, but rather an activity embedded in a social context'.²⁷ The ideal is a 'socially-supportive culture' that relies heavily on social capital and cooperation, not a 'performance-based culture' that seeks to reward individual accomplishments. Friendly cooperation plays a decisive role in the emergence of entrepreneurship, providing the strong and weak ties identified earlier, rewarding the sharing of innovative ideas, and reducing set-up costs through easier access to the required resources. Having noted this, policy frameworks still have a role to play, including the stories told within an organisation (who gets held up to others as an example?), an acknowledgement of the value of risk-taking, and the encouragement of teamwork and knowledge-sharing.

An external orientation plays a significant role in developing entrepreneurial behaviours in an organisation. An internal focus that concentrates on the skills and capabilities of its staff can help an organisation to respond to new opportunities, but it can also descend into inertia and stagnation. An external focus is open to signals and opportunities from partners and customers, bringing greater alertness to problems, opportunities, and the potential for innovative solutions to meet them.²⁸ However, it is difficult to be specific about the steps that need to be taken to achieve this, as entrepreneurial opportunities are unpredictable. Innovations usually emerge in a space-in-between, meaning no one person can claim the credit for them. Sometimes all we can do is create the conditions where they become more likely. This has been called an 'adaptive space'. What is needed is 'enabling leadership', which is 'the enabling of

²⁷ U. Stephan and L. M. Uhlaner, 'Performance-based vs socially supportive culture: A cross-national study of descriptive norms and entrepreneurship', *Journal on International Business Studies*, 41 (2010), 1347–64 (p. 1358).

²⁸ K. S. Cameron and R. E. Quinn, *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006).

conditions that effectively support and sustain adaptive space.²⁹ This brings together those with ideas and the desire for change and provides them with the opportunities and resources they need to generate new approaches and initiatives. Enabling leadership also helps this process by creating uncertainty and instability, thereby creating greater possibilities for entrepreneurial innovation. It would be wrong to infer, however, a simple inverse correlation between rules and innovation. As noted above, some degree of structural and policy support for innovation is helpful. Enabling leaders are able to balance the tensions of policy and procedure with innovation and reflexivity:

It is the enabling function of leadership that bounds the organisation within the safety of policy, bureaucracy and administration, whilst also enabling the people within the organisation that comprise the complex adaptive system to find freedom to experiment, innovate, and respond to new realities.³⁰

Conclusion

The development of entrepreneurial leadership in the Church in Scotland comes about through a combination of traits and behaviours exhibited by practitioners, with a variety of enablers and hindrances providing a wider context for these initiatives. The relationship between these is developed in the diagram and narrative content of the 'theory' section of this paper.

A key trait is that of asking questions and seeing things from a different perspective. From this comes a desire to improve on current ways of doing things, if necessary, by starting something new that is a challenge to existing ways of doing things. Core values play a substantial part in giving focus and direction to any initiative, while also allowing for flexibility in response to challenges, new opportunities, or a change in circumstances.

Important behaviours include the ability to draw on reserves of social capital to make connections and acquire resources. This allows them to form a core team and to draw on a wide network of contacts and partners in support of their initiatives.

²⁹ M. Uhl-Bien and M. Arena, 'Complexity Leadership: Enabling people and organizations for adaptability', *Organizational Dynamics*, 46 (2017), 9-20 (p. 14).

³⁰ R. Elkington and A. Upward, 'Leadership as enabling function for flourishing by design', *Journal of Global Responsibility*, 7 no 1 (2016), 126-44 (p. 139).

Alongside this is an ongoing commitment to just-in-time learning. This learning comes from a wide variety of sources and is needs-driven, responding to issues as they arise.

The developmental approach described herein gives attention to the wider context, i.e. the hindrances and the enablers, and the desirability of reducing the former and strengthening the latter. Hindrances include organisational cultural and structural factors, as well as the Scottish 'tall poppy' culture. Misunderstandings, organisational histories of change (or the lack thereof), and communication challenges all play their part. Enablers include an expectation of and permission for innovation and change, the nurturing of those who show themselves ready to start something, and recognised leadership development inputs like mentoring and coaching. The creation of 'adaptive spaces' makes it more likely that positive entrepreneurial initiatives will emerge and gain the necessary support.

Leadership Lessons from the First Year of a 'Missional' Church Plant

GORDON CHEUNG

Area Manager (Scotland), Christians Against Poverty

In the summer of 2017 my wife Jenny and I, independent from organisational support, began assembling a team. We aimed to start a mission and church plant project in the North Pollok area of Glasgow, with an emphasis on exploiting our physical and relational embeddedness in this area. This paper outlines the experiences of the first year of that project.

North Pollok lies south west of Glasgow city centre and was created in the post WW2 period as a purpose-built 'scheme' to house people relocated from inner city slums.¹ The housing in the area, mainly terraces and semi-detached homes, indicates that it was intended for skilled and semi-skilled workers and their families. Thus, though income deprivation of 25% is above the Glasgow average (20.8%) it is not as severe as the other Glasgow schemes or the inner city.² Still, 30% of adults claim out-of-work benefits which is 40% higher than the Glasgow average; 13.7% of young people are not in work or training, 16% above the city average; 47% of households with dependent children have single parents, 15% above the city average; 37% of children are in poverty, 14% above the city average; and between 1996 and 2012 the population declined by 22%.³ The question for us was what 'shape of church' would help us and our friends, a group based locally but middle class in contrast to most of our neighbours, establish a worshipping community in this area.

Into this context Frost and Hirsch propose a move away from a traditional, attractional model of church and suggest their model of missional church based around four concepts:

- a worshipping community of Christians
- the creation of proximity spaces that allow genuine social connection between Christians and others in a host community
- a set of joint partnerships between Christians and others in their community

¹ [David Walsh et al., 'History, politics and vulnerability: explaining excess mortality in Scotland and Glasgow'](#) (Glasgow Centre for Population Health, May 2016) [accessed 24 September 2019].

² [Understanding Glasgow](#) [accessed 24 January 2018].

³ [Understanding Glasgow](#) [accessed 5 February 2018].

- the creation of commercial activity in order to add something of value to that host community.

They believe that much of this activity will take place on the periphery of the church's existing sphere of influence.⁴

Rae also writes of entrepreneurship taking place on the periphery of geographic, economic and social activity, '[...] a zone of disadvantage, hazard and vulnerability [...]'.⁵ In both the missional and entrepreneurial case, leaders of these new patterns, disconnected from human and financial capital, operate under conditions of resource scarcity.⁶ Therefore, it is interesting that, in addressing the changing environment that churches in the UK face, Volland forgoes theological missional language and uses the vocabulary of leadership and entrepreneurial studies to suggest a new pattern of Christian leadership:

[...] showing that Christians who possess entrepreneurial character traits are a gift of God to the Church because they can imagine what might be, communicate this vision appropriately, and engage in genuine partnership with others in order to see new or improved outcomes, all for the sake of the coming kingdom of God.⁷

This suggests that future Christian leadership may be analogous to social entrepreneurship, where '[...] social value creation appears to be the primary objective, while economic value creation is often a by-product [...]'.⁸

This is an account of an urban mission project. But this paper will use the frames and theories of leadership and entrepreneurship studies when it describes, analyses and proposes interpretation of what happened. Therefore, it attempts to explain the progress of the project by describing

⁴ Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of things to Come* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), Kindle Edition.

⁵ David Rae, 'Entrepreneurial learning: peripherality and connectedness', *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research* 23(3) (2017), 491.

⁶ Frost and Hirsch, *op. cit.*, Rae, *op. cit.*

⁷ Michael Volland, *The Minister as Entrepreneur: Leading and Growing the Church in an Age of Rapid Change* (London: SPCK, 2015), Kindle Location 217.

⁸ C. Seelos and J. Mair, 'Social entrepreneurship: Creating new business models to serve the poor', *Business Horizons* 48 (2005), 244.

the entrepreneurial activity of its leaders, the value formation process of a group that gathered voluntarily, and with democratic aspirations, around an emerging common cause, and the emotional effects that the leaders discovered when dealing with risk and in leading others.

Mission in North Pollok

When the project started in June 2017, it consisted of one family, a youth choir in a local arts centre (the SWAMP), and some voluntary work assisting teachers with music and singing in the local primary school. This had grown by the end of the recorded period.

The mission project, working in two local primary schools and the secondary school they fed into, had taken on a name, *The Voice Project*. This led to a youth community choir as some young people from schools crossed over. Also, an adult community choir had been started in the North Pollok area, meeting first in the SWAMP centre before soon moving to premises in St James, the local parish church.

Using a mix of talents, proactivity and informal relationships, Jenny used the *Voice Project* as a springboard to create income from outside North Pollok to support its mission. Jenny leads a choir for a commercial project in Strathaven, another for a cancer support group in Paisley, a new community choir in a parish church in Glasgow's east end, choirs in a primary school in Larkhall with similar aims to those in Pollok, and the youth choir for the annual Praise Gathering concerts held in Glasgow and Perth. (From the autumn of 2018 she engaged with another primary school in Cumbernauld and led a choir in support of a pioneer ministry post in Paisley). As this gained momentum, several friends became financial donors of Jenny's work. This enabled Jenny to leave her post with a national youth ministry and focus the best of her time, sustainably, on work in North Pollok.

Concurrent with this, a nascent worshipping community, *The Well*, gathered around us. This consisted of twelve adults who valued serving our neighbourhood, demonstrated by their participation in the *Voice Project* and that nearly all of them could walk to our home where we held worship.

Worshiping together began slowly, with monthly Sunday meetings held through the autumn of 2017. The group experienced a time of adjusting to leaving a larger city centre church. Other than having a commitment to the locality, initially, they had few shared values that could be explicitly articulated. Uncovering the implicit values that were (assumed to be) shared became the key process that the worshipping community went through during the recorded period. After the Christmas period *The Well* started to meet fortnightly and by early summer of 2018 was beginning to consider how to be more public with its worship gatherings. So, what did our experience suggest?

Proximity creates opportunities for joint partnerships

One frame to explain the finding of opportunity being uncovered through proximity are social network theories such as those advocated by Balkundi and Kilduff. Here 'Leadership requires the management of social relationships [...]'⁹ that are '[...] opportunity structures that facilitate and constrain action'.¹⁰ They list four key principles that drive their theory.

