Evolving communities : adapting theories of Robert Kegan and Bernard Lonergan to intentional groups

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EVOLVING COMMUNITIES: ADAPTING THEORIES OF ROBERT KEGAN
AND BERNARD LONERGAN TO INTENTIONAL GROUPS

a dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

EVOLVING COMMUNITIES: ADAPTING THEORIES OF ROBERT KEGAN
AND BERNARD LONERGAN TO INTENTIONAL GROUPS

By Joseph Porter Draper

It has been long known that groups of adults learn and enact their learning in

certain ways; what is little known is *how* groups learn and how they *develop* in cognitive

complexity. This dissertation proposes a theory of group cognitive development by

arguing that intentional adult groups are complex and dynamic, and that they have the

potential to evolve over time. Groups are complex in that they are made up of

individuals within different orders of consciousness (Kegan), and they are dynamic in

that different orders of consciousness interact and conflict (Lonergan) during the

formation and enactment of group vision, values, and procedures. Dynamic complexity

theory of group development as it is referred to in this study is grounded in Robert

Kegan's constructive developmental theory and in Bernard Lonergan's transcendental

method. While both Kegan and Lonergan attend to the growth of individuals, their

theories are adapted to groups in order to understand the cognitive complexity of groups,

intragroup and intergroup conflict, and the mental complexity of leader curriculum. This

theory is applied to two case studies, one from antiquity in the case of the first century

Corinthian community engaged in conflict with its founder, St. Paul, and in one

contemporary study of American Catholic parishioners engaged in contentious dialogue

with diocesan leaders from 1994 to 2004. The parish groups experienced a series of

dialogues during a ten year period over the issues of parish restructuring and the priest

sexual abuse crisis yielding cumulative and progressive changes in perspective-taking,

responsibility-taking, and in group capacity to respond to and engage local and institutional authority figures. Group development is observed against a pedagogical backdrop that represents a mismatch between group complexity and leader expectations. In Corinth, Paul's curriculum was significantly beyond the mental capacity of the community. In the case of Catholic parishioners the curriculum of diocesan leaders was beneath the mental capacities of most of the groups studied.

It is proposed that individuals sharing the same order of consciousness, understood as cognitive constituencies, are in a dynamic relationship with other cognitive constituencies in the group that interact within an object-subject dialectic and an agency-communion dialectic. The first describes and explains the evolving cognitive complexity of group knowing, how the group does its knowing, and what it knows when it is doing it (the epistemologies of the group). This dialectic has implications for how intentional groups might be the critical factor for understanding individual growth. The second dialectic describes and explains the changing relationship between group agency, which is enacted either instrumentally or ideologically; and group communion, which is enacted ideationally. The agency-communion dialectic is held in an unstable balance in the knowing, identity, and mission of groups. With implications for the fields of adult education and learning organizations, dynamic complexity theory of group development notes predictable stages of group evolution as each cognitive constituency evolves, and notes the significance of internal and external conflict for exposing the presence of different ways of knowing and for challenging the group toward cognitive growth.

DEDICATED TO

my fellow adventurer and life partner,

Rochelle Lynn Draper,

and to our children,
Naomi, Jessica, Christopher, Matthew, and Levi,

and to those fellow travelers who have accompanied me on the journey,

Tim and Marie Draper,
Fr. Fredrick Schlatter, S. J.,
and Brother Patrick Bignell,

and to all the Peoples of God, particularly those at All Saints and Calvary,
and to the dream that is the American Catholic Church.

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Chapter 1: Lay Catholics in Cognitively Evolving Groups

The present study examines intentional groups of adults who, over a ten year period, grew in their capacity to enact their own slowly evolving vision of what it means to be a local community in a period of significant change. This evolving vision changed the way the groups asked questions, posed problems, selected strategic values, and engaged in conflict with other organizational levels within the diocese. The central question of this dissertation is twofold: do communities of adult learners evolve cognitively *as a* group, and what are the critical variables of that growth in terms of group members' ways of knowing, and the larger institution of which it is a part? It is the argument here that group growth is a cognitive growth that has its sources in the reactivity generated by interacting and conflicting ways of knowing within and without the group.

The present study proposes a model of development for intentional groups by studying a community of American Catholic parishioners who experienced a series of crises over a ten year period yielding cumulative and progressive changes in the group's perspective-taking, responsibility-taking, and in its capacity to respond to and engage local and institutional authority figures. Rather than looking at groups primarily through the lens of the structures and practices of organizations and leaders, this study attends to the experience of groups themselves understood as complex, dynamic, and evolving. This "from below" approach privileges the experiences of local groups of adults over a "from above" approach that often assumes members of a particular kind and constructs

organizational and leadership models based on such assumptions. A "from below" approach understands that adult groups are always more than products of the shaping of leaders, are often immune to the effects of change-strategies (Kegan/Lahey 2001), and "think" and act in ways that can defy structures and processes that attempt to direct or control thinking and acting.

This study argues that adult groups are *complex*, *dynamic*, and *evolving*; a developmental complexity and dynamism that can help communities of practice better understand the functioning and evolution of groups as groups, and why conflict is a necessary "dynamic" of growth. Groups are complex in that their members are developmentally diverse (Drago-Severson 2004a), operating out of different orders of mental complexity. They are dynamic in that different orders of mental complexity interact and conflict during the formulation and/or enactment of group vision, values, rules, and actions. A group vision organizes a set of strategic values; strategic values, or theories of action, construct governing rules that in turn direct group action. Each of these is understood differently by members operating from different orders of mental complexity. This study argues that the dynamism of the interaction and conflict becomes a critical modality of group growth toward increasing developmental complexity.

The context of this question is the congregational life of American Catholic parishioners from two parishes in the Northeastern United States struggling to respond to the priest sexual abuse crisis and the consolidation and closing of parishes in response to

the priest shortage. These recent and ongoing crises[1] offer a convincing example of a lay

constituency finding itself inhabiting ecclesiastical structures that are no longer a good

fit. The "rightness of fit" is not primarily a theological or canonical question, but a

question of the meaning making capacities of lay parishioners as compared with the

leadership structures that invite and shape their participation. Asking this question allows

one to foreground the experience of lay Catholics gathered in intentional groups

confronting matters important to their faith and their faith communities, and allows one to

problematize the coaching of these groups by church leaders. "Coaching" refers to the

quality of informational and formational supports and challenges toward the goal of

individual and corporate transformation.

Of the many things that have emerged in both crises, one of the most striking is

the surprise expressed by lay parishioners that, *as lay parishioners,* they have no

effective, intra-ecclesial means of making their voice heard by diocesan officials, and that

bishops, who hold the title to all church property, could in theory unilaterally sell their

parish churches, schools and centers as a strategy for addressing the priest shortage or to

pay abuse settlements. The participants discovered that lay Catholic parishioners have no

formal, stable means for holding priests and bishops who transgress church law and civil

law accountable to the community; nor do they have sanctioned, institutional means for

representatives of parishes to shape the temporal policy of the church. Arthur, a study

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[1] In the parishes of this study the larger parish lost a resident priest (1996), both were twinned by the bishop without consultation (1996), and in the smaller parish, the diocese proposed to close and sell it (2001). Parish restructuring was experienced as a crisis because of these events; but more significantly, because parishioners' experience of disorientation and loss exposed their own developmental framework as inadequate to meet the new situation they were facing. This is developed in greater detail in the following chapters.

participant, understood the lack of structures of participation for the laity in church governance as having potentially fatal consequences for the church:

> [Priests and bishops] make up one percent of the church, and we make up 99% of the church. And they are shrinking, and we are growing. Who the heck do they think they are to try to hold on to all the control? They're going to fail if they do that. The only way the Catholic Church will succeed at the local level and continue to be able to minister to its people is if they involve the laity much more than they do today.

One outcome of the discovery of lay voicelessness has been the formation of lay groups, Voice of the Faithful only the most visible among them,[2] as attempts to creatively respond to the challenges facing the church from a uniquely lay perspective. While sometimes lacking theological sophistication, such groups are not lacking in "epistemological," or meaning making sophistication. American Catholics are changing and evolving, as they have since the colonial period. These changes include more complex ways of understanding loyalty, of relating to authority, of defining commitment and, in the process, of reconstituting and reclaiming one's Catholic faith. I will examine more closely in future chapters this gradual, but simultaneously radical, change in the mental complexity of lay groups.

An evolving laity represents a growth that is in part a result of the post-Vatican II Church that American Catholics have inhabited and been nourished and challenged by these past four decades. In the context of the present study, discovering why there is currently a poor fit between many American Catholics and the ecclesiastical structures they inhabit requires asking a different order of questions. Instead of asking, What is *lay*

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[2] Voice of the Faithful is a group that formed in Boston in the wake of the priest sexual abuse scandal in 2002. It now has over thirty thousand members throughout the United States. Its three main goals are to support victims of priest sexual abuse, support priests of integrity, and change the structures of the church.

ministry?, How are we to understand lay governance?, What are the possibilities and limits of lay jurisdiction in the temporal matters of the church?, or even, What is a theology of the laity?, this study asks, Why are American Catholic parishioners behaving in the ways they are?, or What are the "forms", as in structures of mental complexity, that make American Catholics to be the way they are? The latter are qualitatively different questions that remove "lay participation" from a juridical category to a cognitional reality, and "the laity" from the category of things, or objects upon which theorists, theologians, and church leaders operate, to evolving persons who are subjects of their own experience, insight, reflection, and action which, if one attends closely, might open up a whole new horizon of understanding.

The question of meaning making is rarely adverted to in the literature on the theology of the laity, or lay ecclesial ministry. It is, however, of central importance in the contemporary church where the above mentioned crises have brought the laity and hierarchy together in new and unexpected forms of dialogue. Sources in theology, ministry and Church law have a great deal to say about the historical, doctrinal, and canonical factors that govern the roles and relationships between the laity and the ordained in the contemporary church. They have little to say, however, to the question of how parishioners with different developmental orientations (Kegan et al 2001b; Drago-Severson 2004a) differently understand these roles and relationships, and how they understand and respond to the educational and pedagogical strategies of the hierarchy. The question of meaning making within groups, therefore, has important implications for the way learning and dialogue are experienced by lay parishioners participating in

intentional groups. It also suggests radically new ways to envision leadership strategies and practices by better attending to group complexity (its developmental diversity) and group dynamism (the fertile interaction and conflict among different orders of mental complexity).

The General Context: Current Crises in the American Catholic Church

The American Catholic Church has weathered many storms since the republican period of the early nineteenth century, but the twin crises of priest sexual abuse and parish restructuring, coming as they have at the same time, are perhaps the most significant challenge the Church in the United States has ever faced. Catholic Church historian, John McGreevy states of the former, "the sustained media coverage, disillusionment, and passion aroused by the sexual abuse crisis have no parallel in US Catholic history" (2004, 136). This, together with diocesan initiatives to close, merge and cluster parishes in response to the priest shortage – decisions 72% of all U. S. dioceses have participated in (Rexhausen 2004, 17) affecting thousands of parishes and millions of parishioners[3] – makes it hard to imagine a more turbulent time for Catholics. It is reasonable to state that few Catholics in the United States even remotely connected to the Church have been unaffected by these crises.

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[3] 1077 parishes were identified by Rexhausen et al. (2004) as having undergone reorganization. The average parish size consisted of 850 households; if each household had between 3 and 4 members, the total number of Catholics affected is between 2,746,000 and 3,662,000. This figure is undoubtedly low since the study drew its data from 1995, 2000 and 2001. Since that time, many more parish reorganizations have occurred throughout the United States.

There is a growing body of literature about priest sexual abuse (Breslin 1985, 2002; Doyle 1985, 1987, 2006; Gonsiorek 2004; Loftus 2004; Plante 2004; Sipe 1992, 1995), about the hierarchy's handling of the crisis, and Church structures and policies that contributed to its severity (Appleby 2002, 2004; Beal 2004a, 2004b; Post 2004; Ruddy 2002), but the literature on parish restructuring is only beginning to appear (Rexhausen 2004; Zech & Miller 2004). In much of which literature, the perceptions and perspectives of lay parishioners are under researched and little understood. This literature addresses the priests who perpetrated the crimes, the hierarchs who perpetuated their careers, and the theologies assumed to underlie their actions or that point the way to a better church. The emerging research on parishes and parish restructuring also focuses on or is overly influenced by priests and bishops.

The present study addresses this gap in the literature by researching groups of lay parishioners engaged in dialogue with diocesan officials over these two seismic issues. Before explicitly treating the research design of the present study, however, it is helpful to describe more fully the priest sexual abuse and parish restructuring crises and their attending literatures in service to better understanding the social, cultural and ecclesial context of the parishes this study researches. My purpose in the next two sections is to not only review the historical contours of the crises as described in the literature, but to also examine the literature itself for how it understands the different roles and responsibilities of lay Catholics and church leaders.

Priest Sexual Abuse Crisis and an Under-recognized Laity

The priest sexual abuse crisis was a highly visible and very painful experience for

the parishes researched in this dissertation. In 2002 conversations about the scandal often

intruded unannounced into various groups in these parishes such as Rite of Christian

Initiation of Adults (RCIA) sessions, the twice weekly Adult Faith Formation sessions,

and the four different Bible Growth Groups that met each week. In some of the adult

gatherings, so intense were the questioning and conversations that these spilled over into

gatherings outside the parishes such as a new Voice of the Faithful chapter in which

parish members were recorded by local media boldly speaking about the anger,

confusion, and learning first articulated in the parish sessions. By the spring of 2002

parishioners began to self-organize into their own Listening Sessions with the consent of

the pastor. Facilitated by the chair of the parish Pastoral Council, Arthur, who was

quoted above, the group discussed the crises, their diocese's role in it, and proposed

action steps to address the lack of transparency and accountability they perceived in their

diocese (I discuss this in depth in chapter six).

The crisis of priest sexual abuse is a story that is still being told. An investigation

begun in 2001 by the *Boston Globe's* Spotlight Team into Cardinal Bernard Law's role in

reassigning pedophile, Rev. John J. Geoghan, set the stage. When articles first began to

appear in the front page of the *Boston Globe*, it unleashed the most dramatic crisis in the

relatively short history of the American Catholic Church. One year, and over 800 *Globe*

articles later, Law resigned. The scandal attracted national interest – it made the front

page of the *New York Times* for over 40 consecutive days in 2002 – and media sources

throughout the country began their own investigations of clergy sexual abuse and cover

up. By 2004, 450 priests had been pulled from ministry nationwide because of credible

allegations against them for sexual misconduct, and four bishops had resigned. Some

voices insist that the stories, horrifying as they are, suffer from distortions and

exaggerations (Steinfels 2002), and hints of anti-Catholicism (McGreevy 2004). Others

note how incomplete has been the reporting and how little is actually known about the

number of victims (Doyle et al. 2006; Rezendez 2004). Writes Michael Rezendez,

journalist for the *Boston Globe*, and 2003 winner of the Pulitzer Prize for his reporting on

sexual abuse in the Catholic Church:

> Nevertheless, it's clear that the number of accused priests revealed thus far is only a fraction of the whole, and that the true extent of clergy abuse in the Catholic Church remains unknown. Complete Church records on allegations of clergy sexual misconduct have been aired in only a few of the 195 dioceses in the United States. And even in those instances, the number of accused is nothing more than a measure of those whose victims had the courage to step forward and identify their abusers (2).

In reviewing the burgeoning literature on priest sexual abuse and the hierarchy's

handling of the crisis, two tendencies frequently stand out. First is the tendency to move

quickly from priest sexual misconduct to re-debate long standing tensions in Catholic

social and sexual teaching and hierarchical practices of governance. Despite the fact that

little is known about priest sexual abuse, a great deal of published speculation circulates

as to its causes, but often in service to competing ideologies of Catholic teaching on sex

and gender. John Allan Loftus, researcher and professor of psychology and the

psychology of religion at the University of Toronto, Regis College, identifies two

ideological camps that differently name the source of the crisis: there is the "reform, reform, reform" camp, and the "fidelity, fidelity, fidelity" camp (Loftus 2004, 85-87). Richard McBrien is representative of the former, argues Loftus; a camp which advocates for a review of the Church's teaching on the role of women, birth control, celibacy, and homosexuality. John Richard Neuhaus is representative of the latter camp which identifies the source of priest sexual abuse in a failure to remain faithful to orthodox Catholicism. Fidelity to the Church's teaching on sexuality, the argument goes, would have averted the crisis. Loftus notes that the only common ground that exists between these two camps is ignorance grounded in a dearth of scientific, peer-reviewed research into sexual abuse by celibate clergy. "To be really blunt about it: few really know what they are talking about. They cannot know. The paucity of actual research into the sexual landscape of celibate clergy is staggering… we know practically nothing scientifically about the subset of priests who have become involved in overt sexual misconduct" (Loftus 2004, 87, 91). This "paucity" has not chastened the speculating. The energy generated by the crisis has sometimes yielded a debate where priest abusers and suffering victims serve as props for vetting competing ideologies of sexual morality that risks contributing to the opacity surrounding priest sexual misconduct, and risks obscuring the complexity of any connection one would make between Church teaching, hierarchical leadership, and lay participation in governance.

The second tendency that stands out is the fact that the audience addressed in much of the literature is an audience of church elites (bishops and other hierarchical officials), and the proposed solutions are framed as advice-giving to these same elites

who are occasionally exhorted to change structures of governance, but often the exercise of their own ministry. This has the unintended consequence of failing to acknowledge the traumatic experience of victims of clergy sexual abuse in particular and the voiceless laity in general, and perhaps of misunderstanding why the crisis has struck such a reverberating chord in the lives of American Catholics. It is a tendency that overemphasizes the role of the hierarchy as the source of, and solution to, the problem, and under-acknowledges the responsibility and capacity of the laity to bring about change. In the expanding wake of the crisis there have been many calls for structural change in the Church (Butler 2004; Heft 2004; Post 2004; Steinfels 2004), and for greater democracy (Bane 2004; Mannion 2004; Russett 2004). There have been many more critiques of the divide that exists between the laity and bishops; and yet much of these calls are addressed to the hierarchy assumed to be the primary agents of change. The laity in general, and lay parishioners in particular, do not factor in as primary change-agents beyond theological exhortations to reclaim their baptismal rights. Also present in the literature – perhaps less prominent but more troubling from the perspective of lay initiative – is the mixing of outrage over the practices of bishops with a high level of deference to the episcopal office, a discursive practice that, I believe, effectively undermines proposals for a meaningful lay role in the Church and undermines a role *for the laity* in bringing about meaningful change.

Terrence Nichols proposes a "participatory hierarchy" as a way of addressing authoritarian, non-conciliar governing practices that precipitated the current crisis (2004, 124). With others (Wuerl 2004), he mentions then dismisses a democratic egalitarian

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society as a viable model for the church, and then proposes a hierarchical model that is more responsive and acceptable. Hierarchies are ubiquitous and necessary, argues Nichols; they are the critical source of unity in most organizations. "Even simple social structures, like families, school classes… need some kind of hierarchy to function. A family in which the children have an equal vote on every issue would disintegrate. A class in which the opinions of the students were equivalent to those of the teacher would accomplish nothing… One purpose of hierarchy in the Catholic Church is to preserve the unity of the church" (112). In social institutions whether simple or complex, the alternative to hierarchy is "fragmentation and disintegration" (112).

Participatory hierarchy eschews authoritarianism and avoids unilateral decision making, both of which are styles of leadership characterized by what Nichols calls "command hierarchy." Command hierarchy is exemplified in the papal monarchy begun by the reforms of Gregory VII (1073-1085);[4] continued in Boniface VIII's papal bull, *Unum Sanctum* (1302);[5] reasserted by Pius IX who in Vatican I (1870) established papal infallibility and universal jurisdiction of the pope; reinforced by Paul IV's overruling the Commission on the Family in his issuing in 1968 of *Humanae Vitae*; and reaffirmed by John Paul II's issuing of *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* prohibiting the discussion of women's ordination (Nichols 2004, 119-121). A participatory hierarchy, on the other hand, is a style of leadership characterized by a willingness to listen to others, consult with them, and accept their advice (123), to facilitate consensus among bishops, and to practice

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[4] In his reforms, the pope asserted the right to install bishops over against the claims of local lay lords.
[5] Boniface stated, "We declare, state, define, and pronounce that it is altogether necessary to human salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman pontiff."

"subsidiarity, and conciliar models of discernment" (124). Nichols recommends structural changes to the Church such as the election of bishops, reform of the Curia, giving more authority to national and international synods of bishops, and providing "more effective lay participation in decisions at the diocesan level" (123). However, even if these structural changes are not introduced, priests and bishops can choose to increase their effectiveness in the performance of their ministry by exhibiting a participatory style of hierarchy.

Setting aside the merits or demerits of the particular ecclesiology Nichols recommends, what I would like to foreground is the audience he appears to address, and his not-so-subtle portrayal of lay Catholics. Regarding his audience, Nichols appears to be addressing the very pinnacle of power in the Church: the pope, the Curia, bishops and occasionally priests. While this may seem natural in an article on "hierarchy", the tacit assumption is that change can only come from the tip of the pyramid of power. The papacy needs to reform itself through more participatory practices that affirm its primacy, but also practices "conciliarity." The unaddressed laity must wait until the hierarchy changes from a command style to a participatory style of governing, at which point they will have a say in the governing of the church. If command hierarchy is as bad and powerful as Nichols reports, then his argument amounts to pleading with the oppressor in the hopes that he will unilaterally change his ways. Given the history of command hierarchy he draws attention to, and the manner in which bishops have handled the sex abuse crisis, this seems highly unlikely.

Regarding his understanding of the laity, Nichol's argument sets up democracy as a fragile structure easily blown down by a more robust and useful hierarchy. But more significant, it is an argument that explicitly seeks justification for hierarchy in a parent-child model that inevitably portrays the laity as children whose constant care necessitates the construction of an unequal society. In addition to the above quote, Nichols states: "Another example of participatory hierarchy might be a parent-child relationship. Certainly there are abusive parents who dominate their children, but good parents wish for their children to grow into the maturity that the parents themselves possess" (113). It is clear that the reader is to translate "bishops" for "parents." A lay reader would likely conclude that the laity must be children. Bishops and priests are to the laity as adults are to children – with one unacknowledged difference: actual children mature and become adults, a fact which changes their legal status vis-à-vis parents, as well as the social and familial relationship between parents and adult children. Lay Catholics, in this view, never "mature" beyond their status as juridical children. Even if their bishop is a "good parent" rather than an "abusive parent," they do not enter an adult-to-adult relationship with him. Nichols' description of hierarchy prizes unity at the expense of voice rather than unity through voice, and looks only upward for sources of change in the Church. Like others in the literature sparked by the priests sexual abuse scandal, he respectfully addresses an episcopal audience whom he exhorts to voluntarily change; at the same time he risks offending lay adult Catholics whom he assumes will voluntarily remain in place.

Christopher Ruddy (2002), professor of theology at St. John's University and College of Saint Benedict, highlights several problems the sexual abuse scandal reveals,

which for him is an indication of how far the Church has yet to go in implementing

Vatican II. The church "has been offered the terrible but graced opportunity to renew

itself by passing from suffering and death into new life in Christ" (Ruddy 2002, 7). It is

an "opportunity" that calls for the retrieval of neglected teachings of the Second Vatican

Council. The first is the need to re-appropriate "baptism as the foundation of all

Christian life and ministry." If lay ministry and responsibility was floundering in recent

times, Ruddy suggests that the scandal has given new energy and life to the laity, which

must now begin to take the initiative in its baptismal share in Christ's threefold office of

priest, prophet and king. States Ruddy, "[T]hey are not helpers in the hierarchy's

mission, but instead receive their mission directly from Christ through baptism" (8-9).

Second, Ruddy argues that the church must recapture the council's (*Lumen

Gentium*) understanding of the local church as the diocese in which the whole church is

present, and its understanding of the bishop whose episcopal authority derives not from

the pope but from sacramental ordination. In present practice, Ruddy argues, "The

bishop, in effect, is defined apart from any necessary reference to a community" (10),

which has the effect of separating the bishop from his local community by ascribing to

him an identity which derives first from his place in the universal episcopal college and

second from his place as a local ordinary.

If one were to articulate a vision for lay ministry and episcopal leadership from

Ruddy's article, one might begin by interpreting the legacy of Vatican II as an attempt to

redirect lay attention from priests to their own Christian initiation (from orders to

baptism); to redirect the attention of bishops from popes and the Vatican to their own

episcopal ordination and the local communities they lead; and to redirect leadership practices away from authoritarianism to humility and poverty of spirit (Metz 1998). In this sense, Ruddy as a systematic theologian is very helpful since, while acknowledging the vital place of the universal, institutional, and hierarchical, his vision nevertheless privileges the local, personal, and relational. However, as a practical ecclesiologist, or as a pastoral theologian his vision does not acknowledge any official role for the laity in the governing of the church. A convincing vision possesses the capacity to organize strategic values around itself, and it is here that Ruddy's proposal for change breaks down since his status-quo-affirming strategies are in conflict with his liberating vision. From the perspective of a lay reader attempting to enact this liberating vision in life and ministry, it is a very confusing article.

This confusion may have its source in Ruddy's combination of harsh rhetoric with a high level of deference to Rome and the American hierarchy. For example, the loss of the primacy of the local character of episcopal ministry to the centralizing power of the Vatican is "a reproach to the church of today," but one that should never "be used to assert indifference or petulance vis-à-vis Rome" (9). Again, "Episcopal and clerical arrogance" is evident in the priest sex abuse scandal, but the reclaiming of one's baptismal mandate must not lead to "a zero-sum or tug-of-war model of power-sharing, whereby the laity's gain is the hierarchy's loss" (8). The combination of a rhetoric of condemnation with a rhetoric of deference chastises the hierarchy while at the same time advocates an ecclesial ideology that affirms the status quo.

Ruddy is aware of the practical status of the laity in the contemporary Catholic church, for he laments that, "the laity remain objects, not subjects, of the church's mission" (9). But here too he is confusing, for his lament is followed later in the article by this counsel to church leaders: "Bishops need to listen better to their presbyterates and their people" (10). Having argued that bishops have a mandate that is not derived from the pope but from their own episcopal ordination – in other words, that a bishop is not a *pope's* bishop – he unwittingly positions the laity as *objects* of the hierarchy while castigating church leaders for doing the same – for failing to address lay persons as *subjects*.

When asserting as fact that the Second Vatican Council's baptismal mandate has not been achieved in the Church's life and structures, Ruddy does not seek warrants for his assertion in ecclesiastical structures that exclude participation by lay parishioners in the governing of the parish and diocese, or to deficiencies in diocesan religious education and communication strategies directed toward adult Catholics. Rather, as he draws back his stick to hit the hierarchy, he pokes the laity in the eye in a single sentence that assumes both episcopal and papal tyranny, and lay incompetence: "Shaped by centuries of hierarchical dominance (sometimes justifiable), the laity are at once unable and unaccustomed to live up to their baptismal mandate" (8). A laity described as "unable and unaccustomed" is an example of the low expectations many theorists and theologians have of Catholics, and assumes that if they are ever to achieve their baptism, hope rests with a hierarchy learning to "listen better" to "their people." A lay Catholic reading this might conclude that the hierarchy is to ease up on the dominating, but not give up on the

dominance, since its use against the laity is "sometimes justifiable." Ruddy may be defaulting on his own vision of baptismal ministry since he unwittingly reasserts the laity's low ecclesiastical status, tacitly affirms the laity's passivity and incapacity to act, and explicitly reminds the laity that hope for change rests not with them but with a gingerly handled hierarchy asked to voluntarily change.

Theological arguments for lay participation that are addressed not to the laity, but to church leaders, leave lay Catholics with nowhere to go. And yet, the laity are changing and have changed, and hope may rest with better understanding the nature of that change and what it means for the whole Church when many of its members actually buy into the baptismal rhetoric and recognize that they hold their own visions, values and actions. Bruce Russett, co-editor of *Governance, Accountability, and the Future of the Catholic Church*, writes that in a crisis three responses can be expected: exit, voice and loyalty. One option is to leave the Church. Another is to affirm one's loyalty to the Church, "accepting without protest whatever the hierarchical authority decrees or does" (Russett 2004, 202). A middle option is to affirm a critical loyalty that insists "on being heard and heeded." Writes Russett: "Voice implies loyalty to the community and to the institution, but not uncritical silence. It means speaking up… It is not a course of action for the faint-hearted, and it requires a long-sustained effort" (202). It is this option that many in the Church today are exercising.

Parish Restructuring Crisis

  Parish restructuring is the second seismic crisis that is affecting thousands of

Catholic faith communities throughout the country. It is difficult to overestimate the

passion this issue aroused in the members of the parishes of this study. Passions became

acute when lay participants in diocesan initiatives felt that their committed participation

had little or no impact in shaping diocesan decision making; when participants began to

believe that there were arbitrary rule changes in the restructuring process, when their

engagement in past restructuring efforts was perceived to be rewarded a few years later

by proposals for closing the parish, or when diocesan decisions about parish restructuring

were made without consulting local communities. One interview participant in the

present study, Theresa, with a deep sense of community sums up many of these passions.

The following comments are her reflection on the difficult 1996 merger between her

parish and another parish in the same town, followed five years later by another

restructuring initiative, this time proposing to close and sell her parish.[6]

> We're going along and doing what we think we're supposed to be doing, what we
> were told we were supposed to be doing, looking forward to a new day because
> we acknowledged the fact that priests were becoming fewer and farther between,
> and really feeling like we were doing the right thing here in this Roman Catholic
> community. And to have cavalier statements like, yeah, maybe [the parish]
> should be closed and possibly sold. Wait a minute! Why are we doing this?
> Why have you [bishop] asked us to do this if you really don't give a damn what
> we're doing here. People who appear to be totally out of touch with the reality of
> parish life and the people in the parishes, [were] sitting down theoretically x-ing

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[6] These two are the parishes studied here. Though the bishop instructed the pastor in 1996 to formally
merge the two into one parish while retaining both sites of worship, the finance councils of both
communities refused to merge. Though the pastoral councils successfully merged into one council, the fact
that the finance councils refused to merge meant canonically that the communities remained two distinct
parishes; in this case, sharing one priest.

out these people and moving these people like it was some kind of an interesting chess game. And it wasn't. We were talking about real life and real people!

This brief, "from below" view of the crisis will be expanded in chapter six when we describe and explain the contemporary case study. Before we address the literature on parish reorganization, it would be helpful to clarify terms, and to note a few considerations "from above" as these relate to the diocese of the present study. Though "reorganization" is the favored term in the emerging literature, parish *restructuring* is the preferred term for what this study identifies as a change not only in the parish-diocese organization, but also in the governing structures of both the parish and diocese. Governing structures in this Northeastern U. S. diocese refer to the relationship between bishop and priests, and pastors and parishes, not the relationship between lay and ordained Catholics. None of the five major restructuring initiatives in the diocese from 1994-2004 changed the juridical status of the laity; however, the final initiative proposed changes that would radically alter the relationship between pastors and faith communities and, potentially, between bishop and priests. The faith communities of the present study exist within a diocese whose goal is to radically reduce the official number of parishes and missions from approximately 180 to 30 through a process of forming new "clusters"; by redefining the cluster as a "parish"; and by renaming former parishes within the clusters as "worship sites." In this way, the bishop is able presently to provide on average two, three or four priests per cluster, some of which have eight or more worshipping communities. In this diocese, then, parish "reorganization," inadequately describes the scope of the *structural* changes introduced in this diocese. These changes,

already underway, go beyond the way the diocese is organized to include the way worshiping communities are gathered and governed.[7]

Pathways for the Church of the 21st Century

In 1995, and again in 2000, a groundbreaking study was undertaken by the Catholic Research Forum of the Conference for Pastoral Planning and Council Development (CPPCD) together with the Center for Applied Research for the Apostolate (CARA). It was published in 2004 as *Pathways for the Church of the 21st Century: A National Study of Recent Diocesan Efforts at Parish Reorganization in the United States 2003* authored by Jeff Rexhausen with Michael Cieslak, Mary L. Gautier, and Robert J. Miller. The study was conducted in three phases. Phase one surveyed 123 dioceses and six eparchies; phase two surveyed 273 parishes; and phase three gave in-depth interviews to 25 pastors and parish directors. The relatively recent practice of restructuring parishes has proven challenging in many dioceses that find themselves inventing processes for communication, consultation, decision making and evaluation as they proceed with strategies for addressing the consequences of the priest shortage. "[D]ioceses and parishes have little or no experience with the conditions, issues, and structures that are encountered in the course of parish reorganization. The experience is frequently one of

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[7] These changes raise many structural and canonical questions. For example, do former parishes renamed as "worship sites" lose their canonical status as a "definite community of the Christian faithful" (*CIC,* 515.1); will pastors, already struggling with an ever changing ministry made more difficult by having to serve multiple communities, have the authority to close a "worship site" simply in order to carry out their ministries in ways serviceable to the community and meaningful to themselves; and have bishops, unable to provide sufficient numbers of priest-pastors, and facing tremendous pressure as a result of the priest sexual abuse and parish restructuring crises, simply transferred the painful task of closing "parishes" to priest-pastors (*CIC,* 515.2 holds that only bishops can "erect, suppress, or alter parishes"); and most basically, is it canonically licit to refer to a cluster of communities as a "definite" gathering of the faithful, i.e., as a parish? The critical piece here, assuming it passes canonical muster, is the possible new authority of pastors to close "worship sites," definite communities whose difference is not a shrinking population, poorly maintained facilities, or significant debt obligations, but a juridical change in status.

exploring uncharted territory and devising new ways to respond to these new situations"
(Rexhausen 2004, 2).