First, the relationship between actors creates a symbiotic and dynamic field. Leadership is not found in individuals' attributes (human capital) but through the relationships that connect them. This links to the second principal: that gains are made by embedding into that social network. Thirdly, understanding how individuals are linked to each other through structural patterning, gives actors access to the information that flows asymmetrically through these relationships, allowing as to where best to position themselves.¹¹ This is shown in our case by the relationships built over time between Jenny and the staff of Crookston Castle School. This allowed the formation of the *Voice Project* to emerge as an organic response to a contextual need.¹²

Fourth, is an understanding that it is the strength of these relationships, built through the creation of trust or 'bonding'¹³ that releases social capital, allowing '[...] access to other production resources, such as physical or human capital, and also facilitates decision-making processes and collective action through reciprocity and mutual trust.'¹⁴ Again this is illustrated by Jenny using the trust built up by serving the school's agenda that was matched by the school releasing facilities for the *Voice Project* to host its Easter showcase. It illustrates the strength of engendering trust through identifying with a definite community.¹⁵

⁹ P. Balkundi and M. Kilduff, 'The ties that lead: a social network approach to leadership', *The Leadership Quarterly*, 17 (2006), 434.

¹⁰ Balkundi and Kilduff, *op. cit.*, p. 420.

¹¹ See D. M. De Carolis and P. Saporito, 'Social Capital, Cognition, and Entrepreneurial Opportunities: A Theoretical Framework', *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* (January 2006), 41–55.

¹² See P. D. Corner and M. Ho, 'How Opportunities Develop in Social Entrepreneurship', *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* (July 2010), 635–59.

¹³ See P. Iles, and D. Preece, 'Developing Leaders or Developing Leadership? The Academy of Chief Executives' Programmes in the North East of England', *Leadership*, 2 (3) (2006), 317–334.

¹⁴ F. Linan and F. J. Santos, 'Does Social Capital Affect Entrepreneurial Intentions?', *International Advances in Economic Research*, 13 (2007), 451.

¹⁵ See Shaw and Carter (2007).

While this frame seems to emphasise that gains are made by exploiting social capital, the significant human capital involved should also be recognised. It is reliant on proactive individuals responding to environmental opportunities, and having the sense-making skills to exploit them '[...] through the acuity with which they perceive social structures and the actions they take to build connections with important constituencies within and across social divides.'¹⁶ Simply put, being active, not just present, within the community has revealed opportunities to serve it. We would follow Iles and Preece in saying that leadership is exercised when the '[...] focus is on building networked relationships that enhance cooperation and resource exchange and social capital, based on relationships created through interpersonal exchanges.'¹⁷

While social network theories explain why opportunities to create joint partnerships arise, we require other frames to explain how they are exploited. Here the literature review predicted that those working close to a situation, while at the same time suffering the disadvantages of working in a peripheral setting,¹⁸ may turn to the tools of 'bricolage' as noted by Di Domenico et al.¹⁹ They propose that in situations of resource scarcity actors may exhibit three qualities in starting their projects to meet their goals.

First is a refusal to be constrained by the limitations of their environment. Having a mind-set that finds creative solutions by asking not what should be done in an ideal world but by doing what can be done in the actual setting may lead to positive action. Second is a willingness towards improvisation. This implies contextual sense-making and an ability to work creatively to solve the problems inherent in the environment. Third, bricolage is essentially about making do with what comes to hand, '[...] whereby bricoleurs acquire resources and recombine them in novel ways to solve problems and respond to opportunities [...] for the purpose of social value creation.'²⁰

Leadership in these contexts may not be about deciding how to meet all the possible needs, but finding what needs can be met,²¹ Moynagh writes:

¹⁶ Balkundi and Kilduff, *op. cit.*, p. 435.

¹⁷ P. Iles and D. Preece, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

¹⁸ See Rae, *op. cit.*

¹⁹ See M. L. Di Domenico, H. Haugh and P. Tracey, 'Social Bricolage: Theorising social value creation in social enterprises', *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* (July 2010).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 689.

²¹ See Corner and Ho, *op. cit.*

Once a mission community [...] has formed and is clear about the people it is called to, the question becomes how best to serve them. The answer begins to emerge by prayerfully exploring how opportunities and available resources can be matched.²²

In short, rather than waiting for the ideal convergence of resources and people to meet the abundant needs of the area, we identified one, a shortage of art provision, where a tangible need could be met. Further, as additional opportunities arose for Jenny we would propose that she (sub-consciously) engaged in a process of 'effectuation'²³, by intuitively responding to the possibilities that were arising rather than by following a pre-determined route. This allowed the *Voice Project* to exhibit agility in its decision making. Zahra et al. suggest that bricoleurs use their social and geographic proximity to their advantage, by responding to needs that larger agencies outside the context may not be aware of²⁴ – the origins of the *Voice Project* certainly lie in us being present in our context and in the particular combination of available resources to meet actual needs.

Further, Di Domenico et al., refer to 'bootstrapping', that actors can gain and use resources they do not own, while at the same time not being constrained by the agendas of others.²⁵ This would seem to fall well within Frost and Hirsch's definition of a joint partnership.²⁶ Working in local partnerships has given the *Voice Project* access to facilities by sharing agendas but not being subsumed by them.

Additionally, because we used skills inherent in the (mostly volunteer) mission team there was an element of mobilisation around a common cause, by aligning worship and mission. Though Jenny takes the lead on these projects she is joined by other members of the team for weekly projects and special occasions. Mobilisation around a common cause has allowed the *Voice Project* to gain stakeholder participation²⁷ and the support of volunteers.²⁸

²² M. Moynagh, *Church for Every Context: Introduction to Theology and Practice* (London: S.C.M. Press, 2012), p. 249.

²³ See Di Domenico et al., *op. cit.*

²⁴ See S. A. Zahra, E. Gedajlovic, D. O. Neubaum, and J. M. Shulman, 'A typology of social entrepreneurs: Motives, search processes and ethical Challenges', *Journal of Business Venturing*, 24 (2009), 519–32.

²⁵ See Di Domenico et al., *op. cit.*

²⁶ See Frost and Hirsch, *op. cit.*

²⁷ See Di Domenico et al., *op. cit.*

²⁸ See P. J. Murphy and S. M. Coombes, 'A model of social entrepreneurial discovery', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 87 (2009), 325–36.

Sustainability and freedom of action are aided by the pro-active application of human capital

Social Entrepreneurship literature suggests that for organisations to fulfil their mission then they would need to create income to achieve sustainability. When independent sustainability is achieved then this allows freedom of action. By April 2018 this goal had been partially realised with Jenny to leave her job with a national youth organisation, becoming a freelance musician and devoting the best of her time and energy to North Pollok.

Donor funding has come from the worshipping community. But some opportunity has arisen through proximity generated by bonding, bridging and brokering across social networks, and some by taking elements created in joint partnerships and applying them in other contexts. We contend that individual leader(s) exploited these areas through the entrepreneurial behaviour(s) of innovation, proactivity and risk tolerance.²⁹ These behaviours could be used to help frame much of what is described above, but they also help to explain how we embarked on the road to sustainability.

Innovation. Through innovation actors creatively combine resources to meet the needs of the environment: 'Innovativeness focuses on the search for creative and meaningful solutions to individual and operational problems and needs.'³⁰ Chen hints that innovation may come from contextual immersion; that providers identify with potential recipients to discern the type of service required.³¹

We contend that the *Voice Project* emerged from understanding how contextual needs could be met with the resources that came to hand. As outlined above, this could be described as a convergence of bricolage and

²⁹ See V. Gupta, I. C. MacMillan and G. Surie, 'Entrepreneurial leadership: Developing and measuring a cross-cultural construct', *Journal of Business Venturing*, 19 (2004), 241–60; M. H. Chen, 'Entrepreneurial leadership and new ventures: Creativity in entrepreneurial teams', *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 16 (3) (2007), 239–49; J. Darling, M. Gabrielsson and H. Seristö, 'Enhancing contemporary entrepreneurship: a focus on management leadership', *European Business Review*, 19 (1) (2007), 4–22; D. F. Kuratko, 'Entrepreneurial Leadership in the 21st Century', *Journal of Leadership and Organisational Studies*, 13 (4) (2007), 1–11; A. Bagheri, Z. Akmaliah and L. Pihie, 'Entrepreneurial leadership: towards a model for learning and development', *Human Resource Development*, 14 no. 4 (September 2011), 447–63.

³⁰ Darling, Gabrielsson and Seristo, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

³¹ See Chen, *op. cit.*

networking. But the frame of entrepreneurial behaviour allows us to account for the agency of individuals in creatively taking advantage of the solution through sense-making and innovation. Jenny mobilised the missional community to meet a contextual need³² through '[...] breaking new ground, going beyond the known, and helping to create the future. It is also about helping people to settle into new opportunities that give them joy and hope for the future.'³³

Proactivity. 'Proactiveness is concerned with implementation, and helping to make events happen through appropriate means.'³⁴ This suggests that good ideas must be actualised through personal agency. For Bagheri et al., it is about a desire to shape, rather than be shaped, by the future and to anticipate its requirements. For agents '[...] it affects their creativity, perseverance to achieve the vision, and desire and intention to initiate entrepreneurial activities.'³⁵

Proactivity can be used as a frame to explain how the *Voice Project* arose in North Pollok: '[...] entrepreneurial leadership is a proactive response to environmental opportunities.'³⁶ But we would suggest that it was this that led to generating an income stream to make Jenny's expanding work with the project possible. If the *Voice Project* had not formed in response to the North Pollok context, the efficacy of its elements would not have been demonstrable. It may show networking is only of benefit if there is something to offer – in our case it was Jenny's human capital, her skills as a musician. But this has not happened without an acceptance of increasing risk.

Risk tolerance. Jenny's proactivity presented a chance to take control of her circumstances and advance the work of the *Voice Project*. But doing so would require stepping away from the security of a salaried post. This step was probably the biggest decision that we made that year. In the abstract Bagheri et al. make sense when they write 'Risk taking is the willingness of entrepreneurial leaders to absorb uncertainty and take the burden of responsibility for the future.'³⁷ It becomes a much more pertinent thought when it relates to one's own circumstances. This is especially stark when it is pointed out that risk-taking '[...] involves the willingness to commit resources to opportunities that may have a reasonable possibility of

³² See P. J. Murphy and S. M. Coombes, 'A model of social entrepreneurial discovery', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 87 (2009), 325–36.