The CPPCD study found that the number one reason given by diocesan officials
for parish restructuring is the shortage of priests, with increases or decreases in
populations in parishes or dioceses as the number two reason (10-11). The types of
organizational changes associated with parish restructuring are clustering (assigning one
pastor to two or more parishes that are linked administratively but distinct canonically),
merging (where two or more parishes are merged into one distinct parish, resulting in the
closure of one of the parishes about half the time), closing/suppressing, building a new
parish, or assigning a parish director in the absence of a resident priest.

The number one goal for parish restructuring given by CPPCD study respondents
is providing Sunday Eucharist. Numbers two and three goals are avoiding over working
priests and not requiring parishioners to travel excessive distances to celebrate Eucharist
(13-14). Seven out of ten diocesan respondents reported that parishes had been consulted
"very much." This included consulting pastors and 90% of parish pastoral councils.
Other findings in this study disclose a tendency for dioceses in the Northeast and
Midwest to initiate diocese-wide parish restructuring effort (p. iv); that two thirds of all
diocese engaged in restructuring efforts mandated changes and one fourth were voluntary
(22); and that 87% of phase two study (the survey of 273 parishes) respondents are
priests (the rest are nuns, ordained deacons and lay persons).

Changes in parishes usually mean significant increases in the time pastors spend
on administrative responsibilities. The most significant problems associated with parish

restructuring for priests are learning how to balance time between different parishes,

getting enough volunteers, and dealing with unhappiness among parishioners associated

with the changes (31). However, respondents varied depending on whether their

communities were clustered, whether parishes were assigned a parish director (i.e. not

closed or clustered), or whether a new parish was built. "Overall respondents whose

parishes have been linked [clustered] or share a pastor appear to have significantly more

difficulty... Parish directors and pastors in new parishes report less difficulty" (32). In

merged parishes pastors report challenges associated with the belief among parishioners

that there was a clear "winner" and "loser" among the communities that came together

(43), a belief that generated much animosity. One pastor in the South reported on some

of the difficulties associated with merging two different communities.

> One cannot overestimate the anger of the people, especially St. Andrew, toward
> the merger. The previous two pastors left the parish when it became apparent that
> the diocese was going to merge the parishes. The people of St. Andrew were very
> angry, feeling that St. Lucy "took over." The anger increased three years after the
> merger when the official canonical corporation of St. Andrew was dissolved
> legally, with all proceeds going to the corporation of St. Lucy. In spite of the
> "we're all in this together talk" many St. Andrew people said that what happened
> was just what they feared – St. Andrew was closed and all their possessions given
> to St. Lucy (Rexhausen 2004, 43).

The CPPDC study also interviewed 25 pastors and parish directors in the third

phase. Significant among the findings germane to this dissertation regard diocesan

learning from parish restructuring experiences, and the quality and extent of diocesan

consultation with lay parishioners. The CPPDC study noted that "most of the pastors felt

that the local church (the diocese) has not tried to learn from these experiences" (45).

One of the study's interviewers records the feedback from a pastor in a Western diocese:

"Fr John fears that the Church is not learning from these situations. He reported that there was a lack of diocesan support. In fact, he noted, no one from the diocese had ever formally spoken to him about the merger or evaluated it with him" (45). Another priest states, "The learning is anecdotal rather than systematic. It is not integrated into how we operate the local church" (48).

On the question of lay participation, and connected to diocesan learning, many dioceses inadequately accessed the voice of parishioners prior to and during parish restructuring. A pastor from the Northeast states, "The chief learning seems to be that the church gets into trouble when the people are not consulted sufficiently." Another from the Midwest reports, "A review of the process used to merge parishes recognized that the people were not involved. It is necessary to make sure that meetings are held with the parish, that parishioners are involved in the process… The process never got to the heart of the communities" (45).

The CPPCD study highlights the many challenges parish restructuring presents to the local church. At the same time its findings offer new insights to pastors, diocesan officials and bishops about the need for early, on-going and broad-based consultation, training of all leaders including parishioners, thorough education, competent pastoral leadership, and an effective evaluation process that enables dioceses to learn from restructuring experiences. It raises, however, two key concerns. First, the sample population consists of mostly priests at the diocesan and parish level; the rest are high level parish directors who are nuns, deacons or lay persons. Thus we do not directly hear the perspectives and perceptions of lay parishioners except through the voices of pastors,

diocesan officials, and parish directors. We hear a great deal about parish restructuring,

but from diocesan and parish elites. How are lay parishioners reacting to these efforts?

What are they saying about the extent and quality of the participation afforded them in

restructuring initiatives?

Second, phase two of the CPPCD study relied on diocesan officials to provide

names of pastors or parish directors. The study began with surveys of chancery officials

(phase one) who were then asked to provide names of parish priests or directors involved

in parish restructuring; these became the participants of the second phase of the study.

This raises questions about sample populations derived entirely within the leadership

structures of a hierarchical system; not only is this study grounded in the perspectives of

an elite group within the American Catholic Church, but the elites within the elite

ultimately determined who got to participate in the second phase of the study (and also

the third, interviewing, stage since participants were selected from stage two

participants). Did diocesan officials include/exclude in their lists priest-pastors who

resisted parish restructuring initiatives and, in solidarity with the communities they led,

protested attempts to close or consolidate parishes? Were priests included by diocesan

leaders who, accepting the need to reconfigure dioceses in light of the priest shortage,

nevertheless critiqued the structures and processes dioceses employed to solicit

presbyteral and lay participation and dialogue? These questions become important in the

present study as the priest who led the two parishes did object to the process of parish

restructuring and found himself increasingly marginalized by diocesan officials. Relying

exclusively on chancery officials to provide the names of study participants may have

skewed the data in service to conventional wisdom that assumes the necessity of

restructuring parishes without either debating the issue or seriously addressing its root

cause: the priest shortage.

Zech and Miller Study

Charles Zech and Robert Miller (2004) in, "Listening to the People of God: Lay

Leaders Reflect on Parish Reorganization," address in part the questions left by the

CPPCD research in their quantitative study presented at the annual meetings of the

Religious Research Association, Kansas City, MO, October 2004. "There is a need to

interview parishioners 'in the pews' after the restructuring to discover the impact of the

planning process used to make the decision to change, the process used to implement the

change, and the effect of the change itself on the lives of the parishioners" (3). The

"interviews" Zech and Miller conducted were quantitative surveys sent to parishes

involved in the CPPCD study. Pastors who agreed to participate were asked to provide

survey instruments to pastoral council members. In total, 114 pastors in "reorganization

situations" in 38 dioceses (representing every region except Region IV) agreed to

distribute the surveys to lay council members (103 returned them). This provided a total

of 658 usable surveys from an original total of 2005 surveys (4).

The Zech and Miller study asked 41 questions in the five categories of

Education/Communication, Consultation, Support, Process, and Roles. Most parishes

were informed about the priest shortage and why changes needed to be made prior to

restructuring (education); what is unclear is if education included a theology of the laity

or parish community (Clark 2005; Lakeland 2003), or education about the parish in canon

law (Coriden 1997). In the category of process respondents indicate the importance of

groups of parishioners and clergy in the affected parishes gathering to discuss

restructuring. What is surprising about the category of process according to Zech and

Miller is that participants have a low regard for the value of post-restructuring

celebrations; moreover, they note "the low value that parishioners place on a thoughtful

planning process (fewer than half thought this was very important)" (7). They speculate

that "parishioners placed a low priority on these activities because they happened so

infrequently" (7). In the category of consultation, the study states the following:

> A majority of parishioners thought it was important that options other than
> restructuring be thoroughly and honesty discussed before the decision to
> restructure is made. In only a tiny percentage of the cases did parishioners believe
> that this had actually occurred. The discrepancy between what parishioners
> believed to be important, and what actually happened is greater for this activity
> than for any other activity that we examined. This was mirrored in their comments
> contained in the open-end question where, as we note below, a large number of
> parishioners believe that the restructuring decision was dictated to them, and they
> had no meaningful input. (6)

In the category of roles, authors note the high regard parishioners have for pastors:

"respondents typically placed much of the credit for successful reorganizations, but little

of the blame for unsuccessful ones, at the feet of their pastor" (7). Parish pastoral

councils also were highly regarded, even more than the role of the bishop; but the latter's

support for reorganization was considered very important.

The authors draw several conclusions about their survey of lay parish pastoral

council members, two of which are important for this dissertation. The first is the

importance of process: "Process issues dominate other considerations. Parishioners

expect a process that treats each participating parish fairly, and they highly value a level

of input that allows them to feel a sense of ownership over the eventual decision" (9).

Second is the importance of communication throughout the process of parish

restructuring, but especially during and after.

Similar questions, however, remain in this study as in the previous. Like the

CPPCD study, church elites selected study participants, again reflecting a top-down,

clerical control over the sample population. A study that seeks anonymous, identity-

protected informants might provide information qualitatively different from participants

selected by a pastor whose status and authority might be used to influence the results of

the study. This is particularly the case where council members who were not elected, but

appointed by the pastor, might not feel their participation is entirely voluntary. But even

if the participating lay persons felt their participation was voluntary, we do not hear from

many others whose input was denied because of the decision of the pastor to not

participate. For example, after reviewing the survey instrument, pastors would be aware

that some of the questions therein ask for lay feedback on priestly performance. Some

may have felt uncomfortable with lay persons critiquing their own actions, or the actions

of any priest and, accordingly, may have either chosen not to distribute the survey to

pastoral council members[8] or chosen to distribute it to select members only.

Second, the quantitative nature of the study precluded participants challenging the

survey instrument regarding the kind of questions asked/not asked, or the way in which

feedback was solicited. In a study that includes semi-structured interviews, the capacity

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[8] Of 466 pastors sent information about the study with a sample of the survey instrument, 281 did not respond and 185 did respond. Of the 185, 114 pastors agreed to participate, and 48 said they would not participate. Of the 114 who agreed to participate, 10% failed to return survey instruments.

of participants to reframe questions, interact with the interviewer, and challenge

perceived researcher bias is much greater in a qualitative study than in a quantitative

study that relies exclusively on survey instruments. For example, the questions about

education/communication are purely practical (priest shortage and change) and appear to

assume the necessity or inevitability of parish restructuring. In a recorded interview, a

participant might notice and address this, or share information about whether or not

parishioners were educated about a theology of laity, about the need to expand lay

ministry in the wake of an ongoing priest shortage, and/or about the canonical

relationship between parish and diocese, or between laity and bishop.

Summary

The discursive practice in much of the literature on the sexual abuse crisis and

parish restructuring assumes that sources of change in the church rest exclusively with

the hierarchy. This includes demands for change while tacitly downplaying the role of

the laity in bringing about such change. In some of the literature one sees also a rhetoric

of outrage with regard to the hierarchy coupled with a rhetoric of deference that blunts

the edge of any demand for change. These tendencies affirm the status of lay persons as

having no jurisdiction within the governing structures of the Church and therefore no

sanctioned authority to effect ecclesiastical transformation. The low expectations many

have for lay parishioners occasions outrage that is expressed, not on behalf of the laity,

but on behalf of ecclesial ideologies, and has the effect of reasserting that lay persons are

to look outward to the world and upward to their pastors, but not inward to the workings of the church in its ministry and governance. Further, the intended audience for much of this literature is Church leaders rather than victims who need support and lay Catholics who need communication and access to forums of ecclesiastical decision making. The two constituencies who are most affected by the crisis are the least attended to in the literature: victims of priests sexual abuse and Catholic laity.

The little attention paid to the laity hides the possibility that the laity, particularly lay parishioners, have changed in ways which, if we pause to examine them, might better explain the interest, impact and energy these crises have unleashed. Regarding the priest sexual abuse crisis, it may have less to do with the gravity of these very grave offenses, aggressive reporting by the media, or aggrieved parishioners who are better informed about the devastation of sexual abuse in general and priest abuse in particular, than it has to do with an American Catholic laity that has evolved toward greater complexity of consciousness. It may have less to do with a loss of trust and loyalty than it has to do with a new way many lay Catholics have of relating to trust and loyalty. In seeming silence and obscurity, the laity continue to evolve in complexity and are organizing themselves in groups that take the responsibility for change upon themselves. In a church that has been confronted in recent times on the need to listen to the lay faithful, to hear lay voices in matters concerning the safety of children and other vulnerable persons, and to create better access for lay persons to ecclesiastical forums where policies are deliberated and decisions are made, further research is called for that studies lay

parishioners in the contexts of the faith communities they serve, sustain and draw

nourishment from.

<u>Research Design</u>

It is important to state in this methods section my relationship to the researched,

which has a bearing on the description and analysis that follows in this study. I was

employed in the parishes as a religious education director from 1997 to 2005, and was a

participant in four of the five groups studied from 1994 to 2004. With the exception of

the 1994 group, I participated in the 2001, 2002, and 2003 groups either voluntarily

(2002) or at the invitation of the pastor (2001, 2003). In 2004, in my capacity as religious

education director, I was the principle architect and facilitator of the group, and was the

primary drafter of one of the documents the group produced. My conscious bias is

toward greater lay participation in the Catholic Church. I understand that who I am

affects everything in ways I can imagine and in ways I cannot imagine. Therefore you

my reader need to keep this in mind as you reflect on and weigh the experiences, insights

and judgments I draw attention to, especially those in chapter six.

The Focus of the Study

This study investigates the cognitive development of groups by studying

gatherings of lay Catholics in contentious dialogue with the hierarchy over the issues of

priest sexual abuse and parish restructuring.[9] I am documenting the growth in cognitive

complexity of a group of adults over a ten year period and the mismatch between the

group's ways of making meaning and the curriculum coached by the hierarchy. I am

doing this with an innovative use of two powerful theories, adapting them to measure

meaning making in groups of adult learners in non-formal settings. This study applies

Robert Kegan's (1982, 1994) constructive-developmental theory and Bernard Lonergan's

(1972) theory of cognition and epistemology to how groups evolve in their meaning

making capacity over time. Understanding this better improves our knowledge of how

groups contribute to their own learning and transformation, and how average adults can

grow in their capacity to understand core issues, to articulate their learning, and to take

appropriate action within a setting not always welcoming of such learning and action. I

do this through an extensive case study that explores one clustered parish's struggle over

the priest sexual abuse crisis and parish restructuring.

Research Question

My question is how do *groups* of adult learners evolve toward greater cognitive

complexity? Given that groups of adult learners in the United States are made up of

individuals with different developmental orientations or orders of mental complexity

(Drago-Severson 2004a), how do these different orientations affect group learning and

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[9] The dialogue was contentious both because of the overt conflict that emerged between the parish groups
and the diocese, and because of the intra-group disorientation that occurred among the group members at
the slow discovery that their assumptions and cognitive frameworks were inadequate to address their
ultimate concerns as they relate to safe and open parishes (Mezirow, 1991).

transformation? What demands does a change in the cognitive complexity of the group place on the capacity of a group's leaders to adapt pedagogical approaches and governing processes? The purpose of this dissertation therefore is to explore the cognitive growth of lay parishioners in contentious dialogue with the hierarchy. This study privileges the voice of parishioners and enables one to see the reality "on the ground" where most Catholics enact their faith. Therefore, the question of lay participation is not simply one of "what ecclesial tasks/ministries are laity theologically permitted to engage in?" It is a question of "what horizonal/epistemological capacities does this group of lay men and women currently possess or hold and how do these interact within groups?" Further, it is a question of "how is this community held, supported and challenged, by whom, and toward what ends?" These latter questions may establish new ground for a lay theology from below and offer new ways to examine issues of governance, roles and relationships, and communication in the Church.

In order to do this I study the growth in cognitive complexity of groups within a two-parish community that were gathered in five major events during a ten year period over the twin crises of priest sexual abuse and parish restructuring. I accomplish this by triangulating data sources consisting of archival material, interviews and my own observations as a participant in four of the five groups. This study examines how adults learn together in non-formal educational settings and how they learn in a crisis. There are practical implications for cognitive development and learning in other real world learning settings as well. Adults learn experientially and toward their own self-directed goals (Knowles 1984). Thus, most adult education happens outside formal learning settings.

What is new in this study is access to undisputed crises that are well defined, evidence of

the evolving thinking of a group over time, and the response and reaction to that thinking

by community leaders such as hierarchical officials.

Data Sources

Consistent with the requirements of qualitative research to gather extensive

amounts of data together with thick description (Charmaz 2003; Geertz 1973), I have

assembled a rich collage of data sources including, 1) ten years of archival material for

each of the five events studied, including: nineteen institutional documents by educators

and leaders (clergy, hierarchy and lay educators) who initiated gatherings, framed the

discussion, summarized findings and responded to participants' inquiries; fourteen

documents produced by lay participants at events; and approximately two hundred pages

of emails from participants to each other and to leaders; and 2) interviews conducted in

2004 and in 2005 from six lay participants who participated in most of the five events

from 1994-2004. My own observations as a participant in all but the first event are also a

source of data. However, I was a participant as an employee of the parishes from 1997 to

2005 and therefore was not a *research* participant. The primary data sources for this

study are the archival material and interviews. I personally interviewed all participants in

two sets of 90 minute sessions using a semi-structured interview protocol which included

probing questions about what participants learned about themselves; changes in their

understanding of their roles and relationships within the community; their experience of

being educated in diocesan and parish contexts; and what they perceived their leaders were learning about their evolving participation as they, over time, turned knowledge production into creative action on behalf of their communities.

Dissertation Outline

In addition to laying out the focus of the study and research question, chapter one attempts to situate the study in the context of the contemporary crises of priest sexual abuse and parish restructuring. This chapter has also examined where the laity and lay parishioners are situated in the context of the literature, noting the generally low expectations theologians have for lay Catholics, and the tendency to reassert a low ecclesiastical status by not including them as subjects of their addresses.

Chapter two discusses Robert Kegan's constructive developmental framework, particularly as it attends to evolving communities, in an effort to draw preliminary conclusions about group growth. Highlighted is the theory's openness to both the individual and social dimensions of human growth. Here, the difficulties of using constructive developmental theory in group contexts are also reviewed. I introduce Eleanor Drago-Severson's concepts of developmental diversity within adult groups and learning cohorts as communities of connection in order to further understand how individuals grow in intentional group contexts. I also introduce William Torbert's theory of organizational development as a way of highlighting possible ways to look at how organizations as organizations can be understood to develop toward increasing

complexity. After defining how the present study uses the term "group," chapter two concludes with a proposal for understanding groups, neither as monolithic entities, nor as collectives of individuals, but as complex and dynamic groups moving with directionality toward increasing mental complexity.

Chapter three begins with a review of several problem areas in applying constructive developmental theory to groups; namely the problem of adults at second order of consciousness, the problem of using terms such as "traditional" and "modern" to describe periods of human history, and the problem using terms such as "conventional" and "post conventional" in pre-modern societies. Also reviewed is the need to more closely examine the "in over our heads" phenomenon identified by Kegan (1994). I draw attention to assumptions in constructive developmental theory that cultural leaders are fourth order or above and that cultural functions, such as vision constructing, limit setting, and boundary managing, are the exclusive province of fourth order consciousness. From this starting point, I introduce the first century Corinthian community and its founder, the apostle Paul, as a case study in service to building a constructive developmental hermeneutic for better understanding conflict between leaders and groups. This case further serves the purpose of making tentative claims about the orders of mental complexity of the Corinthian community, and the complexity of the expectations Paul placed on the community. Before doing this, however, I situate the Corinthian Christians within the larger Greco-Roman social, economic and religious context. I propose that the many conflicts between Paul and the community have their sources in a mismatch between his expectations and the community's cognitive

capacities. I conclude chapter three by demonstrating how the coaching of a cognitive curriculum that is beyond the people to whom it is coached may at times under-whelm rather than overwhelm; how a second order culture sets limits, and manages boundaries; finally, and importantly, why leaders need to attend to multiple orders of mental complexity in their leadership, and the cost to the community for failing to do so.

In chapter four I introduce Bernard Lonergan's transcendental method, highlighting his cognitive theory, different patterns of knowing, and his notion of conversion. I then adapt his theory to group cognitive growth through the concept of dialectic as a mode of exposing different orders of mental complexity, or what Lonergan calls realms of meaning. This chapter examines Lonergan's notion of conversion and argues that these likely occur at every differentiation of consciousness, from less complex to more complex, in the movement toward self transcendence. In chapter five I bring Kegan and Lonergan into conversation on behalf of better understanding group cognitive development. This chapter highlights similarities and differences on the notions of subject-object, directionality, of the "how" of human transformation. From this starting point the theory of evolving cognitive groups is further developed by adapting Lonergan's transcendental method to group knowing; particularly his notions of wonder, being, and the good. Kegan's notions of communion and agency, and subject-object transformation, is examined within the social-cognitive context of groups.

In chapter six I discuss the findings of the contemporary case study of the twin parishes researched in this dissertation. I bring to the aid of analysis the dynamic complexity model of group development worked out in previous chapters, but expanded

here to identify different stages of group cognitive development. After a brief description

of the pedagogical approach used by the diocese, the groups are examined for structural

and behavioral complexity. The final chapter generalizes from the groups studied in the

previous chapter to how four consecutively evolving groups might be understood in terms

of complexity, dynamism, and development across time.

Chapter Two: Community Meaning-Making: Robert Kegan's Constructive-Developmental Theory in Group Settings

This chapter has two goals: to introduce Robert Kegan's constructive developmental theory and to offer a preliminary approach to adapting it to groups. Kegan attends to human transformation by highlighting the evolving movement of individuals toward increasing complexity of consciousness.

<u>**Robert Kegan's Constructive-Developmental Theory**</u>

Like all powerful and interesting theories, Kegan's theory of human growth is centered in very simple ideas, or what he calls, Big Ideas: constructivism and developmentalism. Constructive developmental theory understands that individuals *construct* meaning – they are meaning makers – and *evolve* through various "eras" or "adaptive balances" through which they defend, then surrender, then reconstruct new centers of meaning. This growth process involves struggles of differentiation between self and world – what Kegan calls, emergence from embeddedness (Kegan 1982, 31, 82). Kegan comments on *Evolving Self*, "I looked at psychological growth as the unselfconscious development of successively more complex principles for organizing experience. Building on the work of Piaget and those who came after him, I took the idea of such principles of mental organization and extended its 'breadth' (beyond thinking to

affective, interpersonal, and intrapersonal realms) and its 'length' (beyond childhood and adolescence to adulthood)" (1994, 29).

These two ideas, that we make meaning and we develop, lend themselves to a considerable array of possibilities. Simple description masks a system of great depth and breath. The theory might be likened to playing the game of chess where a few basic ideas of play – pieces defined by their movement on a board of a fixed number of spaces; every piece from most complex (Queen) to least complex (Pawn) is necessary for successful play and capable of producing the decisive checkmate – lend themselves to a staggering variety of moves and many levels of complexity that allow playing chess to be fun and challenging for novices and experts alike. The analogy here includes the game, but emphasizes the *playing*, an activity one can find oneself doing with this game throughout one's life. One of the "staggering variety of moves" that has been under explored in the "game" of constructive developmental theory is whether and how the theory can be applied to groups. Is there a meaning constitutive evolutionary activity (Kegan 1980) for groups that attends to the developmental diversity of its members; that avoids construing groups as "corporate individuals" in order to apply to them theories of individual development; and that understands groups as dynamic where different orders of mental complexity interact toward a coherent enactment of a group vision? The "move" I begin to develop later in this chapter understands the dynamism of the interaction of different developmental orientations as that which gives a group-as-a-whole certain characteristics that include an overall structure that governs how it understands, judges and acts, while at the same time avoids construing the group as a cognitive monolith.

The Holding Environment

It is not a very great leap to make this move, for though Kegan's theory of human transformation clearly attends to individual growth, he avoids describing and explaining the individual apart from the communities of which he and she is a member. The social influence on, and implications for, individual transformation are never far from one's attention when studying constructive developmental theory. This is perhaps most evident in Kegan's concept of the holding environment. Kegan has convincingly shown that the distinction between the individual and the social is not absolute (1982, 115). The individual is one who is embedded in a "psychosocial surround" that includes a continuous network of care and challenge that is sometimes adequate and sometimes not. Holding environment is a term first used by D. W. Winnicott who argued that, to the infant, the mother is not simply an "other" but the very context of its surviving and thriving. He famously said, there is never "just an infant" to convey the fact that a thriving infant always comes attached. Kegan takes Winnicott's notion of the holding environment and extends it to the whole of one's life, including and especially, adult life.

A healthy holding environment provides an ingenious blend of support and challenge, and attends to the relationship between a person's mental capacity and the demands placed upon her by the "cultural curriculum" (Kegan 1994). Two key human yearnings correspond to the dialectic inherent in a holding environment between organism and environment, self and other, person and community: 1) agency, which is the yearning to be independent, autonomous, distinct and individual – an "object-

grasping" drive toward differentiation; 2) and communion, which is the yearning to be included, accepted, held – an "attention-recruiting" drive toward attachment (1982, 18). Kegan calls the holding environment the "culture of embeddedness," "natural therapeutic environment" (288), and "lifelong psychological amniocentesis" (257) to emphasize the intimate connection between self and world.

There is never *just* an individual, there is always a psychosocial holding environment within which one is "cultured" and grows. It consists of three functions: *confirmation* (holding on: encouraging, giving proper tasks and feedback), *contradiction* (letting go: appropriately opposing or resisting) and *continuity* (remaining in place: sticking around, being there when you are needed). Kegan describes the way a community "holds" and "lets go" akin to a sacred dance that is vital to both community and individual. "Each time a particular culture of embeddedness 'holds securely' it insures the integrity of the wider community of which the individual is a part; each time it assists in 'letting go' it attests to the community's greater loyalty to the person-who-develops than to the self-the-person-has-composed" (Kegan 1982, 260-261). In language reminiscent of Abraham Heschel, he notes that when communities inadequately hold, or fail to hold members at every developmental era, "time itself is profaned."

> Intact, sustaining communities have always found ways to recognize that persons grow and change, that this fate can be costly, and that if it is not to cost the community the very loss of its member, then the community must itself be capable of 're-cognition.' It must operate richly at many evolutionary levels, dedicating itself less to any evolutionary level than to the process itself (1982, 261).

Later in this chapter we discuss further the implications for Kegan's reflections on the relationship between individual growth and community support when we make a preliminary attempt to adapt subject-object theory to groups.

The Subject-Object Motion

For Kegan, metaphors of motion, movement and dance, are crucial to understanding life and human living. Human be-ing is an activity, whose entity-ness is inseparable from the activity itself. "Life is motion," and person is "an ever progressing motion engaged in giving itself a new form" (1982, 7-8). Without keeping this in the foreground of ones thinking when moving on to his orders of consciousness, one risks mistaking the person for a developmental stage (1982, 277). Objects are events, says Kegan, "this book is about human being as an activity. It is not about the doing which a human does; it is about the doing which a human is" (8).

The foundational human evolutionary activity in constructive developmental theory is the movement from "subject" to "object," and it is this movement that grounds both constructivism and developmentalism into a more comprehensive and inclusive framework for understanding human growth. Kegan does not simply attempt a synthesis of various conflicting psychological schools of thought and practice, such as Freudian psychoanalysis with Piagetian cognitive-developmentalism; rather, he places both in a broader, more general, context in order to ask a new and richer set of questions. He refers to this attempt as a "metapsychology" that attends to both biology (a developing

"entity" – in this case a person) and philosophy (the "process" of constructing meaning – a person's epistemology or way of knowing). Where Piaget's system remains descriptive, Kegan's subject-object theory is both descriptive and explanatory.

Throughout *Evolving Self* Kegan attends to the change that occurs in the self-world distinction at each adaptive balance by asking the question, "To what extent does the organism differentiate itself from (and so relate itself to) the world?" (44). This is a key question in subject-object theory and allows one to also ask to what extent is the self embedded in the world, and therefore prone to confusing itself with the world. Says Kegan, with each new adaptive balance the self is better able to grant to the world its own integrity, to allow the world to be what it is, apart from one's own previous construction because there is a further differentiation between self and world. This becomes a critical point when taking up below the question of how different orders of mental complexity in groups are related and coordinated to each other.

In his neo-Piagetian epistemology "'subject' refers to the basic principle of organization; 'object' refers to that which gets organized" (Lahey, Souvaine, Kegan, Goodman, & Felix 1988, 13). In other words, what one holds as object one can reflect upon and decide about, but what one is subject to, since it is the means by which one reflects and decides, cannot be an object of reflection. Subject is that which holds the self, that in which the self is embedded and therefore identified with. In the evolution of the individual, the self slowly dis-embeds from what was *subject*, which then becomes held as *object*; what was behind the self, as it were, driving the "operations" in one "stage" (subject) moves in front of the self, and is able to be noticed, held, acted upon in

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the next "stage" (it becomes object). This process involves a very gradual evolution always in the direction of increasing complexity of consciousness. Changes in mental complexity are always *qualitative* changes that transcend but include earlier orders of consciousness. This becomes clearer as we look at orders of consciousness below.

There are six orders of consciousness from infancy ("0") to late adulthood ("5") which Kegan variously names as adaptive balances, truces, orders of mind, or orders of consciousness. I use these terms interchangeably with orders of mental complexity and developmental orientation, the latter term Drago-Severson prefers. Since our concern is with adults, we will treat primarily second, third and fourth orders of consciousness, and only touch on fifth since it is so rare. Kegan and his collogues have demonstrated that at any given time over half to two-thirds of adults in the United States are less than fourth order consciousness, and this percentage is based on a population that is "whiter, wealthier, and better educated than the general population" (1994, 191). In one composite study that is more representative of the general population over one third of adults are second order, over two fifths are third order and one fifth are fourth order (Kegan 1994, 195-196).[10] The large presence of second order in the contemporary population is attested to in Drago-Severson's work with ABE-ESOL learners seeking a high school diploma (Drago-Severson 2004a) in which over half of study participants were second order.

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[10] Kegan refers to the composite study as "Full SES." The exact percentages are: second order, 36%; third order, 43%, fourth order, 21% (zero at fifth order).
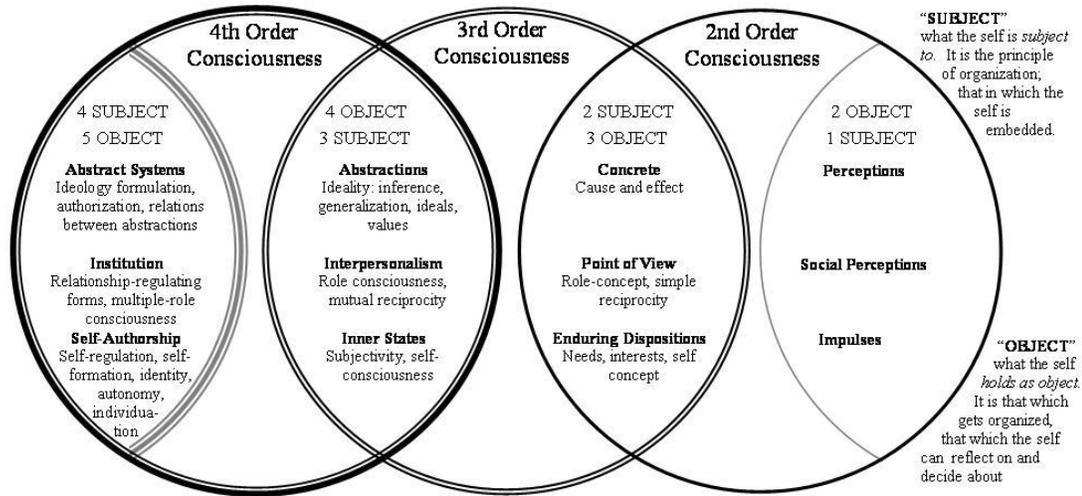
Figure 2.1: The Motion of Human Development (from second order to fourth order) in Robert Kegan's Subject-Object Theory

Orders of Consciousness

Subject-object theory understands the motion of evolution as a meaning-constitutive activity (Kegan 1982, 77); it is "an activity of equilibration, of preserving or renegotiating the balance between what is taken as subject or self and what is taken as object or other" (81). Kegan argues that this activity is the fundamental ground of personality. It is very distressing during periods of dis-equilibrium or decentration in which the self defends, surrenders, and reconstructs a new balance. The process of object creating – of making into a *part* of the self what was formerly identified *with* the self – is concomitant with that of subject losing – the experience of the loss of the self. But subject losing is also object finding in the establishment of a new center of balance (83).