³³ Darling, Gabriellsson and Seristo, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³⁵ Bagheri, Akmaliah and Pihie, *op. cit.*, p. 449.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 450.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

failure'.³⁸ This is one of the areas in which we found that missional church is an emotional experience.

Overcoming the fear of risk-taking. In cases where action is not taken for economically rational reasons,³⁹ motivations such as altruism, influential role-models, formative experiences and passion are suggested, all of which lead to a high degree of personal identification with the projects undertaken and often produce tireless work on behalf of these projects.⁴⁰ Miller et al. add compassion to this list,⁴¹ with social entrepreneurs often drawn to the plight of others with a desire to alleviate that suffering, requiring an appreciation of '[...] the motivations of individuals and groups who take the risks associated with conceiving, building, launching and sustaining new organizations [...]'⁴²

We see the Christian narrative as giving a specific moral identity that actors may use to make ethical decisions.⁴³ When this identity is coupled with proximity to a host community it provides moral awareness and a call for action into that context and a moral imagination of what could be done to alleviate the needs of that context through joint partnerships. Braga et al summarise that motivation:

[...] influences entrepreneurial behaviour in three complementary ways: influences on the choice of the individual, i.e., the direction of the action; influences the intensity of the action, based on the importance or value that the action has for the entrepreneur and influences the persistence of action, based on the clearness of the path to achieve this value.⁴⁴

³⁸ Darling, Gabrielsson and Seristo, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

³⁹ See D. Roberts and C. Woods, 'Changing the world on a shoestring: The concept of social entrepreneurship', *University of Auckland Business Review* (Autumn 2005), 45–51.

⁴⁰ See J. C. Braga, T. Proenca and M. R. Ferreira, 'Motivations for social entrepreneurship - Evidences from Portugal', *Tekhene Review of Applied Management Studies*, 12 (2014), (p. 12).

⁴¹ T. L. Miller, M. Grimes, J. S. McMullen and T. I. Vogus, 'Venturing for others with heart and head: how compassion encourages social entrepreneurship', *Academy of Management Review*, 37 (4) (2012), 616–40.

⁴² Zahra et al., *op. cit.*, p. 522.

⁴³ See J. F. McVea, 'A field study of entrepreneurial decision-making and moral imagination', *Journal of Business Venturing*, 24 (2009), 491–504.

⁴⁴ Braga, Proenca and Ferreira, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

However, while the Christian narrative provides ample motivations and imperatives for engaging in a missional church project, we should address the feelings of fear and anxiety that are present.

In our case, we find hope within the Christian story. We affirm its imperatives towards compassionate action and mission and see them as powerful motivating forces. But we also confess the anxiety of cutting off salaried income and relying on our living coming from more precarious sources. Therefore, risk tolerance can be equated with the hope that we have in our personal calling. This has been shaped in the past by influential role-models and formative experiences,⁴⁵ coupled with the faith expectation that this will continue into the future. For us this was evidenced in the number of potential sources of income that were being uncovered by the *Voice Project*. Our understanding of the Christian story is of participatory obedience to its call. This has led to us accepting that there may be short term (temporal) losses to enable longer term (eternal and altruistic) gains – the benefits outweigh the costs. The wider literature may abstract and explain the process of how altruistic motivations give an increased tolerance to risk but, for us, the source of overcoming fear is the hope of being part of the Christian story in our community.

Values matter

While it may be assumed that Christianity gives believers a common set of values and motivations to mobilise around, there is a wide disparity in how those values should be enacted, and to what degree. Each participant came to *The Well*, shaped by their own understanding of the Christian faith and their hopes and expectations of what their worship experience and participation in mission may be. By extension this may mean that each of them may wish to express their faith in subtly different ways. We found as Dees states: 'Values matter. They drive and constrain behaviour.'⁴⁶

We believe that an awareness of the negotiation over these values, what we termed the cultural paradigm, proved to be important. The emergent change impacted into where energy was expended. In the same way as Austin et al. placing the social value proposition at the centre of their model of social entrepreneurship predicts it to be the driver of activity,⁴⁷ it is proposed here that the cultural paradigm fulfils a similar function. Projects

⁴⁵ See Braga, Proenca and Ferreira, *op. cit.*

⁴⁶ J. G. Dees, 'A Tale of Two Cultures: Charity, Problem Solving, and the Future of Social Entrepreneurship', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 111 (2012), 321.

⁴⁷ See J. Austin, H. Stevenson and J. Wei-Skillern 'Social and Commercial Entrepreneurship: Same, Different or Both?' *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, (January 2006), 1–22.

in their infancy, such as *The Well*, need to spend significant resources negotiating over the shape of their paradigm, and where there is a lack of a formal behavioural or doctrinal framework, forming a new one is a key leadership task.

In assessing how to form a consensus around values we found it was important to identify how the group saw itself working. Although it seems an obvious task, this early sense-making work is key. If the wrong appreciation of a situation is made, then leaders are liable to proceed on faulty assumptions and may seek to employ the wrong tools to (trans)form the values of their groups. This encourages caution, especially in highly relational voluntary team situations where inter-personal damage may not be easily reset. Morgan writes 'Skilled leaders and managers develop the knack of reading situations with various scenarios in mind and of forging actions that seem appropriate to the understandings thus obtained.'⁴⁸ When it comes to describing group forms there are several frames, but in our case the most helpful is to note the appropriateness of seeing the group as a machine or as an organism.⁴⁹

If an organisation is viewed as a machine then the assumption is that the leader simply decides, and other members of the group simply follow those instructions and carry them out. It expects of leaders a high level of agency and of being able to give groups vision and direction. Of other members of the system it expects that '[...] the human 'machine parts' are compliant and behave as they have been designed to do.'⁵⁰ If we had viewed *The Well* as a machine we may have tried to impose our values on the other participants – but this would have relied on their compliance.

However, those other participants wanted to help shape the project. This democratic aspiration made the application of the machine metaphor and 'top-down' change tools inappropriate. In our case, it was better to view the organisation as an organism, like '[...] living systems, existing in a wider environment on which they depend for the satisfaction of various needs.'⁵¹

Each participant had a unique set of views and preferences. Studying how such unique combinations interact with others is the realm of Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS). Here a '[...] large number of agents, each of which behaves according to its own principles (rules) of local interaction which requires each agent to adjust its behaviour to that of other agents.'⁵² For Seel,

⁴⁸ Gareth Morgan, *Images of Organization* (London: Sage, 2006), p. 3.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 27.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 33.

⁵² Bernard Burnes, 'Complexity theories and organisational change', *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 7 issue 2 (2005), p. 79.

'[...] the emergent result of the continuing negotiations about values, meanings and proprieties between the members of that organisation and with its environment [...]'⁵³ creates an organisational culture, or paradigm, '[...] a self-consistent set of ideas and beliefs which act as a filter, influencing how we perceive and how we make sense.'⁵⁴ It was in creating a set of values, a cultural paradigm, from the disparate influences that made up the members of *The Well*, which became a key leadership task.

When leading in complex environments a new posture of leadership needs to be adopted. Seel suggests that of a midwife birthing something new rather than engineer.⁵⁵ Further, if values are to be formed not by edict but by negotiation within a CAS, then a new set of skills, a behavioural framework⁵⁶ rather than a mechanistic process, may be required, allowing change through interaction.

We conclude this section by stating that adopting an organic, not mechanistic, approach to value formation enabled a participative approach that allowed all the voices in the team to be heard. It was a process aided by having a strong calling to worship and mission. That time was spent on the process acknowledges the importance the cultural paradigm has on shaping direction and on informing new members of what they will be committing to.

A conceptual model for missional church

We conclude by proposing a conceptual model for missional church, as a synthesis of Frost and Hirsch's ideas, supported by the social entrepreneurship literature (figure 1).

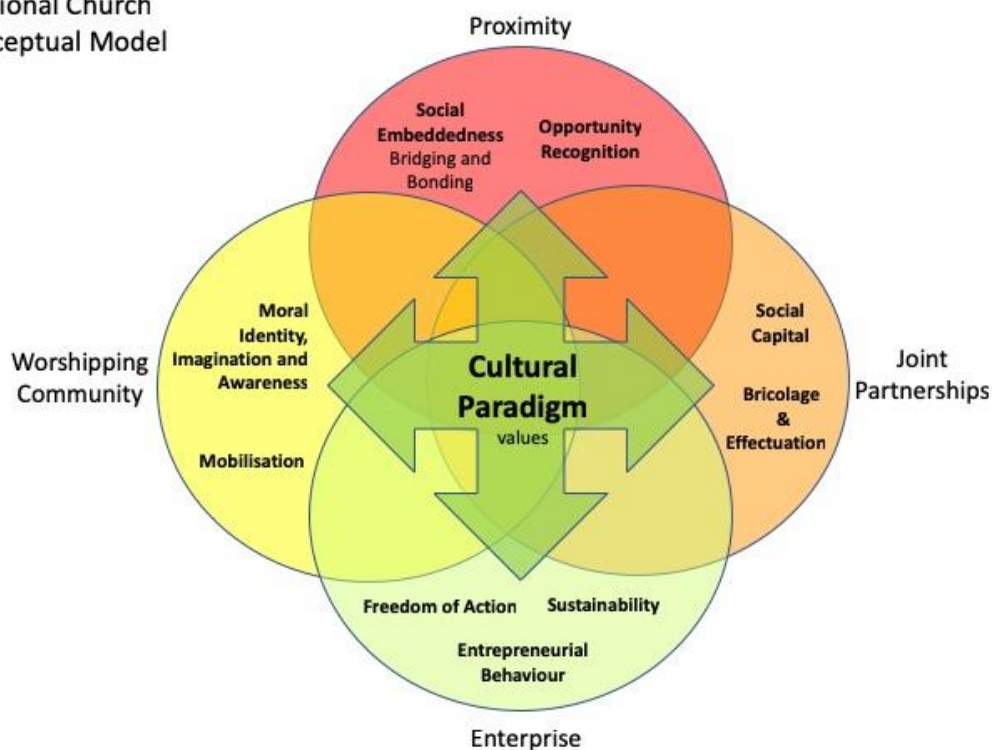
⁵³ [Richard Seel, 'Culture and Complexity: New Insights on Organisational Change'](#) [accessed 22 August 2017].