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Impulsive first order of consciousness

In Kegan's Impulsive first order of consciousness the self is embedded in impulses and perceptions, but holds reflexes as object. Because impulses are immediate, rather than mediated, they lack the control older children are capable of. In fact, failure to express impulses is experienced as a threat to the self, to who one is. Objects separate from the child now exist, but they are also subject to what the child perceives them to be. The first order self also cannot hold two different perceptions together at the same time, nor hold two feelings about one object or person together at the same time. The world cannot yet be a "concrete" world – existing apart from one's perceptions of it – in the first order way of knowing since the world is as one perceives it to be. Results, not intentions, are central as seen in Piaget's question to children: which child was naughtier, the child who took a glass and deliberately broke it, or the child who accidentally broke a whole tray of glasses. Unable able to recognize intentions, impulsive children believe the child who broke many glasses is naughtier. When the impulsive child "loses its balance" between the ages of five to seven, she begins to be able to hold impulses as object, and to recognize that she exists in a world of "durable categories" – objects that have their own characteristics apart from one's perception of them. This is the world we discuss next.

Imperial second order consciousness

Second order consciousness is embedded in, or subject to needs, interests, wishes and goals; understands others as "suppliers" to the self (Lahey et al. 1988, 13); and enters relationships on behalf of its own interests. An adult with second order mental complexity holds impulses and perceptions as object. The rule oriented second order, or

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"Imperial" self can take the point of view of another person, but cannot hold her own point of view and the other's simultaneously and internally. Writes Lahey and associates, second order complexity concerns, "negotiating the fulfillment of the individual's own needs, wishes, and interests. For the stage 2 [individual], these negotiations often take the form of mutual promises, deals, or pacts to which both partners promise to adhere" (1988, 127). Though there are significant differences in the kinds of "deals" or "pacts" between children and adults, both are based on simple, tit-for-tat, reciprocity. Conflict is therefore externalized. Writes Lahey and associates, "A Stage 2 self would view both viewpoints in terms of 'what I want,'" making the other the sole holder of alternative points of view with which the self negotiates in terms of its own point of view (1988, 50).

Interpersonal third order consciousness

In the third order self, one can hold one's own and another's point of view together; one can take the point of view of the other taking one's own point of view – holding both points of view simultaneously and internally (Lahey et al. 1988, 49-50). This becomes the basis for a new "interpersonal" balance whereby individuals enter into shared realities with others; the other is now constructed in a relationship "not as a separate individual with her own values and beliefs but as part of a shared reality" (Lahey et al. 1988, 327). The other, "now made object to the extent of being released from being the sole holder of an alternative point of view [second order] – can be engaged in the working of the interpersonal self, partnered to the self's own capacity to hold multiple points of view within itself" (Lahey et al. 1988, 50). The self is able to subordinate her own interests and needs to those of others on behalf of building and preserving the

relationship, and to have loyalty to a community and to identify with it so that its success

is one's own and its failure assessed in terms of cost to community (Kegan 1994, 47).

Values and standards are internalized but have their authority in sources other than the

self, such as parents, mentors, peers, traditions, institutions and their leaders. The third

order self is embedded in the psychological surround, according to Kegan, but holds

needs, interests and point of view as object. Conflict is also internalized, leaving self

feeling responsible for the point of view/experience of others and simultaneously making

others responsible for the self's point of view/experience. A person's own feelings

depend on, or are subject to, "how he believes another person feels about him" (Lahey et

al. 1988, 321).

Institutional fourth order consciousness

In the movement from third to fourth order, the other-authoring, interpersonal

surround that once held the person (which made one *subject* to expectations and

authorities outside the person) begins to move from subject to object – to that which the

self holds and can decide about.

> *Evolution between stage 3 and 4 is the story of gradually separating internalized points of view from their original sources in others and making the self itself a coherent system for their generation and correlation.* When that has happened, e.g., we stop making others responsible for our own feelings, and experience it as a kind of violation when others make us responsible for theirs (Lahey et al. 1988, 51, emphasis original).

The self, disembedded from the fusion that accompanies the shared reality of third order,

has gained some distance from the interpersonal realm and can now decide about (hold as

object) relationships – the self *has* relationships rather than *being had* by them (Kegan,

1994). The self as system has the ability to subordinate what it thinks on behalf of the

other; it "is not about *altering* what [the self] thinks or *making disappear* the differences between them" (Lahey et al. 1988, 133). The self holds onto what it thinks and is comfortable with and aware of differences between self and others, even as it temporarily brackets out what it thinks in order for the other to be heard. The self "visits the other's experience" (1994, 134).   Standards and values are self generated rather than internalized from sources outside the self.

Interindividual fifth order of consciousness

Fifth order of consciousness is extraordinarily rare, so much so that Drago-Severson (2004a) suggests that it is a hypothetical way of knowing. In the many studies cited in Kegan's 1994 work, not one research participant scored at fifth order. Limitations in fourth order, however, suggest the real possibility of a post-ideological balance. In fourth order, the self-as-system presents a whole, complete self to others who are also assumed to be whole, complete selves (Kegan 1994, 312). The self *is* the system in fourth order; the self-authored self *is* the organization, a fact which prevents it from reflecting on the self that is *doing* the organizing and regulating (Kegan 1982, 102). The self is subject to the system. In fifth order of consciousness the system becomes differentiated from the self; a self which now holds the system as object.

Fifth order may be capable of reorienting and coordinating the powerful human yearnings for communion and agency that provide an underlying orientation in earlier orders of consciousness. Agency and communion achieve a kind of divine status in third and fourth orders. In third, the yearning for communion occasions the capacity to construct a shared reality in which mutuality grounds the self – the self *is* insofar as it is

in relationship with the other. Mutuality constitutes wholeness and completeness in third

order. In fourth, the yearning for agency occasions the capacity to construct a self that is

grounded in personal authority – a self that is whole and complete and relates to the other

as a whole and complete self. Fifth order, which subordinates self-as-system to a system

regulating, or inter-institutional self, seems to de-divinize agency and communion as

constructed by fourth and third orders of consciousness. The fusion of self and other in

third order is a communion that can discount autonomy; the distinctiveness of whole,

independent selves in fourth order is an agency that can discount community. Fifth order

assumes the incompleteness of all communal ideations and agental ideologies because it

recognizes the permeability or interpenetrablity of all selves and all systems. This

prevents the self from becoming over-identified with any one frame of reference. Fifth

order may recognize that community writ large is achieved not by "sameness" (third

order's tendency to flatten difference on behalf of fellowship), nor by an alienating

"totalism" (fourth order's tendency to flatten otherness on behalf of its own meta-story).

Rather, community in fifth order, because it is grounded in an assumption of the "total"

interpenetrablility of all systems, is always a local, historical, social enactment that is

influenced by, and influences, others within the total field of action.   There are no utterly

autonomous, self-subsistent selves or systems, nor does the interconnection of selves and

systems blur their distinct, singular reality.

Fourth order ideology digs a big hole into which its members unwittingly attempt

to fit the whole world. Because ideology is the structure of knowing for fourth order

individuals, ideology is identified with the self; the world therefore remains

undifferentiated from it (ideology) and is assumed to be the same. When the world

shows up differently from ideology, when some of its parts "don't fit" into the hole dug

for it, then those parts are simply bracketed out and ignored. Fourth order ideology

marks out, as it were, a portion of the sky (*templum*), a consecrated space (*effatum*) in

which to not only observe the world, but to make the world after the fashion of its own

metanarrative. When the world shows up differently, one simply cries, *non consulto* –

"doesn't count," "not looking," – as did the ancient (second order, but also agental – see

chapter three) Roman augurs when startled by an inauspicious sign. Because fifth order

simultaneously refuses to be identified with any one "system" or to identify the other as a

complete, self-subsistent system, everything counts, everything matters, nothing is not

looked at. There is no *templum*, no space that is not already consecrated, no inauspicious

time. There is no world with which to confuse a self that holds the world.

     The fundamental task of cultural leaders, especially adult educators is to facilitate

human evolutionary activity in ways appropriate to each order of mental complexity. The

extraordinary movement from one order of consciousness to another requires the right

combination of support and challenge, and the building of "consciousness bridges" that

secure both ends of the mental divide (Kegan, 1994). By doing so, one better engages in

transformational learning.

Motion of Orders of Consciousness in Subject-Object Theory

In subject-object theory, an order of consciousness does not necessarily refer to

the reign of a dominant epistemology, such as the "2" in second order. Rather, it refers to

an era one has achieved in which a new epistemological balance has fully emerged and

the former balance has been fully transcended (but included). In second order, for

example, "2," having "arrived," enters a long waning phase in which a new, more

complex epistemology appears and then waxes – in this case, "3." Arrival in this sense

heralds an inevitable movement toward the decline and fall of an epistemology. A

meaning making structure – the whole – is a dialectic between one waxing and one

waning epistemology – the parts (see figure 2 below). One not only is in motion, one is

developing; a development in which a hard-fought balance, given the right blend of

challenge and support, is under sustained and increasingly persistent challenge from a

new, more complex and therefore destabilizing epistemology. Below are the five

distinctions in each order of consciousness as used by Kegan (Lahey et al. 1988, 46).

1	1(2)	1/2	2/1	2(1)	
2	2(3)	2/3	3/2	3(2)	
3	3(4)	3/4	4/3	4(3)	
4	4(5)	4/5	5/4	5(4)	5

One is rarely just "3" or "4" since subject-object theory makes five distinctions within

one order of consciousness and one moves slowly but steadily through them. 3, 3(4), 3/4,

4/3, 4(3) are the five distinctions for *third* order. 3 simply means no evidence of second

or fourth order; 3(4) means that one is third order, but fourth order is beginning to make

an appearance; 3/4 and 4/3 means both are strong but in the first, third is dominant and in the second, fourth is dominant; 4(3) means fourth order is strong but must defend against the appearance of third order which is still present.

What might be initially confusing in this way of naming distinctions within orders of consciousness is, again, that a dominant epistemology is not necessarily an indication of a particular order of consciousness. Further, an individual is not simultaneously third order *and* fourth order. Rather, an individual *is* the dialectical motion between one waxing and one waning epistemology within a given order of consciousness.
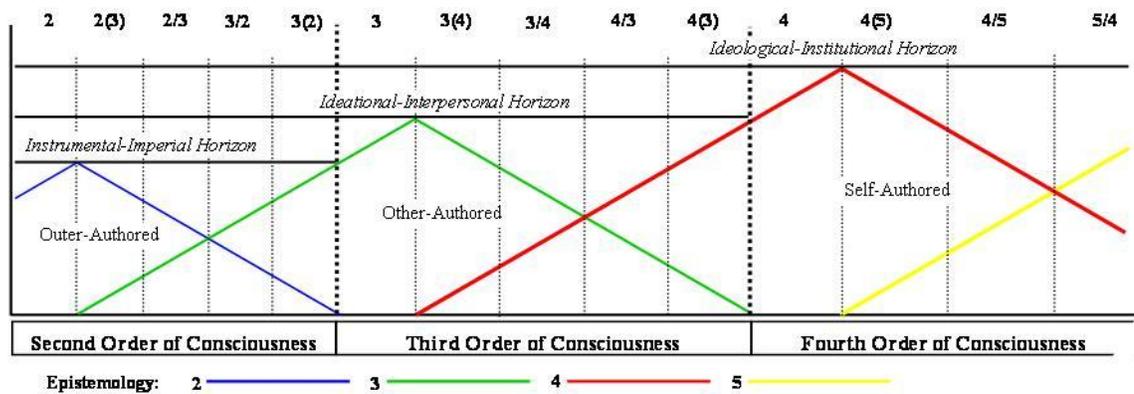
Figure 2.2: Waxing and Waning Epistemologies within three Orders of Consciousness

Communities in Kegan's Theory of Individual Development

Collective Consciousness

Kegan's constructive developmental theory describes individual growth, not community or group growth. However, the place of communities for generating and

sustaining individual growth in Kegan's theory has a central place in *Evolving Self* as indicated above. In fact, individual growth is unintelligible apart from one's rootedness in family, community and culture, an emphasis also evident in, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life* (Kegan 1994). Here he describes a "cultural mentality" and a "collective consciousness" that has in the past provided capacities individuals within communities lacked (1994, 134). He speaks of "communities of mind" which help to provide "a common core of beliefs that are entered and reentered via a seamless fabric of ceremony, celebration, ritual, gesture, and symbol… such communities are distinguished by a kind of homogeneity that makes the notion of 'role model' pandemic" (103). In such communities the collective consciousness provides the tasks of vision creating, role creating, limit setting, and boundary managing.

> However unique the content, style, or mood of each community's creed, what they all share at the formal epistemological level is the delivery of a fourth order consciousness that creates and regulates the relations, roles, and values with which most of the adults in the community become identified and to which they are loyal. For many, and even most, this may be the source of fourth order consciousness. It does not *and need not* come from their own minds (Kegan 1994, 103-104).

Kegan refers to this as "Traditional Community" where third order individuals are suspended in a "borrowable mind" (105) that supports them in the fulfillment of fourth order tasks. He argues, however, that this "mental monolith of Tradition" is fragmenting, which means that today, third order individuals are inadequately supported in fulfilling the fourth order demands the hidden curriculum of the contemporary American culture places on them.

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Consciousness Conversation at Cross-Purposes

Kegan relates an interesting story to note the collision of third order collective consciousness with the emerging mind of fourth order consciousness. He refers to this as a "consciousness conversation at cross-purposes," a theme I return to in chapters three and four when addressing intergroup and intragroup dynamism (conflict between and among different orders of mental complexity). In Henrik Ibsen's nineteenth century play, *A Doll's House*, Kegan draws one's attention to the collapse of Torvald's and Nora's relationship where the "mind of Tradition speak[s] with the emerging mind of Modernity" (1994, 112). Nora's newly emerging fourth order consciousness makes appeals to achieving autonomy, becoming her own person independent of her husband, thinking and acting on her own authority, and taking personal charge of her own education. Torvald's third order consciousness makes appeals to what people will think with Nora running off, to the external, authoritative, "infallible guide" of one's religion, and to cultural expectations such as a wife's duty to her husband and children. "An infallible guide outside ourselves, in which we comfortably invest authority and to which authority we pledge loyalty, fidelity, and faith – this is the essence of psychological *de*pendence. It is the essence of the premodern Traditional state of mind, and it is the essence of third order consciousness" (1994, 112). What was in an early form of cultural advance at the close of the nineteenth century is today present with such force that its cultural demands now permeate higher education, management, parenting, partnering and the helping professions. He speculates: "I would guess that the number of Americans

with fourth order consciousness was considerably smaller one hundred years ago than today" (100).

Kegan understands earlier periods in human history as characterized by a dominant order of consciousness (for example, Tradition Company) in which crucial higher order tasks are fulfilled by means other than the capacities of the dominant developmental constituency. Behind this understanding one can identify two key assumptions. First, the fulfillment of higher order tasks is done by a less dominant (numerically), but more complex order of consciousness. A critical question here is at what point does a more complex order of mental complexity, while a numerical minority, become determinative in creating and shaping the whole culture? This study makes a fourfold distinction with regard to the capacity of fourth order to exert its presence in groups: 1) it is present but not influential; 2) influential but not determinative; 3) determinative but not dominant; 4) it is dominant. This cumulative and progressive development of fourth order coincides not with a decline in third order, but a decline in second order. This will be developed more fully in chapters five and six.