⁵⁴ Seel, *op. cit.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ See B. Lichtenstein and D.A. Plowman, 'The leadership of emergence: A complex systems leadership theory of emergence at successive organizational levels', *The Leadership Quarterly*, 20 (4) (2009), 617–30; Kevin R. Lowell, 'An Application of Complexity Theory for Guiding Organizational Change', *The Psychologist Manager Journal*, 19 nos 3–4 (2016), 148–81.

Figure 1:
Missional Church
Conceptual Model



Conceptual models gather together concepts and sub-concepts and propose how they will dynamically interact with each other and their environment to shape organisational behaviour and activity. Here missional church occurs at the overlap of proximity, joint partnerships, enterprise and the worshipping community.

The overlapping nature illustrates the dynamic interaction of the concepts and sub-concepts. For example, an organisation may have options as to how to achieve sustainability, but this may be constrained by the moral identity of the participants. Or an opportunity may be recognised in one social network, but it may come at the cost of expending social capital in another or impinge on the long-term sustainability of the project.

Proximity. The literature suggests that embeddedness in social networks⁵⁷ allows church planters to create trust through bonding with the host community, link with wider networks through bridging, and release resources through the accumulation of social capital within host communities.⁵⁸ Through embeddedness, and understanding shared codes

⁵⁷ See P. Davidsson and B. Honig, 'The role of social and human capital amongst nascent entrepreneurs', *Journal of Business Venturing*, 18 (3) (2003), 301–31; Balkundi and Kilduff, *op. cit.*

⁵⁸ See De Carolis and Saporito, *op. cit.*

and meanings, church planters gain access to information flowing through these networks,⁵⁹ which is crucial for recognising ministry opportunities. Opportunities will arise not through meticulous preplanning, but through convergence of economic, social and environmental resources⁶⁰ that can only be recognised by those contextually present.⁶¹

Joint partnerships. The literature suggests various ways in which opportunities could be recognised to work with agents in the host community to further build social capital through bridging and bonding and gain the use of assets and resources that they do not own. Principally these involved adopting strategies of bricolage and effectuation.⁶² These are not so much about identifying the plentiful needs in social environments, but in the delivery of practical solutions in innovative manners.⁶³ Bricolage is using what comes to hand and crafting solutions around available, not theoretically ideal, resources. This socially embedded improvisation recognises opportunities that those outside the social network miss.⁶⁴ Effectuation is navigating a course through the emerging context, rather than imposing on it a pre-meditated plan. This creates unique outcomes due to the contextual mix of resources and opportunities. Both strategies predict an agile response to the context but require sense-making skills to navigate through complexity.

Commercial enterprise. This can be seen as an act of good neighbouring and adding value to a host community,⁶⁵ but also as a way of sustaining the work of missional church.⁶⁶ Church plants could develop ways to generate resources that can then be deployed to further meet the mission of the venture. This also allows freedom of action. Where church planting is seen to be a charitable endeavour relying on the funding of donors,⁶⁷ action may

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ See Murphy and Coombes, *op. cit.*

⁶¹ See Corner and Ho, *op. cit.*

⁶² See Di Domenico et al., *op. cit.*

⁶³ See Austin et al., *op. cit.*; M. Wren, A. Peter, A. Dacin and M. Tina Dacin, 'Collective Social Entrepreneurship: Collaboratively Shaping Social Good', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 111 (2012), 375–88.

⁶⁴ See Zahra et al., *op. cit.*

⁶⁵ See Frost and Hirsch, *op. cit.*

⁶⁶ See J. Weerawardena and G. S. Mort, 'Investigating social entrepreneurship: A multidimensional model', *Journal of World Business*, 41 (2006), 21–35.

⁶⁷ See Dees, *op. cit.*

be constrained by having to meet the requirements of those donors.⁶⁸ In contrast, an organisation that can generate its own resources is free to pursue its own agenda.

Worshipping community. For missional church's participants, the mission of Jesus should mean they become walking anecdotes for their cause.⁶⁹ In ill-defined peripheral environments, this requires a strong ethical dimension from a place that helps to form moral awareness, imagination and identity,⁷⁰ giving boundaries to acceptable action.⁷¹ More positively the mission of Jesus should give participants a social value proposition⁷² that energises, and a common cause to mobilise around, releasing the resources and energy of the worshipping community into its host context.⁷³

The missiologist Stuart Murray indicates that the future for church in the developed world is one of dislocation and disconnection from its host culture.⁷⁴ This calls for new patterns of mission, ministry and leadership to emerge, enabling Christian communities to take on new shapes suitable for a dynamic and turbulent future. Applying the lessons of social entrepreneurship gives church planters new frames for engaging with new people, in new places and in new ways.

⁶⁸ See [S. Teasdale, 'Explaining the multifaceted nature of social enterprise: Impression management as \(social\) entrepreneurial behaviour. \(2010\) 1–35](#) [accessed 23 October 2017].

⁶⁹ See Roberts and Woods, *op. cit.*

⁷⁰ See McVea, *op. cit.*; Romans 12. 1–2.

⁷¹ See Weerawrdena and Mort, *op. cit.*

⁷² See Austin et al., *op. cit.*

⁷³ See Murphy and Coombes, *op. cit.*

⁷⁴ Stuart Murray, *Church after Christendom* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2005).

The Cultural Liturgies of Café Church

JOSHUA COCKAYNE

Lecturer, Logos Institute for Analytic and Exegetical Theology,
University of St Andrews

This article seeks to examine the engagement between culture and mission in café churches.

As the examples considered in the article will demonstrate, the label 'café church' can refer to a variety of different church communities which differ significantly in both style and approach, but which typically try to borrow from aspects of 'café culture' to enable an accessible form of worship.¹

This engagement between café culture and church raises a number of important questions for missiology and ecclesiology: Does the mix of contemporary culture and worship introduce values at odds with the values of the Gospel? Is worship compromised for the sake of mission and evangelism? These are particularly pertinent issues in the Scottish Episcopal Church in which, it is often said, the shared liturgy is the primary means of unification across the Province, rather than a particular set of doctrinal statements. Café churches often dispense with formal liturgy altogether, replacing these with more informal café-style liturgies. Thus, if café church is to be used in the SEC, then these issues need to be thought through with some care.

In the first section, I begin by profiling four different cafés or café churches: (1) A café church which meets in a 'third-place' (i.e. a non-church building) for Sunday worship, (2) A café church which runs a café throughout the week in a church building, and (3) A café church which worships in a church building with a café-style set-up for worship. Then, in the second section, I will discuss James K.A. Smith's recent work on cultural liturgies and examine the ways in which our understanding of liturgy might inform the interplay between culture and theology in café church. Drawing from Richard Niebuhr's discussion of culture in *Christ and Culture*, I consider how café church might be sensitive to the cultural issues which undermine

¹ As Graham Cray puts it 'café church' is a label which attempts to 'group examples that seek to engage with café culture and whose external characteristic is a deliberate change of ambience and 'feel' when people meet corporately' (*Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context* [Church House Publishing, 2009], p. 50).

the values of the Gospel, whilst at the same time using this contextual packaging to effectively communicate the Gospel.

Contextual Profiles

In profiling the contexts below (drawn from interviews and my own observations), I aim to consider the engagement with mission and culture within these contexts and the ways in which the café church model allows for this engagement to occur.

G2, York (Church of England)

Vicar: Revd Christian Selveratnam. G2 is a large Fresh Expression church, planted from St. Michael le Belfry in York in 2006. G2 currently has two congregations – 'G2 Burnholme', which meets in a local community centre, and 'G2 City', which meets in a Methodist church hall in the city centre. Currently, both G2 congregations meet in theatre style, using the café style layout during student holidays when attendance is reduced. Both have around 100–150 in attendance on a Sunday.

G2 began as a café church aimed at creating an accessible worshipping community for the de-churched and un-churched, with a particular focus on young adults. It originally met in the function room of a gym, laying the room out with large tables and chairs. It puts a high value on pioneering and innovation; in its vision statement it describes that, 'We are committed to experimentation, starting new things, and sharing what we learn with others.' This also states that, 'We want to reimagine what the church can be in the world, models aren't sacred, and we believe Jesus can be worshipped with our whole lives.'²

Christian Selveratnam, the vicar at G2, describes 'café church' in relatively broad terms, noting that they have used a number of different models over the years. He describes that, 'the common ingredients' of café church, 'are a higher presence of hospitality, which often might be in the same rooms, the room where you worship and the room where you socialise, often are the same one'. He also notes that seating is often different, 'typically sitting on chairs that [are] organised around tables, rather than in something that resembles the layout of fixed pews or even theatre style or something like.' Thirdly, Selveratnam told me, the consequence of this difference in layout is that, 'the meeting naturally lends itself to...being a conversation, rather than a monologue'. Finally, he noted, café church often operates using the concept of the 'third space' (which I will explore later in the article); rather than meeting in places of work or home (first and second space), café churches often try to create a neutral space where people feel relaxed and

² [G2York website](#), 2019 [accessed 14 June 2019].

can socialise easily. Selveratnam states that, 'I think café style, especially if it's not running [in] a church building takes the church meeting out of the church domain into somewhere neutral and that definitely helps people, particularly visitors.'

According to its website, one of G2's core values is evangelism, noting that 'We will keep inviting people to discover and follow Jesus and we will share, and be, good news in every sphere of influence', and part of its vision is '*to start and support churches that help people to discover and follow Jesus Christ. We are looking for opportunities to step out in mission, plant new churches and to support leaders in the region*'.³ Selveratnam noted a number of features which mean that using a café-church model help and assist the community to be missional. First, one of the recurring themes was that of accessibility; the meeting was described as 'very easy to dip in and out of', something which has a parallel with a coffee shop. Selveratnam told me that, 'All sorts of different things are happening with different people and that doesn't matter. Because it's the style.' He suggested that this means that people feel comfortable to opt in and out of the meeting as they choose, making it a more accessible context for newcomers, and families with young children.

Secondly, Selveratnam noted that café church adopts a less top-down model than most traditional churches and allows people to express their own beliefs and opinions freely. He told me that this can be:

a very helpful mission or dynamic and it might be quite cultural, that people don't want to be told what beliefs are. But people, I think, are very interested in having a discussion about beliefs. ... as long as ... their interaction is genuinely wanted; I think people are happy to engage with that.