The second assumption is that vision creating, role creating, limit setting, boundary management are the exclusive domain of fourth order consciousness, which therefore requires the positing of a "cultural mentality" or a "collective consciousness" whose creeds and rituals somehow deliver what the community lacks. This is problematic for two reasons. First, it appears to deny the possibility that boundary management, limit setting, etc., have counter parts within communities operating from a combination of early orders of mental complexity; that, say a community with a dominant

second order mental complexity would be unable to set limits or manage boundaries *by*

itself. The next chapter demonstrates that such a community can construct a second order

vision that fulfills these tasks; but one that is an instrumental, rule and role-oriented

vision. Second, it assumes that in every period of human mental development there

existed fourth order mental elites who, however tiny a percentage of the population, were

responsible for establishing for the whole population its vision, values and rules. The

next chapter also argues that a third order curriculum is capable of introducing to a

second order community a new, more complex vision that accounts for not only rules and

roles, but organizes them within a set of ideational values (a theory of rules and roles).

Toward Understanding Constructive Developmental Theory in Groups

Eleanor Drago-Severson's Developmentally Diverse Community of Connection

One solution to understanding group complexity has been addressed by Kegan

himself in a later study with colleagues including Eleanor Drago-Severson (Kegan,

Broderick, Drago-Severson, Helsing, Popp, & Portnow 2001a, 2001b). This multi-

method, multi-site longitudinal study understands adult groups as developmentally

diverse – as containing multiple "cultures of minds." Drago-Severson (2004a) reports on

one of the three sites studied, the Polaroid Corporation workplace site in Waltham, MA

whose study participants were "employed as shop-floor workers and enrolled in a high school diploma program" sponsored by the company (2004a, 3).[11]

In the Polaroid study, sixteen adult students completed the program and received High School diplomas. Most were non-native English speakers ranging in age from 27-58 who had moved to the United States from West Africa (ten), the Caribbean (three) and Asia (one) (2004a, 57-58). Two were U.S. born citizens. Using a variety of instruments, including but not limited to, the subject-object interview (Lahey et al., 1988) participants were scored for developmental orientation at the beginning of the study and then fourteen months later. Of the three sites in the larger study, the Polaroid site showed the most growth among participants between the two periods of measurement. Participants ranged in complexity of consciousness, with nine at various distinctions from early to late second order, six at various distinctions from early to late third order, and one at early fourth order.

Drago-Severson's and her colleagues' research is helpful for this present study because 1) it demonstrates the presence of developmental diversity within adult groups and examines how different developmental orientations differently experience knowledge, decision making, and conflict, and 2) and it reveals individuals within a learning cohort growing in complexity of consciousness over time aided not only by the pedagogical approaches of educators, but also by the support of fellow students.

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[11] Drago-Severson's research was part of a larger study that was "the first in-depth study of adult learning in ABE/ESOL [adult basic education/English for speakers of other languages] settings that applies Robert Kegan's (1982, 1994) constructive-developmental theory to understand how adults make sense of their learning experiences and their lives" (Drago-Severson 2004a, 3)

On the first point, the presence of developmental diversity with in the learning

cohort, it is worth repeating some of the features of developmental orientations. Clearly

in the Kegan tradition, Drago-Severson applies his constructive-developmental theory

within adult classroom settings[12] for the purpose of studying how different

developmental orientations differently understand learning experiences. Drago-Severson

and her colleagues found three different developmental orientations among the

participants in the learning cohort. This sheds further light on how notions such as

knowledge, decision making, and conflict are experienced in qualitatively different ways

by adults in various orders of mental complexity. Instead of referring to adaptive

balances as orders of consciousness, she refers to them as developmental orientations,

which seems to be a preferable choice when studying adult populations since it sets aside

(at least temporarily) questions of higher or lower, earlier or later, less complex or more

complex.[13] This is particularly the case when second order is not only present in an adult

population, but numerically dominant. Drago-Severson refers to second order as

Instrumental orientation, third order as Socializing orientation, and fourth order, with

Kegan, as Self-authoring.

Instrumental developmental orientation understands knowledge as a possession

acquired from authorities external to the self that is either right or wrong (2004a, 34); it is

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[12] Classrooms are a kind of group, though not a group working toward a corporate outcome. Rather, adult educational cohorts as defined by Drago-Severson, work together in teams sharing common goals, but for individual outcomes such as getting one's diploma. A group as this dissertation defines it is a group of individuals working together for outcomes that advance the interests of the group itself, or a larger group (parish) whose interests it represents.
[13] For Kegan, second order consciousness in today's cultural curriculum is the domain of the 8 to 12 year old child, which seems to suggest that second order among an adult population is a "problem." His examples of second order in *Evolving Self* (1982) and *In Over Our Heads* (1994) bear this out.

something that can increase, a fact which improves one's condition and opportunities in

life and work. Decision making for instrumental learners is about setting concrete goals

and following correct rules in order to achieve them; deviating from the rules is

experienced as doing it wrong (2004a). Instrumental knowers watch "for who is

following the rules and who is not, and whether one's own concrete needs and goals are

being met" (2004b, 30). Conflict is experienced as resulting from rule breaking; where

different points of view are characterized as one right and the other wrong; where

rightness coincides with achieving one's own needs and interests; and where fairness is

understood in terms of simple reciprocity (you do this to/for me and I'll do that to/for

you). Persuasion of others is a key strategy for "winning" arguments.

Socializing knowers also construe knowledge as something received from

authorities. "Unlike instrumental knowers, socializing knowers conceive of knowledge

as something a person should have in order to meet the goals and expectations of external

authorities" (2004a, 34). In adult groups, socializing knowers make decisions by

"realizing an abstract goal and figuring out the best way to achieve it. Goals are based on

a sense of loyalty or obligation to another person or group or cause… Looks externally

for support, encouragement and validation of progress" (2004a, 34). Decision making is

intimately connected to loyalty to important others including leaders, institutions, and

traditions. Conflict can be more troubling for socializing knowers because they are more

aware of the feelings of others and because there may be more at stake in the dispute than

simply who is right and who is wrong and how does this meet one's own needs and

interests (instrumental knowers).[14] These knowers watch for "commonalities and places

of agreement that can be build on to decrease sense of difference and hurt feelings.

[They emphasize] loyalty and inclusion of everyone and coming to a mutual

understanding and resolution that everyone feels good about" (2004b, 30-31).

Self-authored knowers experience knowledge as "context dependent" where both

others and self are sources of knowledge (2004a, 33). Decision making for self-authoring

individuals is an internally generated process not bound to outside authority. Thus

values, beliefs, and standards are adhered to not because they come from external

authority to which one is loyal, but because they are internally authored by a self one is

loyal to. Decision making focuses "on identifying one's own independently conceived

and desired goal(s) and considering all of the possible ways to accomplish it/them… [and

follows] one's own standards and values for reaching the goal, recognizing when and

where one needs others' expertise and seeking that out" (Drago-Severson, 2004a, 34).

Conflict is understood as an inevitable feature of adult groups that can be potentially

helpful to "clarify an issue and lead to better communication and relationship" (2004b,

30). The goal of conflict resolution for self-authoring knowers is to "move the interests

of the group forward" through vetting different opinions, perspectives and feelings

(2004b, 31).

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[14] Drago-Severson argues that the self is defined for instrumental knowers as what one has; for socializing
knowers as who one is; and for self-authoring knowers as who one can become. Because socializing
knowers are embedded in the psychological surround and therefore look to valued others as authorities,
what may be at stake in conflict is one's very sense of self. Because of this, socializing knowers may
prefer advocacy of one's own position while respecting other positions, rather than persuasion to one
position or another, as the chief strategy for disputes.

Drago-Severson's description of the program at the Polaroid site as a holding environment has important implications for the present study in terms of social learning in intentional group settings. The participants worked within an educational cohort and educators employed methods of collaborative learning where students interact with each other in learning groups. Collaborative learning is a "constructive process" that "creates a mutual learning environment for a teacher and a group of students" and better attends to students' own experiences and questions (2004a, 68). It avoids approaches that understand learning as "depositing" information from teacher to student. Drago-Severson reports that though the initial goals of the larger study was not designed to examine the effects of a cohort on the learning experiences of participants, "we came to understand that being part of a learning cohort mattered greatly, although in different ways to participants, and especially to learners at the Polaroid site" (2004a, 71). "They became what I call *a community of connection* in which each member supported and was supported by every other member" (2004a, 71). Cohort learning increases student commitment to each other's learning and, when offered paid release to pursue studies, increases the feeling that they are participating in something important and "helped them gain the respect of their peers and supervisors" (2004a, 159). Drago-Severson's description of a community of connection includes avoiding curricular strategies that unknowingly attend to one developmental orientation in favor of approaches that support learners in a variety of ways of making meaning. "This kind of developmental mindfulness can increase the likelihood that greater numbers of adults will feel recognized and valued in their learning" (2004a, 161).

Drago-Severson's work highlights developmentally diverse adult groups made up of individuals with different orders of mental complexity, a fact that greatly affects how they experience learning. Highlighted also is the value of groups organized as learning cohorts using approaches of collaborative learning. Such groups allow students to participate in each other's learning through mutual support and encouragement, and challenges educators to employ developmentally sensitive pedagogical approaches. For the purposes of this dissertation, however, we are left with several questions. Drago-Severson's understanding of cohorts consist of individuals sharing common goals and mutual support, but whose members work toward individual outcomes (diplomas). Student cohorts as communities of connection necessarily attend more to individuals than to the community itself. How are we to understand parish groups similarly gathered under common goals and enjoying mutual support, but whose outcomes are as much corporate as individual? How do we understand the cognitive dynamics of developmentally diverse groups where "collective" goals fuse with "corporate" outcomes, where the implications of conflict are significantly greater, and where a single outcome (parish closure for example) impacts every member within the community equally?

Obviously a parish or parish group is a different kind of community than a student cohort. In the case of a parish, it is a community enjoying legal status in civil law, juridical "personhood" in canon law, and is understood by its members as having a particular character or identity or ecclesial flavor. While parishes are clearly made up of their members, all of these descriptions (and there are many more) understand the parish

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as an organization, as an organic whole, that is more than the sum of its membership. Are there developmental features to the "organic parish" as a whole or to groups as a whole?

William Torbert's Action Inquiry as a Model for Organizational Development

William Torbert's developmentally sensitive approach to action research may shed some light on the question of how to construe the cognitive development of intentional groups.[15] Though there are different varieties of action research (Reason & Bradbury 2002), each shares three basic elements: research, participation and action. Professional researcher and participants are co-researchers in the process of knowledge creation. Participation therefore assumes that ownership of knowledge belongs to the participants as much as it does the researcher, and that together they are co-generators of knowledge. "AR is a participatory process in which everyone involved takes some responsibility" (Greenwood & Levin 1998, 7). Action assumes the goal of changing the current situation of the community or group toward greater liberation and participation.

In a context facing or requiring change, action research provides a framework for people and organizations to inquire into the concerns and issues their unique, local situation faces. From the standpoint of the professional researcher, Peter Reason states

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[15] Kegan treats Torbert's earlier work in some detail in, *Evolving Self* (1982), and twice references it in, *In Over Our Heads* (1994). "One of the more thoughtful students of organizations, I think, has been William Torbert, whose books speak in an uncommon blend of candid self-disclosure and scholarly rigor" (Kegan, 1982, 244). Kegan is appreciative of Torbert's description of "a qualitative evolution in the development of an organization" (244). Later, Kegan states, "Torbert's theoretical approach to the study of work and management makes explicit use of subject-object theory" (1994, 197) and "explicitly incorporates a constructive developmental perspective" (1994, 321)

that "there are two faces to action research: the practical question of how do we engage with this group of people in the service of doing things better; and the utopian project of helping bring forth a very different kind of world" (Reason 2003). From the standpoint of organizations and their leaders, Torbert states that "Action inquiry is a way of simultaneously conducting action and inquiry as a disciplined leadership practice that increases the wider effectiveness of our actions. Such actions help individuals, teams, organizations, and still larger institutions become more capable of self-transformation and thus more creative, more aware, more just, and more sustainable" (Torbert 2004, 1).

In Torbert's rich theory of inquiry and action there are many features that space does not allow me to develop. What I highlight here are the specifically developmental features of Torbert's action inquiry as they relate to organizations. Torbert fully developed his understanding of individual development in *The Power of Balance* (1991) and then applied it to organizations in *Action Inquiry* (2004). What Kegan calls orders of consciousness, Torbert calls action-logics, which range from pre-conventional (impulsive, opportunist – Kegan's second order), conventional (diplomat, expert, achiever – third order), to post conventional (individualist, strategist – fourth order; alchemist/ironist – fifth order). The characteristics of each action-logic are similar enough to constructive-developmental theory that they do not require repeating here. Torbert argues that individual action-logics correspond to the evolution of business corporations. His "Organizational Developmental Action-Logics" also include, pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional stages of growth. My purposes here, again, are not to repeat the different characteristics of each corporate action-logic, but to

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inquire how his theory understands developing organizations. The goal of organizational transformation according to Torbert's action inquiry is to become a "learning organization" by which he means achieving a post-conventional stage in which the organization intentionally assists individual transformation and the ongoing transformation of teams, divisions and partnerships (122). Organizational development "is more fragile than personal transformation" because a corporation's board may oust the senior management. "In such cases, the governing action-logic of the organization may regress virtually overnight" (122).

Torbert makes a specific analogical connection between individual and corporate action-logics. Organizational development is understood "as a sequence of transforming action-logics, analogous to personal development" (124). What this means for a given corporation is its evolving capacity to engage in inquiry and action in all the organizational functions of visioning, strategizing, performing, and assessing. Torbert applies the analogy by stating that in his and his associates' description of early action-logics (opportunist, diplomat, expert), "we were describing not children in the normal process of development but, rather, adults in organizations who are still motivated by relatively early action-logics… By contrast, when we discuss organizations at these three early action-logics… we describe them in their natural developmental process (i.e., in their 'childhood'), so the positive attributes of each action-logic will be more obvious than its shortcomings" (125).

In this use of analogy (the development of children and adults, is analogous to the development of organizations), organizations are described as evolving from one stage to

the next, like individuals, and are therefore developmentally uniform, or cognitively homogenous, at each stage. The key contribution of Torbert's work is that it provides a helpful framework for describing and analyzing the development of organizations *as* organizations toward increasing cognitive complexity. The present study adds to this body of work by positing that each "stage" of an organization's development is made up individuals within multiple orders of mental complexity, and that the movement, or growth is connected to interaction and conflict between and among them.

Torbert's description of organizations as moving sequentially along a developmental trajectory of increasingly complex action-logics inevitably portrays them as cognitively homogeneous at each stage rather than as hetero-cognitively complex. It obscures the fact that an organization is also made up of members who likely organize meaning at two, three and perhaps four different orders of mental complexity; it makes organizational development over-dependent on and over-determined by senior management; and it assumes that organizations as developmental structures are less robust than perhaps they are. While the goal of action inquiry is to create just and sustainable organizations that practice integrity and mutuality with their own stakeholders, but also with the broader social and natural worlds, more research needs to be done on how the diversity and interaction the of action-logics of its members are a *constitutive* activity of the organization itself.

A New Understanding of Evolving Groups

In its analysis of Kegan's and Drago-Severson's constructive developmental theory, and Torbert's theory of organizational development, the previous section left several questions unresolved. On the one hand, the groups I am concerned with are not simply gatherings of individuals sharing common goals, as in the case of the Polaroid study, whose "product" is specific to the individual. This approach uses constructive developmental theory in an educational cohort setting in service to better understanding the development of individuals, not the cohort as a group. On the other hand, groups are not well understood by construing them as "individuals," an approach which directly applies developmental theory designed to understand individual growth; one that gives the appearance of turning organizations *into* individuals in order to better inhabit a theory of individual development. Below, I define what a group is within the framework of this study, and then propose a constructive developmental hermeneutic for understanding groups as complex, dynamic, and evolving. In this way, I argue that particular kinds of groups are more complex than a gathering together of individuals, and are more diverse than is accounted for in models that construe them as cognitively homogeneous.

Definition of a Group.

In this dissertation, a "group" is made up of individual meaning makers operating from different developmental orientations within an intentional community. It is gathered and authorized with a specific mandate, collaborating toward a common set of goals on behalf of the larger community of which they are a part. Its processes include

knowledge production that can be expressed in texts. It is a gathering in which normative communication among group members and between group and leaders is open and ongoing. An intentional group that is or becomes a meaning making community is likely to exist over time, has a mechanism of boundary management and limit setting, some means of "remembering", and at least a minimal continuity of membership across time.

A group with no social or communal mandate beyond the edification of the individuals present, for example a Bible study in a Catholic parish, while producing knowledge within a small community of learners, nevertheless does not represent the congregation, does not speak or act on its behalf. Nor does it usually articulate and enact its knowledge production in official texts. As a group it is therefore less likely to *demonstrate* a complex epistemological structure than, say, a parish Pastoral Council or board of directors which is charged with particular responsibilities to produce knowledge (a pastoral vision, for example) and *do* something with the knowledge it produces on behalf of the community (for example, authorize and hold accountable other bodies – "commissions" – to organize ministerial and missioning strategies for carrying out the vision). The key word is demonstrate; the structure that is likely present needs also to be measurable in some way. In the model I develop here, a Bible group, since it typically produces no group texts, and does not formally interact with other governing bodies within and without the parish, lacks a ready means to discern the structures of mental complexity that are certainly present. It is in the intersection of the knowing and doing of a group, *how* it understands, and what it *does* with what it understands, that is of interest here.

Groups as Complex, Dynamic, and Evolving: A Brief Look at Method.

Intentional groups are complex in that they are made up of a diversity of orders of

consciousness, and are dynamic in that change and growth is a factor of a dialectic

between different orders of mental complexity. Groups are also developmental in that

they evolve in the direction of increasing complexity of consciousness through a

succession of "eras" each of which possesses a distinct character determined by the

meaning making composite of the group. In chapter six I more adequately support the

claims I make here when I discuss the contemporary case study, however, it may be

helpful to briefly discuss the method employed in the analysis of the groups of the

present study. My approach has been to adapt the guidelines for interpreting subject-

object data from *A Guide to the Subject-Object Interview* (Lahey et al. 1988) from

individuals to groups. In doing so, I score the groups from each of the five events from

1994-2004 using the threefold procedure of analysis consisting of structural, behavioral,

and developmental analysis. *Structural analysis* notes the presence of different orders of

mental complexity within lay produced documents and tentatively scores documents

according to the strength of each epistemological structure present. *Behavioral analysis*

examines the group's response/reaction to the given crisis it was facing, with special

attention to how its members experienced the group's suspension after each event,

asking, a) to what did participants return, and b) into what did they transform?

Developmental analysis examines the evolution of the groups over time looking for

development in four areas: a) movement from solution proposing to problem posing

(Freire 1970); b) changes in what the group could or could not take a perspective on; c)

changes in responsibility taking – who or what they were/were not responsible to/for; d) changes in the group's response to authority.

A First Approximation at Understanding Groups as Complex, Dynamic, and Evolving.

Setting aside for now the question of group dynamism, one way to understand a group's evolving complexity, or the presence of meaning making structures within groups, is to look at how it puts together a particularly challenging set of experiences. For example, after the 1994 restructuring initiative, the two parishes of this study, formerly separate parishes each with its own pastor, finance and pastoral councils, were instructed to merge by the bishop who, in 1996 installed one priest for both communities. The community's response to the merger though initially negative, did not include a challenge to the bishop's decision, even though the parishes had requested two years earlier (the 1994 process) a different parish configuration than what the bishop gave them. Lay cooperation in the process was framed by study participants as an attempt to do what they believed was necessary to maintain parish viability in the face of a hierarchy with the power to close them. This entailed holding the tension between cooperating with an unwelcomed merger while at the same time attempting to preserve each community's distinct character and identity.

As they struggled in the following five years to bring the two communities together in a new kind of unity – an effort that led to a net increase in the number of ministerial and missionary activities the parishes engaged in – they began to believe that their experience of merging was unusual, even exemplary, and earned them a kind of perdurability, or right to ongoing existence as parishes. The traumatic feelings of loss

and confusion when it was discovered in the 2001 initiative that the smaller of the communities was on a list of parishes proposed to be closed or sold led participants in the group gathered at the time to express their perception that they had done all the right things to stave off this eventuality in an era of priest shortages, that the hierarchy was somehow "not playing by the rules" when it proposed to close and sell the smaller parish, and that such a proposal represented a serious breech in appropriate parish-diocese relations.

In Kegan's framework, this response might be second order if the feelings expressed were derived from a fear of what the hierarchy could do to them if they didn't cooperate in the merger (i.e., refuse to provide them priests in the future, or formally suppress them – a canonical term for permanently closing the parish); or if their cooperation derived from an understanding of an implied bargain, that doing so would serve their interest in staying open and, having done so, they would thereupon get what they wanted from a hierarchy that existed to meet their needs. If this is so, it is suggestive of a group organized around second order capacities; that is, organized around its own needs and interests, unable as a group to subordinate these on behalf of their relationship to the larger Catholic community (the needs of other parishes or the diocese).

The response might be third order if the feelings about parish viability and sustainability were derived from other authority figures such as the pastor; if their playing by the rules was out of a felt expectation that it would win hierarchical approval; if their offense-taking was derived from a sense of loss at the perceived breach of an implied relationship between the parish and diocese; and, moreover, if the group was able to hold

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its own point of view simultaneously with the point of view of the hierarchy. This would then suggest a group organized around third order capacities. That is, needs and interests no longer rule, but the group is embedded in the approval and expectations of authority inside and outside the group such as the pastor, bishop or chancery officials.

The response might be fourth order if the feelings of concern over the proposal to close or sell the smaller of the parishes were derived from a sense of violation of how they had come to see themselves as a community; a sense of violation of who they had become as a self-constructed community in the five years post-merger (1996-2001); and if their participation and collaboration was understood by them as co-creating with the hierarchy a new and viable community that assumed a self-determining or governing role for themselves – one violated by the hierarchy's unilateral proposal in 2001. This would then suggest a group functioning at or near fourth order.

In fact, all three orders of mental complexity are evident in the data (the archival material produced by the group in response to possible parish closure). However, determining the relative strength of the presence of each order of mental complexity, or at least the dominant order, requires both structural and behavioral analyses – a search for both linguistic and non-linguist evidence of meaning making. In this way we are able to differentiate between what a group espouses and what it actually does or does not do. For example, all of the groups from 1994-2004 gathered and organized around some action on the part of the hierarchy; action that generated strong negative responses from parishioners which, in turn, morphed into documents articulating the knowledge produced through the group process. And yet, except for the 2004 gathering, groups

generally returned to status quo at the close of each initiative as measured by the fact that

they did not protest their suspension, even when in the group documents they demanded

new processes and mechanisms to preserve or implement what they had learned. The lay

quiescence after such events represents a non-verbal, epistemologically significant

communication, and suggests both a concern that pushing too hard could generate further

negative consequences; and suggests as well the presence of a pervasive trust in or

loyalty toward pastors and bishops, or a return to trust when overtures, even slight

overtures, were made by the hierarchy in response to parishioner demands. One can infer

from this a dominant third order base in many of the groups with a subdominant second

order constituency. While there were likely members who were fourth order, and exerted

influence on the group, the overwhelming meaning making logic for most of the groups

was third order with a less influential, but strong, second order.[16] Prior to 2004,

loyalty/trust is the general ground or structure of the group's knowing. A value-generator

working in the group that self-consciously relativized loyalty to a vision of

parish/church/laity was not weighty enough to draw the group into its orbit. There is no

effective visioning capacity that not only preserves inter-ecclesial relationships but does

so on behalf of a claimed identity of who they are as a community, a capacity that

regulates and subordinates trust to a "theory of trust." The group's role creating, goal

producing, boundary managing and limit setting functions were therefore ceded to the

pastor and the hierarchy.

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[16] From the perspective of the dominant cognitive constituency, this can be expressed in a balancing feedback loop: Lay parishioner (LP) trust > hierarchy (H) action > LP lose trust > LP challenge H > H responds > LP return to trust. This feedback loop operated as long as both parishes remained open, or until the group began to construct and act on its own vision of church (then a reinforcing feedback loop emerged in which the group resisted suspension and overtly challenged the hierarchy as in the 2004 group).

Thus, when a fourth order constituency puts forth demands for lay assemblies in a self-shepherding bid to partner with the hierarchy in the governing of the parish and diocese, or calls for stronger parish Pastoral Councils, financial accountability and two-way communication in service to regulating relationships between laity, clergy and hierarchy, third order recognizes and supports these same demands, but from a horizon bounded by the ecclesio-psychological surround. Third order offers its support on behalf of the emerging group consensus (knowing what it wants when others express what they want), on behalf of preserving relationships within the parish (against the threat of parish closures) and in service to re-authorizing religious leaders who have let them down.[17] When the diocese acknowledged parishioner contribution to the 1994 initiative, when it dropped its 2001 proposal to close one of the parishes after vociferous opposition, when the bishop responded in a letter to the parishes in 2002 addressing some of the parishioner concerns about his handling of the sex abuse crisis, third order goal's were largely met by such responses – trust was reestablished – and they saw little reason to protest the group's suspension. The status quo was reaffirmed. They were able to go along with calls for lay assemblies, accountability and communication, not from self-shepherding ground, but because it provided a means to affirm and reaffirm their relationship with and trust in the very authorities they felt compelled to challenge in these instances. Third order goals were met even as fourth order goals were not (no lay

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[17] Re-authorizing is not self-authorizing (fourth order). A group dominated by third order is not simply held captive to authority, but in the dialectic between this constituency and leaders, third order unwittingly bequeaths to authority figures or tradition the power to tell them who they are. It is other-authored, but also authorizing, not of self, but of its own mentors and leaders, empowering them with the capacity to organize their energy and lead. The re-authorizing in this case is a return to trust once bishops or chancery officials responded by giving at least some attention to their concerns.

assemblies, weak Pastoral Councils, no episcopal accountability, no multi-directional

communication).

What of second order's presence? Second order bought into the group's overall

goals, but in service to their own needs and interests rather than in service to intra-parish

and inter-parish relationships. Leaders construed as extrinsic sources of needs-meeting

are opportunistically engaged (as opposed to third order which, having internalized

authority, is able to feel and respond to the claims of others – they internally matter –

including and especially the perceived expectations of leaders). The hierarchy for this

cognitive constituency is that which has the power to save or close a parish; it is

simultaneously a source of needs-meeting and a source that can render harm. The

fundamental need of this order of consciousness in this threatening context is regular

Eucharist and parishes available to provide it (in that order). If they perceive that the

hierarchy's response (and their participation) is one that, a) keeps available the Eucharist,

and b) renders no harm, then they would likely return to the status quo and lose interest in

the group.[18] This, in turn, would add weight to third order's decision to acquiesce to the

group's suspension, further weakening the impact of four's complaint that not much, in

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[18] This is not to say that other cognitive constituencies do not also "need" the Eucharist. Embedded in needs, an individual operating with second order complexity might tend to view the Eucharist exclusively as the source or means of salvation. The third order mind "holds" needs and interests, needs which are subordinated to and relativized by interpersonal mutuality. Because of this increased mental capacity one might view the Eucharist *also* as the critical means for establishing and maintaining one's relationship with God and one's relationship with the community – that the Eucharist establishes an authoritative community of salvation to which one owes one's loyalty and from which one draws one's values and beliefs. An individual operating with a fourth order complexity might view the Eucharist as a participation in the mystery of Jesus; as an end toward which one moves in the enactment of solidarity with Jesus who cared for poor and oppressed persons; an internally authored vision and value generating capacity able to organize relationships and direct action toward that vision. Therefore the Eucharist may be construed as a ritual act of solidarity with Jesus whose words and hands and feet become incarnate in the world through one's own utterances for, holding of, and journeying with the other.

fact, had been gained when measured against the goals of giving jurisdiction to a lay constituency within the parishes they build, maintain, and support.

A very significant change for group development was the slow but continual rise of a fourth order constituency which moved from present but not influential (2001), to influential but not determinative (2002, 2003), to determinative but not dominant (2004) and that this rise coincided with a slow decline in a second order constituency. How this may have occurred is a question for chapter five when we take up the dialectic between different orders of mental complexity. For now the above example shows possible new ways for understanding complex and evolving groups, and suggests the idea that why groups do what they do is a question of how different developmental constituencies within them make meaning.

Conclusion: Challenges in Theory Adaptation

We are left with many challenges in adapting constructive developmental theory to groups. The first has to do with the theory's assertion that each successive order of consciousness transcends and includes the former order of consciousness. While the transcending is clear enough, it is not clear how the former is *included* in the new form. Lonergan solves this, as we will see in chapters four and five, by allowing persons who have achieved self appropriation to move among what he calls the different cognitive contexts; a solution that has its own challenges. If the question is one of retreating or

reverting to earlier orders of mental complexity, then Kegan powerfully and convincingly rejects this (1994, 371, n. 26).

For example, retreating to former *behaviors* is not an indication of a retreat to an earlier meaning making system. Piaget shares an endlessly quoted example of this. A preschool child can be shown two identical beakers that hold the same amount of liquid, and two empty beakers, one is tall and thin and the other short and wide. Water can be poured from the two beakers, one into the short one and the other into the tall one. When asked what beaker holds the most liquid, a three-five year old child invariably answers, "the tall one" without noticing the fact that the quantity of the liquid didn't change, only its appearance. She is embedded in her perceptions – the world is as she perceives it to be (which can lead to meltdowns when the world keeps showing up differently than her perceptions). But once the child gets that the liquid quantity doesn't change, around age 6-8, *she can never not get it*! She has entered a new way of making meaning (second order) and now understands that objects in the world have their own qualities apart from one's perception of them; she now experiences what Kegan calls "durable category," that things retain their somethingness across change. She can't go back to not getting this. She cannot not understand that Mommy in a costume and funny makeup is still Mommy (Mommy retains momminess across change) where before, Mommy in a costume was someone else. The older child, however, can make mistakes that have the appearance of a mental retreat, say a 10 year old temporarily fooled by a particularly good makeup job by Mommy. But being fooled is not retreating to "world equals my perception of world" way of making meaning.

In the same way, once an adult finally gets, for example, that their sense of self-value is constructed internally, that who they are is not a matter of who they are with, that identity is self-authored and not simply a *given* that is given *to* them by persons, authorities, peers and traditions, then this person can never not get it. This person remains in relation to persons, peers, authorities and traditions, but in a new way that no longer expects others to tell him who he is. This person, having achieved some degree of psychological distance from others might say, "I may be startled by an exchange that misfires and walk away with hurt feelings. But that's all it is. My feelings are *my* feelings and do not have their source in the actions of others. The experience did not call my sense of self into question because I no longer seek my self in the face of others and therefore do not give blanket 'permission' to others to fill up my sense of who I am. My feelings about who I am have their origins in whether or not I am living up to the self I am struggling to become." To use Kegan's wording, I now have relationships rather than being had by them because I have a relationship with my relationships. The choices of others as they relate to me are about *how* they are, not *who* I am. This internal, self authorship does not mean separation from others; it means I can now allow others to be *more* who they are rather than agents who fill up who I am.

But does "never not getting it" mean forgetting one's earlier orders of mental complexity? While this question may not be relevant in constructive developmental theory and its focus on individuals, it is crucial when investigating group development since persons operating from many orders of mental complexity are likely present. The "including" may be as important as the "transcending" because of the tendency to forget

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one's earlier structures of knowing. This calls forth a particular developmentally attuned

pedagogical approach that foregrounds not only multiple structures of knowing, but also

foregrounds how these structures differently experience intentional groups and, further,

how groups can be organized to better enlist the participation of members at different

orders of mental complexity.