The use of discussion and interaction seems to foster this attitude, but even the layout suggests a more egalitarian approach to worship; the focus of the room is not the front, but the other members of the congregation. This is also reflected in the liturgy of the services; Selveratnam described the meetings as having a 'magazine style', having 'lots of little bits', breaking up talks with questions and media, and being creative with the use of interactive worship, discussion questions, and interviews.

Finally, Selveratnam mentioned the engagement with social justice in the community, noting the similarities with the 'pay it forward scheme' implemented in many cafes. He noted that many of his congregation are concerned with the ethics of the produce they consume, and the church's

³ G2York (emphasis in the original), *op. cit.*

engagement with people in need. The values of G2 in their vision state that: 'We will be radically generous with our resources – they're God's anyway – and go for costly obedience and a life of serving others, especially those most in need, locally and beyond.'⁴ Selveratnam admitted that this may be a feature of the increased concern for social and ethical issues amongst millennials but reflected that the openness of their varied 'magazine-style' meetings allowed space for engagement with such issues.

One interesting point Selveratnam raised was the empowerment of lay leaders within this context. Because the services are varied in content, and because they strive to have an egalitarian structure, there are a number of lay people involved in leading, preaching, and leading worship. One result of this is that the church community is instinctively more in touch with culture; Selveratnam noted that, because clergy spend so much time engaged professionally in the Church, they can often lose touch with culture. He reflected that as a fifty-year-old ordained minister, he has a very different understanding of culture from a twenty-two-year-old student or young professional. Allowing a twenty-two-year-old to lead a service brings a difference in 'life perspective' and they are typically 'more likely to have the pulse of what's in popular culture'. Selveratnam suggested that their engagement with culture was therefore 'just a consequence of who's involved', noting that, 'the leader of the church [doesn't]... need to be monitoring ... popular culture on behalf of everyone. [They] need to empower people to bring all the things they're learning about following Christ through their life to the church context. And if we do that, well then what we're doing is ... of relevance to culture or ... seeing ... what Gospel themes are in society and trying to give them space in a meeting.'

Finally, Selveratnam admitted that café church can sometimes lack the richness of 'higher' forms of worship (e.g. cathedral worship), but that G2 aims to reach people who might not engage with cathedral worship easily. He also noted that the style of worship meant that it was much harder to remain anonymous than in larger, more formal settings. For people experiencing difficult times, for instance, the prospects of being 'sat at a table' when 'somebody asks you questions about your life' might feel uncomfortable.

*St George's Tron, Glasgow (Church of Scotland)*⁵

Minister: Revd Alastair Duncan. St George's Tron has a reputation within the evangelical church for teaching and preaching, and sits on Buchanan Street

⁴ G2York, *op. cit.*

⁵ See St George's Tron [website](#) [accessed 14 June 2019].

in Glasgow city centre, one of the busiest streets in the UK. In 2013, shortly after a large refurbishment of the building, the congregation left over concerns with the Church of Scotland's stance on same-sex marriage. When Alastair Duncan arrived as Transition Minister, he had a congregation of 0, and a large refurbished city-centre building. Duncan spent some time considering the context which the church was part of, noting that the main communities surrounding the church were 'people who work in the city, people who shop in the city, students, night time leisure and pleasure seekers, and homeless and marginalised people'. Duncan told me that the key questions to consider during this process of discernment were: 'how do you get people to come in a building if they're not used to it? [And] How do you get young people to go in a church building?'. He noted that many un-churched people feel a sense of embarrassment and alienation going into a church building, but that everyone instinctively knows how to act in a café.

Thus, St George's decided to convert the back of the main sanctuary into a café, aiming to create a space with 'good ambiance' and providing 'good quality of food'. The café is open Monday to Friday, and serves soup, scones, coffee and cake. It runs as an independent charitable entity, giving its profits to two homeless charities in Glasgow, and it also provides free meals and drinks to homeless people in the city. They also run training placements for individuals struggling to find employment and employ a resident artist and filmmaker who, between them, paint and make video content for use in the building. They have a volunteer chaplain who aims to start conversations with individuals who come into the café, and to provide pastoral support for those in need.

St George's retained a traditional church layout in the rest of the building. On Sunday, the church meets in a 'café style', with a shared meal, beginning the meeting with discussion questions around tables, a time of testimony, sung worship and a sermon. The congregation sit around tables for the service, and when there is a communion service, the tables function as communion tables. Sunday afternoon operates as a community building social time, before a very short, simple evening service at 5pm.

Since opening the café, Duncan approximated that they had served at least 42,000 individuals over the course of a year, meaning that a lot of people pass through the building each day. A steady trickle of individuals had also joined the café church since the space was changed because of their interactions in the café. There is a weekly midweek service running in the church whilst the cafe is open, and the space is used for Alpha courses which are advertised in the café.

Yet, Duncan was under no illusions that the church was missional *because* it had a café in the building. He noted that in fact, having a café can sometimes 'become an excuse for people not thinking about mission', since

they assume that getting people in the building is all that mission requires. However, he admitted that part of his vision for the church was to change attitudes; some people might come in for coffee and cake and leave thinking that the church is not always 'a complete, historical anachronism, a waste of space'. Others might come and see a different approach to worship and mission and take it back to their own context. For this reason, Duncan told me, it is very hard to measure the extent of their missional engagement with the community.

Duncan noted that in engaging with aspects of café culture, they had sought to 'espouse ... the immanence of God, which is why we emphasise ... eating, drinking [and] culture, it's contemporary, it's relational'. He contrasted this approach with the engagement with culture found in cathedrals which often seek to emphasise God's transcendence. Duncan told me that this relational approach allowed for a very individualised community in which the marginalised individuals of the city-centre could be engaged with more easily. St George's has tried to borrow from café culture's emphasis on hospitality, and social justice, whilst still upholding the evangelical emphasis on preaching and teaching. It is interesting to see these values directly reflected in the architecture and layout of the building; whilst the café seeks to be comfortable, contemporary and cosy, the church still *feels* like a church building.

Duncan also seemed very keen to stress that not all aspects of café culture were reflected or replicated in their community. He stated that,

we recognise that the city centre is an environment which has given over to the gods of the age, given over to making money and spending money, we're a part of what's called the Glasgow 'Style Mile'; ... the gods of working human achievement of ... vanity and praise and appearance of ... leisure and pleasure and self-indulgence, and so on. So we're parked in amongst all of that. ... we engage with it, ... in the sense that, yes, we have a coffee shop, which invites people to come in ... [aiming to foster] the values of welcome hospitality, compassion ... But we are doing it explicitly as a church and in Jesus's name.

If there is an engagement with culture in the café church at St George's Tron, it is because there is a recognition that many of the values of café culture are Christian values. Yet, they are keen to stress that they are unlike any café since their work is done 'in Jesus's name'. As Duncan described their vision: 'what we seek to do, is to make the space as much a passive sign of the gospel as of Christian values, and, as an active space and terms of our practice, how we treat people how we welcome people.'

Duncan noted some challenges which come with café church; one of the results of engaging with a city centre context is that the congregation is more 'fluid'. This means that retaining volunteers is more challenging. Having a younger demographic also means that there is a lack of generous retired congregation members who typically volunteer in more traditional contexts. This also means that 'there's more of an emphasis ... on paying people to do stuff'. Additionally, because of the fluidity of the congregation, it can be difficult keep track pastorally of individuals.

St Luke's, Dundee (Scottish Episcopal Church)

Rector: Revd Canon Kerry Dixon. St Luke's describes itself as an 'Anglican evangelical church that welcomes everyone' and that it aims to 'explore life's issues from a faith perspective in a relaxed café atmosphere'.⁶ When Kerry Dixon became rector, St Luke's was a small, traditional SEC congregation. They initially removed the pews and replaced these with tables and chairs, opening up the kitchen hatch to serve food and drinks, and focusing the room to the side, rather than towards the altar. More recently, they have moved the Sunday service into the church hall, meeting around tables. Dixon described the meetings at St Luke's as aimed at the 'non-churched ... rather than the churched or the de-churched'. The meetings are deliberately informal to encourage the accessibility of the community, as Dixon told me, 'We want a place where people can belong before they believe – you can come and sit and hang out, and you can get up and go if it's getting a bit intense for you. You can walk out and have a fag or go get a cup of coffee.' Thus, church meetings are typically more 'conversational' than formal, with short interactive talks. Demonstration of vulnerability is encouraged by making space for 'people to tell their stories, so people who have broken lives feel less judged'. Dixon described that this style of worship has attracted young families, who are drawn to a context in which they can allow their children to run around, and engage at their own pace, as well as marginalised individuals who might sleep rough, or who have drug addiction problems.

St Luke's sets out for its Sunday meeting to be missional. As Dixon describes it, the whole meeting 'is geared around the message' of the Gospel. This focus on the Gospel is not reflected merely in content (although this is clearly important to St Luke's), but the focus on accessibility is an attempt to model the welcome of the Gospel in action. Dixon told me a moving story of a young woman who was drawn to the community because she saw the way in which the meeting was centred upon the people and not the liturgy – whilst Dixon was speaking one Sunday, a member of the congregation with

⁶ St Luke's Dundee [website](#) [accessed 14 June 2019].

mental health problems was visibly distressed. Rather than carry on the sermon, Dixon decided to stop and put his arm around the shoulder of the man and calm him down so that he could carry on preaching. For the young woman in question, this showed her something of the love found within the community. Reflecting on this incident, Dixon told me that:

Because relationship is much more important than anything else that we do. And there are times when you can see that folks, for whatever reason, are just restless and anxious. And we'll just say, let's just stop let's take a break. Let's get another cup of coffee. Let's just stop everything. And we'll come back in five minutes just take a break. Because it's about the needs of the folks it is not about institution or anything else.

Clearly, the informal café style liturgy used by St Luke's has facilitated this relationship centred approach to worship which allows them to care for the congregation, but which also serves as a model of evangelism to draw new people into the community.

Dixon admitted that in using café style church, St Luke's had drawn from aspects of contemporary culture, but, he noted, 'the Church has always bowed to culture. Otherwise, we'd still be doing services ... in Latin'. He suggested that this borrowing from culture was an important part of the mission of the Church: 'The Gospel is not for the Church. The Gospel is for the world.' Thus, for Dixon, engaging with culture is crucial for engaging the Gospel with the world; he described the church's use of culture as a form of 'communication' which allows the Church to 'communicate the good news of Jesus that God loves you beyond measure ... if that's what's wrapped in a package that nobody can understand or access, and you've ceased to fulfil the function you existed for'.

Despite being upfront about using aspects of culture to communicate the Gospel, Dixon admitted that this engagement was not without its risks or challenges, one of which being that café church 'adds to the consumer culture that we have' due to the huge numbers of resources (multimedia, talks, quizzes) that are needed to sustain the liturgy of café church, which lacks a set liturgy used every week. He also noted that formal cathedral worship has its benefits which café church could never bring, most notably, the richness and depth of the liturgy. Ultimately, for Dixon, both the café church and the cathedral are needed within the wider Church; St Luke's exists to fulfil a particular need within a particular community, but there is no illusion that this model of church is normative. In fact, Dixon suggested, having the cathedral as a standard of orthodoxy and orthopraxy within the

SEC, meant that somewhere like St Luke's was able to operate with a 'freedom to experiment' in engaging missionally with its community.

Zest Café, St Andrews

Owner: Lisa Cathro. The final example is different from the first three in that it is not a church setting out to engage in Christian mission. It has no religious affiliation at all. Drawing comparisons with café culture more generally can help to flesh out our consideration of the intersection between culture and mission in café churches.

Zest is a café in St. Andrews, which is run as a social enterprise. Its vision is 'To inspire and transform lives through excellence in People Development and Social Inclusion', and it does so by striving 'To create meaningful work and learning opportunities for people with barriers to employment by embracing diversity and social inclusion'. They 'aim to take a holistic view of the person and put people above profit'. Zest employs a number of marginalised individuals with special needs and/or mental health issues, as well as offering placements for former convicts. Thus, as many of the congregational profiles suggested, this emphasis on social justice is something which appears to be prevalent within coffee culture, more generally, as well as in café churches.

Lisa Cathro, the owner, described this engagement with social issues as playing an important role in her business; she noted that people like to use Zest because they can support a charitable enterprise and contribute to the community. But she also noted that the quality of the produce served helped Zest to attract regular customers. As she told me, 'The majority of our customers are regulars' who like to go somewhere 'where they are known and know the staff who will be there.' Thus, the sense of community and belonging in an environment like Zest is striking. It is notable how the emphasis on social justice for its own sake as well as such engagement serving an almost evangelistic role in bringing people into the café was present even in a context like Zest.

Reflecting more generally on the attraction of independent cafés, Cathro told me that, 'People want to change their lifestyles, and often see cafés as relaxed and simple.' Independent cafés are able to stand out from chain cafés in their engagement with social issues. This is exemplified in Zest which clearly has both a loyal supportive customer base, and a strong engagement with social issues.

Reflection: Café culture and Church in dialogue

Having considered four different contexts which reveal various aspects of the engagement between culture and the Gospel at play in café church, we

will now consider some conceptual questions which arise in the engagement between culture and mission.

First, a few brief comments on the nature of liturgy more generally. Whilst the term 'liturgy' might typically be associated with a certain kind of high-church ritual, the term has traditionally been used much more broadly to describe any ritual with a certain goal or *telos*. Liturgy comes from the Greek, *leitourgia*, which literally means 'work of the people', and was a term commonly used to refer to public work performed for the benefit of the state.⁷ Moreover, it also seems clear that each of us has our own daily rituals and liturgies with their own specific goals or *telos*, whether these involve watching Netflix after work, the supermarkets we shop at, or the routes we take to work. None of these rituals are neutral, almost every ritualised action we perform reflects something of what we value and contributes to some wider cultural liturgy.

According to Smith, liturgies, whether religious, cultural, or individual, reflect the things we desire and care about. To see this, he argues, we need to recognise that human beings are not primarily rational disembodied creatures as much post-enlightenment philosophy would have us believe, but rather, desiring, ritualistic, embodied creatures. All of our liturgical actions have some level of intentionality about them, even if this is at a pre-reflective level.⁸ Thus, he argues, 'What distinguishes us ... [as human beings] ... is not *whether* we love, but *what* we love'.⁹ Our culture is filled with liturgies which seek to orientate our desires in a certain direction. These liturgies orientate towards a certain way of existing in the world as embodied, affective creatures. For instance, the liturgies of retail therapy teach us to value our autonomy as individuals and the need to satisfy our pleasures to be truly happy. Thus, as Smith goes on to describe, the primary role of Christian liturgy is to encourage the cultivation of habits which can re-orientate the actions of individuals towards God's goodness in a way that becomes second-nature to them; Christian practices aim at *forming* our habits away from those values entrenched in us by culture which run counter to God's values, and towards the values of the Gospel.¹⁰ This occurs not through an acquisition of knowledge or an increase in understanding,

⁷ James F. White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*, 3rd edn revised and expanded (Abingdon Press, 2010).

⁸ James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom (Cultural Liturgies): Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Baker Academic, 2009), pp. 48–51.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

¹⁰ James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom (Cultural Liturgies): How Worship Works* (Baker Books, 2013), p. 166.

but rather, through the development of the right kinds of habits and dispositions to re-orientate our desires.¹¹

The discussion of liturgy as desire focused raises important questions for the engagement between worship, mission and culture. On a rationalist worldview, for instance, it might be assumed that the kinds of spaces occupied by café churches provide neutral environments which make worship more accessible to newcomers, especially those who have negative connotations with church buildings. As the contextual profile of G2 York indicated, some café churches clearly see the importance of meeting in so-called *third places*. Following Ray Oldenburg's analysis, a third place is a space which has the following features:

- It is neutral ground
- It is inclusive and promotes social equality
- Conversation is a natural activity
- It is frequented by regulars who welcome newcomers
- It is typically a non-pretentious homey place
- It fosters a playful mood.¹²

Thus, whereas the Church was once a place which had many of these features, this has been replaced by the coffee shop in our culture. Whilst churches might have once had these relational and welcoming qualities, increasingly, some have argued, churches are off-putting and hostile environments for new people to enter into. In contrast, Leonard Sweet, in his book *The Gospel According to Starbucks*, writes that:

Starbucks gives away a third place for very little money. This low-cost (to you) space is not the office and it's not your home. It's a much needed third place where you can connect with others in a different way.¹³

Clearly, one of the missional pulls towards the café church movement is this attractive neutrality which allows newcomers to feel at ease, something which was reflected in some way in each of the contextual profiles we considered.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ray Oldenburg, *The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and Other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community* (Da Capo Press, 1999).

¹³ Sweet, Leonard. *The Gospel According to Starbucks: Living with a Grande Passion* (Waterbrook, 2008), p. 131.

While there is clearly some insight in this discussion of ‘third spaces’, the analysis of the interaction between culture and mission in much of this work is fairly surface level. For the idea that retail environments are straightforwardly *neutral spaces* in the way envisioned by Oldenburg is problematic. Indeed, some have raised concerns with the apparent neutrality of such spaces. As Smith argues, the movement towards locating worship in attractational, ‘neutral’ spaces is that they ‘distil Jesus’ from the liturgical practices and contexts that have been inherited by the church over many centuries, while claiming to retain the core of the message in a familiar container.¹⁴ The problem with this distillation, he goes on to argue, is that, these cultural settings:

are not just neutral containers or discardable conduits for a message. [...] what are embraced as merely fresh forms are, in fact, practices that are already oriented to a certain telos, a tacit vision of the good life. [...] when we distil the gospel message and embed it in the form of the mall, while we might think we are finding a fresh way for people to encounter Christ, in fact the very form of the practice is already loaded with a way of construing the world. The liturgy of the mall is a heart-level education in consumerism that construes everything as a commodity available to make me happy. When I encounter ‘Jesus’ in such a liturgy, rather than encountering the living Lord of history, I am implicitly being taught that Jesus is one more commodity available to make me happy.¹⁵

If Smith is right, this puts pressure on the idea of the neutrality of third spaces. These spaces might be familiar, but that doesn’t mean they are neutral. In fact, Smith warns here, distilling the Gospel into a culturally digestible form has severe implications for our presentation of what the Gospel *is*. Bringing the language and ritual of the coffee shop into the Church risks setting up the Gospel as another product for consumers to buy into. Indeed, this point was clearly acknowledged by all of the practitioners of café church I spoke to. Dixon spoke of the risks of consumerism through the vast amount of resources required to maintain café church. Duncan spoke of the recognition that they were drawing from ‘an environment which has given over to the gods of the age, given over to making money and spending money’. And Selveratnam spoke of the fact that many people today are

¹⁴ James K. A. Smith, *You are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Brazos Press, 2016), p. 75.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 75–77.

‘consumers of church’, describing the ways in which café church attempts to meet the needs of these consumers. So, these issues are clearly on the mind of those who engage in café church.

However, despite there being some clear insight in rejecting the neutrality of coffee shops, Smith’s rejection of this cultural repackaging of the Gospel is too heavy-handed. It seems possible to recognise the non-neutrality of coffee culture, without buying in wholesale to the vision of the good life it seeks to inculcate. The underlying assumptions of Smith’s critique seem to be articulated well by what Richard Niebuhr describes as the ‘Christ Against Culture’ model of understanding the engagement between culture and the Gospel. As Niebuhr presents it, this view ‘affirms the sole authority of Christ over the Christian and resolutely rejects culture’s claims to loyalty’, leading to a ‘rejection of cultural society’ and a ‘clear line of separation ... between the brotherhood of the children for God and the world.’¹⁶ Such a model is not without scriptural support or theological precedence, either. As Paul writes in Romans 12, for instance: ‘Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.’¹⁷

However, Niebuhr describes the ‘Christ Against Culture’ model as a ‘necessary and inadequate’ position to hold.¹⁸ While a great deal of progress has been made culturally and theologically by those who hold this stance of radical opposition between Christ and culture, the shortcomings of such an approach are evident. It is simply impossible in this life to be solely dependent on Christ ‘to the exclusion of culture.’¹⁹ Human beings can do no other than develop their language, their sense of self, and their relations to others in and through culture.

It is also clear that whilst there is evidence of *Christ against culture* within the pages of Scripture, there are also cases of different approaches at work. For instance, as Margaret M. Mitchell has argued in some detail, throughout I Corinthians, there is evidence that Paul is directly drawing from the political-philosophical thought of Greco-Roman discourses. For example, Mitchell argues that I Corinthians 1. 10 ‘is filled with terms which have a long history in speeches, political treatises and historical works

¹⁶ Richard H. Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (Harper Torchbooks, 1951), pp. 45, 48.

¹⁷ Romans 12. 2.

¹⁸ Niebuhr, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

dealing with political unity and factionalism'.²⁰ Moreover, discussing Paul's use of the body metaphor of I Corinthians 12, Mitchell writes that, there can be 'no doubt that I Corinthians 12 employs the most common *topos* in ancient literature for unity'.²¹ This was a metaphor used commonly in ancient Greek philosophy and political thought to stress the unity of the state. Thus, whilst Paul stressed the opposition of his culture and the Gospel in many places, he also was not afraid to use the resources and language afforded by his culture to package its message. Presumably, this is because (i) Paul sees the emphasis on unity within political literature as valuable for the Church, and, (ii) Paul seeks to communicate in a language which is familiar to his audience. Both of these points seem clearly at odds with the 'Christ Against Culture' model.

The approach seen by Paul in I Corinthians also comes across in the contexts of café-church. The three practitioners I spoke to clearly saw a great deal of value within coffee culture which reflected the values of the Gospel. Duncan spoke powerfully about the values of welcome, hospitality, compassion which were reflected in café contexts, as well as the emphasis this helped to bring on the immanence of God. Both Duncan and Selveratnam noted that many cafés also place a strong emphasis on social justice and engaging with marginalised members of society. As the discussion of Zest, St. Andrews demonstrated, these are clearly values aimed at by independent coffee shops, and something which is achieved to a high degree of success. Seeing these Kingdom values at work within this cultural context provides an opportunity to affirm the values of the Gospel in a cultural language which, even if non-neutral, is relatable to many individuals. This came across strongly in Dixon's interview, who stressed that café church is primarily about communicating the message of the Gospel in a language which is relatable to non-churched individuals. All three contexts, then, sought to find reflections of Kingdom values in culture, and to draw from these cultural contexts to communicate the message of the Gospel more effectively.

Returning to the discussion of cultural liturgies, it seems that Smith assumes that finding points of Gospel resonance in contemporary culture must fall into the trap of what Niebuhr calls the 'Christ of culture' model, in which culture and the Gospel are neatly assimilable. But this is too quick. As Duncan noted in the context of St George's Tron, 'yes, we have a coffee shop, which invites people to come in ... [aiming to foster] the values of welcome hospitality, compassion', but in contrast to any other coffee shop, 'we are

²⁰ Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians*. (Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), p. 79.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

doing it explicitly as a church and in Jesus's name.' Moreover, the 'Christ of culture' model is clearly not what Paul is advocating in I Corinthians in using political-philosophical methods and it seems clear that none of the contexts considered in section 2 advocate for this approach either. All three of the café churches I observed, spoke of the need to resist aspects of contemporary culture and seemed all too aware of the non-neutrality of coffee cultures as a conduit for communicating the Gospel.

A more nuanced approach is needed to retain Smith's insight that no culture context is neutral, whilst still recognising that there are methods of cultural engagement which are beneficial and effective forms of mission. A way of avoiding both the naivety of assuming that cultural contexts are neutral, and of the dismissive response that therefore they should never be borrowed from, is to affirm what Niebuhr calls the 'Christ and culture in paradox' model. This model seeks neither to draw sharp distinction between culture and the Gospel, nor to synthesise the two, but to hold these points in tension. The Christian should neither withdraw from culture, nor seek to become like culture on this model. This approach, which Niebuhr sees exemplified by Martin Luther, seeks to stress that we live 'between the times' of eternal happiness and our temporal sinful existence.²² There are no hard and fast boundaries to be drawn between Christ and culture, for the tension lies not between culture and Gospel, but between sin and grace, between God and man.²³ Thus, the paradoxical model seeks to put emphasis on the grace of God to save human beings, but also on their continued sin and disobedience. As Niebuhr puts it, we must join:

the radical Christian in pronouncing the whole world to be godless and sick unto death, [...] [whilst also affirming that] he belongs to that culture and cannot get out of it, that God indeed sustains him in it and by it; for if God in His grace did not sustain the world in its sin it would not exist for a moment.²⁴

Put in the language of cultural liturgies, this paradoxical approach seeks both to affirm the sinfulness of the practices of culture, whilst at the same time admitting that such practices are inescapable and infused with divine grace. The culture of coffee shops is both marred with the values of selfishness, individualism, consumerism and greed, and yet, it is filled with works of divine grace, mercy, hospitality, and love. If this view is to be affirmed, then the point must surely apply equally to the liturgies of coffee

²² Niebuhr, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

shops as it does to the baroque architecture of traditional church buildings, and historical formal liturgies of the institutional church. These practices too contain an interweaving of human sin and divine grace, and to suppose otherwise would be to think that our religious culture is a gift descended from heaven without human influence. Whilst the language of paradox was not used in the contexts I observed; we can see this emphasis in the way that cultural engagement was described. For the overarching desire of these three church contexts was to find ways of communicating the love of God to generations unreached by the Gospel and seemingly put-off by cultural packaging of traditional church. This tension was particularly emphasised in St. George's Tron which sought to bring the hospitality and warmth of the coffee shop *into* the traditional architecture of the church, without removing it entirely. The space stands as a tangible example of paradoxical cultural engagement in which both the historical, traditional forms of church culture and the contemporary values of coffee-culture are blended and held in tension.

Conclusion

I have explored some of the ways in which café churches draw from contemporary coffee culture in service of mission and evangelism. As we have seen, there is much within coffee culture which reflects the values of the Gospel, and which the Church can draw on to communicate effectively to a new generation. Moreover, there is not one approach to this engagement, and many different models have been used to bring coffee culture into the Church.

In reflecting on the implicit liturgies of coffee cultures, and the risks of distilling the Gospel into culturally relevant forms, we have seen that there is clearly no neutral space within which the Church can engage. Thus, I have sought to cast doubt on the analysis of the neutrality of so-called *third spaces*. Yet, I have argued, we need not follow Smith in rejecting this cultural repackaging of the Gospel, either. For there is clear evidence that there are gospel values reflected within coffee culture, and there is biblical precedent in using cultural forms to communicate the Gospel effectively. Finally, if café church approaches to mission and worship are to escape the challenges raised by Smith, then this paradox between the sin of culture and the grace of God at work within culture must be affirmed. If this nuanced, paradoxical stance is taken to thinking about cultural engagement with café churches, then I see no reason why café church in all its varieties cannot be of great service to the Church of God.

Book Reviews

[WILLIAM AND JOANNA STORRAR, eds. *Last Doctor out of Biafra: The War Zone Journal of Dr Ann Jackson*. Haddington: Handsel Press 2019. Pages 220. ISBN 978-1-912052-47-9. £11.98 \(paperback\).](#)

I was thirteen in 1967, just about the time when my interest in current affairs began to develop and the civil war in Biafra was a major item reported on the television news – the first televised war in history (Evening Standard). By the time the Biafran war was over, two-and-a-half years later, around three million people – twenty per cent of the population – had died, most of whom were children. Every night people watched, appalled, as the hopelessly outnumbered Biafrans (with only 2,000 troops at the start of the war) threw themselves at the massed ranks of the Nigerian army.

On 30 May 1967, the Republic of Biafra was created when the region of Eastern Nigeria declared itself independent of the country of Nigeria following a failed peace conference earlier that year. This declaration was led by the Eastern Nigerian military governor, Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu who became president of the newly declared republic.

This resulted in civil war between Biafra and Nigeria and while Biafra, as a country, was formally recognised by a small number of African states and unofficially supported by an equally small number of international states, the principal aid to it came from non-state actors including Joint Church Aid, Holy Ghost Fathers of Ireland, Caritas International, and US Catholic Relief Services. It was as a result of the humanitarian crisis generated by the Biafran civil war that Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) was established in response to the suffering experienced. The most dreadful sight of all was the famine victims: starving babies with withered limbs and flies settling on their eyes. People had never seen anything like this before, at least not in their living rooms. In Britain, dock workers reportedly refused to load ships with arms bound for Lagos, protesting that they were being used to kill Biafran babies. Somewhat controversially, the British Government refused to recognise the Republic of Biafra as it worried about losing oil revenue, and it continued arming the Nigerians throughout the conflict. It was this international position of the UK Government that prompted John Lennon to return his MBE in protest.

On the evening of 10 January 1970, after three years of non-stop fighting and starvation, the Biafran President Ojukwu flew into exile from his shrinking country's only airstrip. Just half an hour before the Biafran airliner departed with its defeated leader, a smaller plane had flown out

from the same airstrip. On board were the last medical missionaries airlifted out of Biafra by the World Council of Churches. Among them was a Scottish doctor called Ann Jackson.

In the spring of 1966, Dr Ann Jackson had been sent to Nigeria as a medical missionary by the Church of Scotland. While many missionaries and their families left Nigeria as the civil war broke out in 1967, many others chose to stay, including Ann. She spent the next three years in the newly declared republic of Biafra. During her time in Biafra, 'Dr Ann', as she was known by her friends and family in St John's Church of Scotland in Carlisle in Lanarkshire, kept a personal journal.

Ann began her collaboration with the Revd Dr William Storrar at St John's Church, Carlisle, shortly after his induction as the minister there in the mid-1980s, when she asked if she could start a healing service at the church. Following agreement, this remarkable local GP ran this monthly service for over thirty years with the support of Storrar and his successor ministers. One evening, Storrar called at Ann's home on a routine pastoral visit. Among other matters, they discussed one of the hymns that had been sung in church the previous Sunday. The tune was 'Finlandia' by Sibelius, and Ann mentioned that that was the tune which had been used as the national anthem of Biafra. She then produced a well-worn notebook, the journal that she had kept during her time as a medical missionary in Biafra. Hearing 'Finlandia' in church had brought back painful memories for her and she had been about to burn the journal. If Storrar had not happened to visit that evening, the story contained in *Last Doctor out of Biafra* may well have been lost.

Ann Jackson was a devout daughter of a close and loving family in the small town of Carlisle. She felt that God was calling her to be a doctor, a missionary, but she was told at high school that she should aim to be a nurse. Not dissuaded, Ann went on to study medicine at Glasgow University and then applied to be a missionary with the Church of Scotland. In 1966, still in her early twenties, she was accepted and was sent to Nigeria where she developed her love of the country and the people she encountered there.

The Church of Scotland had carried out missionary work in this part of Africa since the nineteenth century, and Ann's first posting was to the Mary Slessor Hospital. It had been founded in 1905 and named after Mary Slessor, another Scottish woman in her twenties who had felt a calling by God to spread the Gospel. Ann had read about the experiences of Mary Slessor as a girl in Carlisle. This planted the seed that seemed now to be bearing fruit. Ann was inspired by and mentored in her work in Nigeria by many dedicated Christian doctors, nurses and church workers, including Mary Russell, a missionary deaconess also from Carlisle, but her relentless

round of medical duties left little time for prayer and Bible study. Whilst it changed her life, it was not quite the mission life she imagined.

When Biafra declared its independence in May 1967, Ann was home on leave, recovering from illness and exhaustion after treating refugees fleeing from the civil unrest in the build-up to the split from the rest of Nigeria. The Church of Scotland had withdrawn its mission staff from the country as Nigeria descended into civil war, but many missionaries and doctors chose to stay to serve the sick and starving. Among them were Holy Ghost priests and Holy Rosary nuns from Ireland, Joint Church Aid (JCA, nicknamed Jesus Christ Airways) and the French doctors who went on to found Médecins Sans Frontières.

Ann's journal is her own account of the three years she spent in the Republic of Biafra, written in moments between her rounds as an overworked doctor in overcrowded hospitals, lacking enough medicines and food supplies to address the level of need being experienced. Apart from the entries made by Ann in what downtime she had, the journal contains photographs and documents and copies of letters written to and received from family, friends and fellow congregation members back home in Lanarkshire, many of whom had raised considerable amounts of money to support the work of Ann and her fellow relief workers.

It is not a complete record of the three years she spent in Biafra as often she struggled to find time from her work to write-up the journal. However, what comes across in it is her unquestioning faith and belief in God despite conditions and circumstances many would not have withstood. It also illustrates the close relationships she developed with fellow medical professionals and the many local workers and volunteers who assisted in the delivery of much needed medical and spiritual assistance. She established numerous lifelong friendships with those she worked with in the hospitals and clinics in the war zone. On one occasion, when sharing her sense of failure with an African friend from those days in Biafra, her friend's response is telling: 'The important thing Ann was – you were there. You stayed. That was what was important. You stayed with us.'

Whilst there is much that is moving and inspirational in this journal, the story that moved me most was her account of a day at a clinic at the height of the blockade by Nigerian forces when thousands of children were dying for lack of food and medicine. A mother had brought her child to the clinic for treatment, but the child had died before she was seen. The mother asked for her dead child to be tied on to her back to look alive so that she would get back to her village. Even at such a low point, Ann felt that she had someone beside her. She knew that, if she just turned around, she would see Jesus.

On her return from Biafra in January 1970, as she sat in Heathrow Airport waiting for her connecting flight home to Glasgow, the BBC reporters, waiting in the arrivals lounge to pick-up the story from the returning relief workers, passed Ann Jackson by. She did not fit their image of a heroic doctor fleeing a war zone. She later returned to Africa on behalf of the Church of Scotland to run a maternity hospital in Malawi before completing her missionary work and returning to her Carluke.

It is said the world is a small place, and God moves in mysterious ways. This could not be truer for Ann Jackson, who by 2016 was an active 78-year-old elder at St John's Church in Carluke. She was amazed to learn that the new minister at St John's, the Revd Dr Elijah Obinna, hailed from the small community of Uburu in Ebonyi State, South Eastern Nigeria. Elijah's mother, Margaret, had worked in the same Nigerian hospital as Ann 50 years ago.

[DONALD URQUHART](#)

Provincial Safeguarding Officer, Scottish Episcopal Church

[WAYNE J. HANKEY AND DOUGLAS HEDLEY, EDs. *Deconstructing Radical Theology: Postmodern Theology, Rhetoric and Truth*. London: Routledge, 2018. Pages xviii + 191. ISBN 978-1-138-37913-8. £38.00 \(Kindle\); P£40.00 \(paperback\); £110.00 \(hardback\).](#)

It is difficult to over-estimate the power of Radical Orthodoxy in a contemporary British theological landscape that is largely destitute of energy and invention. Most of the essays in this book address the theology of John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock, the writings of whom are certainly challenging and rarely easy, claiming, at least, a breadth of reading that few of us can match. But the work of Milbank and Pickstock is also difficult to converse with, being often bombastic, rhetorical rather than argued, and sometimes over assertive. Hence, in turn, there is a somewhat bombastic tone to most of the essays in Hankey and Hedley's book. Though, like Radical Orthodoxy itself, they are never dull and invariably challenging if we are prepared to wrestle with them.

Pickstock and Milbank often dazzle their reader with their difficult style and frequently arcane reading. Each of these essays in this book sets out to attack them at the root of their thinking, attempting to expose false readings and unstable, even incoherent philosophical or theological foundations. Milbank claims to be the theologian *par excellence*, renouncing the claims of secular modernity and of 'philosophy as autonomous or foundational with respect to theology'. (p. xv). Each essay in turn seeks to establish its ground carefully, beginning with Pickstock's (mis)reading of

Plato (Diamond) in her world of 'liturgical Platonism'. Later discussions move on to Augustine (Breyfogle), Aquinas (Marenbon), Duns Scotus and Suárez (Cross), the Cambridge Platonists (Hedley), Kierkegaard (Shakespeare) and Derrida (Rayment-Pickard). Each essay is, at least in ambition, philosophically rigorous and merciless in its exposure of a theological rhetoric that is, undeniably, seductive even as it is dazzling and perplexing.

This is a book to be wrestled and argued with. It sent me back to a re-reading of Milbank's writings and to Pickstock's *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy*. In doing so I was delighted to be brought by both sides of the argument to a recovery of tough, critical and demanding theological thinking, a reflection on what made Radical Orthodoxy so important, and an admission of the poverty of almost all of our current theological activity in both church and academy. Milbank is certainly a rhetorician (a breed, as Plato knew only too well, never to be trusted), and a thinker given to both assertion and dismissal. The essays in this book do, at least, call him to philosophical account with demanding clarity, questioning his readings of his heroes (such as Augustine, Aquinas) and his villains (such as, above all, Scotus).

It is to be hoped that clergy and ordinands will stir themselves to read these essays and to reflect upon the phenomenon of Radical Orthodoxy as one of the few serious, if deeply flawed, theological movements in the Church in our time. If such reading encourages reflection upon our theological roots in Plato and Neoplatonism, on Aquinas and scholasticism, on Descartes and modernity, on Derrida and postmodernity, then some good will have come of it.

[DAVID JASPER](#)

Honorary Professorial Research Fellow in Theology & Religious Studies,
School of Critical Studies of the University of Glasgow
Convener, Doctrine Committee of the Faith and Order Board

[BRUCE LOUDEN. *Greek Myth and the Bible*. Routledge Monographs in Classical Studies. London: Routledge, 2019. ISBN 978-1-138-32858-7. Pages. viii + 241. £44.99 \(Kindle\); 120 \(hardback\).](#)

This book makes a robust, if tendentious, contribution to an important area of study, viz. the influence of the cultural forces commonly labelled Hellenism on the Christian Bible. That the Levant and Anatolia had been subject to such influences for centuries before the emergence of Christianity has been widely recognised in scholarship for generations. That a radical dichotomy between Ancient Near Eastern or Semitic cultures on the one

hand, and those broadly categorised as Greek or Hellenistic on the other, is fundamentally false has increasingly been recognised: both represent developments in and from a common milieu within which the Hebrew traditions and those which became Christian are to be situated. Therefore, in comparing documents from the Hebrew Bible and the Christian New Testament with selected Greek classical texts, Loudon does nothing at all radical.

This book reflects limited and rather selective familiarity with New Testament scholarship, and very little knowledge of Ancient Near Eastern studies and scholarship on the Hebrew Scriptures. The result is an impression, presumably unintended, that the Hebrews made no distinctive contribution to human culture and were entirely dependent on cultures shaped by Greek mythology and Egyptian and Mesopotamian traditions mediated through Greek classical writers. The term for this in other contexts might be Orientalism, or even Anti-Semitism. The fundamental weakness of this work, however, may be not so much an ideological predisposition in favour of the classical traditions of western culture, as a lack of understanding of orality and its significance in the preservation, transmission, and dissemination of cultural traditions in the ancient world. In privileging (surviving) written texts, or those known to him, in the reconstruction of cultural appropriations and developments, the author undermines the very insights he could contribute to our understanding of the evolution of the biblical traditions within a milieu which saw distinctive cultures emerge which were to be of enduring significance to humanity. There is no reason to doubt that mythological tropes attested in both Greek and Hebrew traditions may, and very probably do, derive from a common source, but to presume the cultural and textual priority of extant Greek books, and the dependence on these of the Hebrew writings, is at best an over-simplification which exceeds the evidence and disregards possibilities beyond the expertise of the author.

The ideological agenda of this book is most explicit in the final chapter, fundamentally shaped by Charles Freeman's *The Closing of the Western Mind: The Rise of Faith and the Fall of Reason* (New York: Vintage, 2005). The relationship of monotheistic Judaism and Christianity with the cults and cultures of the Graeco-Roman world were very much more complex than encounters with contemporary Christians in Texas might suggest. Loudon is of course entitled to believe that Christianity is inherently obscurantist and bigoted, and anecdotal evidence might be abundant in his context. But there are important issues which require closer attention: how philosophical movements in the ancient world engaged with popular culture, and how Judaism and Christianity interacted, over centuries and in different contexts, with national and imperial cults and ideologies, and with other philosophical

and cultic movements which formed communities and evolved lifestyles in the eastern Mediterranean and its hinterland. The evidence of a rich and dynamic diversity of interactions, with strong attraction as well as the revulsion emphasised by Loudon, towards Judaism and Christianity, and also of concerted philosophical efforts to articulate these traditions in the language of Greek philosophy, over many centuries, is all but dismissed with contempt.

Homer, Hesiod, Vergil and Ovid are, to be sure, products of the same wider cultural movement as are the books of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament; traditions and cultures bifurcated, interacted, and clashed over centuries, and their surviving texts illuminate the world they inhabited. The literary remains of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Greece, and the Levant can and do shed light on each other, without disregarding the distinctive characteristics of each and their particular contributions to human civilisation, and without requiring crude and simplistic theories of literary dependence which force the evidence into ideologically defined paradigms which presuppose the priority and superiority of Hellenism and the West.

[NICHOLAS TAYLOR](#)

Rector, St Aidan's Church (Clarkston)