This challenge leads to the second challenge about the *how* of change. The

explicit inclusion together with transcending is important because the *relations* among

the members in developmentally diverse groups is constituted by and grounded in the

varying meaning making structures that *are* the members of the group. As I argue later,

the *how* of transformation for the individual may have more to do with her presence in

complex (cognitively diverse), dynamic (conflicting), and evolving (developmentally

moving) communities with whose members she is in relationship, than with any other

intrapersonal, individually understood cognitive factor. Considering for a moment, not

individuals, but cognitive constituencies (for example, subgroups of second, third, and

fourth order members), what a given constituency has transcended constitutes its relation

to a more complex constituency, and what it includes constitutes its relation to a less

complex constituency. Transcending may be understood as intelligibly proceeding from

that upon which it depends; it is a dependency, however, that does not subordinate what

has proceeded to that from which it proceeded, as in third subordinated to second,

because the procession is not causal. In other words, third order depends on second order

from which it proceeds; second order is the ground, but one that, in the transcending, is

regrounded in a more complex system. At the same time, that which is transcended is

neither discarded nor found defective; rather included in a more comprehensive and universal framework or context. Third order is not possible apart from a prior evolving second order consciousness; a consciousness that, in individuals, does not cause third order to be. For groups as defined here, then, the transcending can be understood as the differentiation and the inclusion can be understood as the relation. It is the argument here that subject-object "cross breeds" in complex, dynamic, and evolving groups, but always in the direction of increasing complexity. A third order constituency transcends a second order constituency by way of subject, but includes it by way of object. Its real relation to second order is grounded in what it has included, or holds as object; which is simultaneously that which second order is subject to.

These epistemological relations are also correlated to each other as in second to fourth and fourth to second; third to fourth and fourth to third, etc. Moreover, in the context of intentional groups with attention on the developmental diversity, because the correlation is directed, the individuals' orders of consciousness are also coordinated to each other. That is, they are mutually attracted to each other, but in different ways. The relation, correlation and coordination has to do not only with the subject-object relation between each constituency, but also with how each cognitive constituency relates to the whole group. Fourth order *includes* the worlds of second and third, or holds them; it therefore does not confuse members within these cognitive constituencies with itself. On the question of authority, for example, second order confuses leaders with its own needs and interests and construes them as suppliers of these same needs and interests – leaders,

institutions, even the community, do not yet have their "own integrity." Second order does not *relate* to third and fourth as these relate to it.

Another way cognitive constituencies in groups are related and correlated is through the two orienting principles: communion and agency. Second order's over-independence is resonant with fourth order's autonomy – that is, both experience agency (in different ways) as a fundamental yearning. Third and fifth orders experience communion as its fundamental yearning. Third order may relate to second and fourth as if they are the same, and second and fourth may relate to third as if it is "other." The relation, correlation, and coordination of the various cognitive constituencies can be observed in the groups studied in this dissertation (chapter six).

A third challenge involves coming to terms with the large number of adults making meaning at second order of consciousness. Subject-object theory does not distinguish between the meaning making of an adult and a child at second order of consciousness. If there is no qualitative difference in degree of mental complexity, is there nevertheless a difference in kind? When imperial, second order, adults join groups how do they interact with third order or fourth order members? What is their relationship to leaders who may be second, third, or fourth order consciousness? What is the relationship between a second order constituency and a dominant third order constituency? Bernard Lonergan's work on what he calls common sense as a specialized way of knowing for many adults will shed light on these questions.

A final challenge is how to understanding holding environments in light of complex and dynamic groups? Kegan's constructive-developmental theory directs

attention to the individual and his or her transformational growth; when attending to social, communal dimensions of human be-ing, it is in service, not so much to community growth, but to the growth of the individual. It is difficult therefore to answer questions about how a holding environment holds, not individuals, but multiple orders of mental complexity. Moreover, who or what is doing the holding when it is a developmentally diverse community needing to be held? What are the leadership tasks for culturing such groups? How are leaders to construe conflict within the group and between the local group and broader institution as in the case of a parish and diocese? For now, we are left with these questions and with the following suggestion: groups themselves may be capable of providing some of their own "holding", particularly in communities whose institutional structure and leaders inadequately "culture" multiple orders of mental complexity.

The framework for a constructive developmental hermeneutic of groups that I develop in this dissertation has implications for examining groups in different contemporary contexts and in different periods of human history. In the next chapter we will look at the first century CE Corinthian community as a case study employing a constructive developmental hermeneutic of Paul's two letters. Doing so sheds light on some of the above challenges.

Chapter Three: Constructive-Developmental Hermeneutics: A Case Study of the Complexity Consciousness of the Corinthian Church

The previous chapter raised questions about the cognitive make up of both cultures and intentional groups. If communities are dominated by a particular culture of mind, how can one investigate what is going on "beneath" that mind, as in orders of consciousness that are less complex? How can one understand what is going on "above" it? And, most importantly, what is the dynamic between the various orders of consciousness in the evolution of the culture? A constructive developmental hermeneutic for describing and analyzing various cultural and historical groups is needed to address these challenges; one that is able to assess the levels of complexity of communities and compare these with the complexity of the curriculum toward which their leaders educate them. In this chapter, a developmentally attuned biblical hermeneutic is proposed that sheds new light on a longstanding dispute within New Testament studies over the source of the conflicts within the Corinthian community: were they caused by heterodox Christian teachers, by external social pressures on the community, by adaptation of established first century norms, or a consequence of economic divisions between those who made up the community? A constructive developmental interpretive theory will serve as a framework for understanding this complex and dynamic community and the factors that contributed to the tensions so evident in Paul's correspondences.

This chapter places the Corinthian Christian community within a first century socio-cultural context heavily influenced by the presence of voluntary associations and

Greco-Roman religious practices. It does so in order to better support claims about the orders of mental complexity that could have been operating in the first century CE. What this chapter demonstrates is that "convention" and "tradition" are relative terms as used in constructive-developmental theory since human development is dominated by different "cultures of mind" each of which become the "convention" of a particular period and location. The chapter also addresses Kegan's "in over our heads" phenomenon by evaluating the cognitive complexity of Paul's gospel and comparing it to the community's dominant order of mental complexity. This project requires careful attention not only to New Testament scholarship, but also to shifts in Greco-Roman studies away from the literary sources produced by elites to neglected sources of data about ancient society including such archaeological artifacts as statuary, civic monuments and epigraphy. This line of investigation foregrounds the social, economic and cultural experiences of non-elites comparable to Paul and the members of the Corinthian community.

The Religious and Social Context: Greco-Roman Piety and Voluntary Associations

Roman "Religion" As a Way of Knowing

Beginning with a brief examination of Roman religious practices in a case study of the Corinthian Christian community in the Greek east is appropriate for two reasons. First, Corinth was a heavily romanized seat of government for southern Greece whose

religious and social practices would have likely influenced Corinthian residents attracted to Paul's preaching. Having been leveled by the Romans in 146 BCE, the city was refounded one hundred years later by Julius Caesar in 44 BCE shortly before his assassination. Caesar repopulated the new colony with Roman freedmen, approximately 19% of whom were wealthy and politically successful (Clarke 2000, 38); the rest were among the urban poor. When Paul arrived one hundred years later, it was still a fairly young, very Roman city, made up of Romans, Greeks and Jews. Second, as the Republic gave way to Empire one of the many directions the evolution of Roman religious practices took was the development of the imperial cult, or emperor worship. Worship of the imperial gods, however, was not a radical development in the kind of religion practiced by the populace. Robert Turcan states: "Whatever may have been said, the apparent innovations of the imperial cult – at least in part – descended directly from the *mos maiorum* [religious practices of the Roman ancestors]" (Turcan, 2000, p. 135).

Philip A. Harland (2003) argues that the imperial gods were prominent features of voluntary associations, often worshiped along side of the group's divine patron (such as Jupiter or Minerva). This becomes significant because I argue that the development of Roman religious practices from the Republic to the Empire[19] did not represent a *qualitative* development, but a simple extension of the logic that underlies both. The Corinthian Christians' experiences within voluntary associations was not only a likely source of the disputes between the community and Paul, as others have argued (Chester 2003), but also that these experiences, which included worshipping favored local deities

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[19] The posthumous deification of Julius Caesar, a fact that made his son, Augustus a son of a *god* (Turcan, 134-135) legitimated the practice of emperors receiving sacrifices, prayers and other forms of worship.

(probably Isis in Corinth) and the imperial gods, may shed light on the complexity of mind possessed by the Corinthians who struggled with Paul's unusual expectations.

Roman Religious Practices

To ask, "What is your Religion?" of a citizen of the city of Rome in antiquity would likely confuse the recipient since the "religious dimension" of his life was undifferentiated and therefore indistinguishable from every other aspect of life. The terms "religion" and "dimension" are abstractions from a concrete, lived reality that are helpful to moderns when engaging in the tasks of inquiry and conceptualization. The lived reality in ancient Rome was saturated with the presence of the gods whose ubiquitous communications through signs could be interpreted and exploited with the right ritual formulas. The "doing" of religion therefore was never separated from the activities of daily life for everyone from the highest magistrate to the peasant farmer.[20] Robert Turcan, professor of Roman history at the Sorbonne, states, "There was really no such thing as Roman religion… Ancient Rome knew about religious procedures or, rather, processes and formulas required in any given circumstance to ensure the

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[20] Citing Servilius's (Serv.) commentaries on Virgil's *Georgics* (*G.*), and Augustine's (Aug.) *City of God* (*CG.*), Robert Turcan writes: "Every place had its Genius (*genius loci*) or its own god. Plains were attributed to Rusina, hilly crests to the god Jugatinus, hills to Collatina and valleys to Vallonia (Aug. *CG*, 4, 8)… Here again, the Roman sense of operational realism made use of the *indigitamenta* [a code of prayers appropriate to the various divine powers]; one therefore had to pray to Sterculinius for annual manure, Vervactor for turning over fallow land, Redarator for the second ploughing. Imporcitor for the third, Obarator for a new turning of the soil. Occator for harrowing, Sarritor for weeding, Seia for the germination of seed, Segetia for the corn to grow, Nodutus for the stem to have nodes, Volutina for the sheath of the corn-ear, Patellana for it to open, Hostilina for the corn to be of the same height (to make harvesting easier), Lacturnus for the ears to be milky, Runcina for killing weeds, Matuta for the ripening, Messia for the harvesting, Convector for loading, Noduterensis for threshing, Condito for garnering, even Promitor for taking the grain from the granary, but chiefly Tutilina for preserving it (Aug., *CG.*, 4, 8; Serv., *G*, 1, 21). Even this list is by no means exhaustive" (Turcan 2001, p. 38). A different, equally elaborate, ritual protocol was called for with regard to marriage, conception, pregnancy, labor, lactation, weaning, rearing, educating, etc. (Turcan, 18-21).

effectiveness of divine assistance" (2001, 2). Paraphrasing the "self-interested realism"

of the ancient Roman mind, Turcan writes, "What good are religious ceremonies? To

rescue us from danger… We venerate the gods in order to gain some advantage from

them" (2). This veneration meant that "[e]very instance of the domestic day was thus

governed by a ritual that was still observed in certain rural and even urban circles in the

imperial era" (15).

Gods were useful, and sometimes dangerous; facts which required scrupulous

attention to any form of divine communication such as prodigies (predictions or warnings

noted in the flight or sound of birds, lightening strikes, light flashing on spears, or even

an ox on the roof of a house). When interpreting the meaning of a particularly baffling or

alarming prodigy, Romans also had recourse to a collection of oracles in the Sibylline

books, or they could simply consult the various priestly colleges (Turcan 2001, 6). They

were scrupulous (*religio*), but they were also pragmatic. Every general, for example,

took on campaign a coop of sacred chickens; if the hens ate vigorously and food fell from

their beaks, it was a favorable sign. In order to ensure the quality of the sign, however,

food was withheld from the birds until the rituals were performed thus giving "favor" a

little help. With regard to the Roman citizen: "He was a man of action who played a

close game with the gods" (7). Divine communications could also be obtained by taking

the auspices – sacrificing a particular animal in the right manner using the correct

formulas, and then reading its entrails; if the victim's entrails were unfavorable in

appearance, another victim was sacrificed, and so on.

There are many features to Roman religion that are striking in terms of its complexity. One is the tit-for-tat reciprocity assumed in divine-human transactions. Thus a person could fear the god's power to bring disaster and, accordingly, make appropriate prayers and sacrifices, while at the same time feel little apparent compunction about desecrating a temple if the god failed to make good on the bargain.[21] While such displays of violence were rare, the logic behind them was not. Turcan observes: "Roman religion was wrapped up with judiciary procedure: it was contractual, *do ut des*... If the deity, duly invoked and propitiated by a suitable sacrifice, granted the prayers of the supplicant, the latter could discharge his debt by keeping the promises he had made; but if the gods failed to keep those they were believed to have pledged, they could be treated as faithless betrayers, if need be" (4). He calls the legalism and ritualism of the Romans, "opportunistic realism" (7) and "operational realism" (38) that was above all results-oriented; an "inveterate pragmatism" that sought the gods' favor, "to reassure them in their plans and back them in their actions" (11).

Another feature is the plethora of rules, rule-making, and rule-qualifying that governed all ritual actions. Not only could sacred hens be induced to produce appropriate signs genuinely believed and promptly acted on, but augurs themselves, when consulting the gods, had many procedures to increase the likelihood that important tasks of government and war would have the weight of divine approval.[22] Augurs read signs from the sky that included the flight of birds and their cries, as well as signs of thunder and

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[21] Turcan cites the example of the death of the popular Germanicus, after which angry people rioted and knocked down altars and heads of the gods who, having been properly invoked, betrayed their end of the bargain.

[22] Augur has its root in *augere* which means to increase – thus their religious responsibility included reading certain signs in order to add divine *gravitas* or weight to human activity.

lightning. None of this was random. The augur marked out a portion of the sky

(*templum*) as a consecrated space (*effatum*) and a time of observance; if a bird's flight or

cry was troubling, he could ignore it by crying, *non consulto* (Turcan, 7, 54, 85). At the

same time, once the gods were consulted through the taking of the auspices the resultant

action had to be carried out (or avoided if signs were inauspicious). Here, "traditions"

are practices; they are ritual protocols handed down from the ancestors preserved and

continued in the present for the practical purpose of maintaining and advancing the

concrete glory of Rome. They are not beliefs or values (abstract ideation) that draw out

loyalty to their sources in a sacred tradition within which people enact their meaning.

Rather, they are the sacred rules that, when adhered to and duly performed by the people

(concrete instrumentalism or "imperialism"), enact not only the Roman state concretely

understood, but also enact the state of the gods (as in disposition of the gods toward

Rome). Thus "intentionality", an *interior* disposition of the person making supplications,

would have been a moot point since the correct performance of the ritual was itself

effective.[23] Intentionality is projected onto the gods whose intentions, or dispositions, are

effectively shaped and directed by human ritual. What governs rules are not ideas and

values and interior dispositions, but the needs and interests of a people embedded in the

living narrative of Rome.[24]

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[23] The Roman Catholic notion of *opus operatum*, ("work worked" or "work having been worked") carries
the same belief that ritual actions are by their performance effective (marking grace's here/now presence),
with the exception that the ministers of the action must *intend* the meaning of the actions. For example, the
co-ministers in marriage – the woman and the man – have to intend the meaning of Christian marriage in
order for the bond, ritually enacted, to be "effective" or sacramental.
[24] A Roman narrative that citizens were unable to reflect upon because they were embedded in it. In
Kegan's terms, they were subject to the narrative.

A final feature of Roman religion was a disciplined, even passionate piety in

service to the city-state that was grounded in immediate, concrete results. It was a

religion that did not require or necessarily inspire hope,[25] was not rooted in a mythology

(even the gods lacked genealogies, unlike the Greek gods), and had no religious

iconography (Turcan 2001, 12). This low esteem for hope may be what lies behind

Roman disdain for Jewish prophesy, which they labeled, *superstitio*.[26] They at times

respected Jewish religion for its great antiquity, but looked down their noses at its many

peculiarities, prophesying a distant future high on the list.[27] One interpreted prodigies,

took the auspices, or consulted the Sibylline books[28] not in order to remember or

liturgically make present a sacred past, anticipate a triumphant future, or denounce a

cruel and unjust present, but in order to direct immediate action toward outcomes

favorable to the people of Rome and acceptable to the gods. Jewish liturgical anamnesis,

and apocalyptic and prophetic literatures, from the perspective of Romans, offered little

in the way of practical, concrete, real-time direction; required waiting on the gods to

bring about a future that nevertheless remained in doubt; and perhaps most troubling,

linked the gods' favor not only to correct religious practices, but also to interior

dispositions such as righteousness or justice, values that favored the weak and lowly and

condemned advantage-seeking by the powerful that fell particularly hard on such

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[25] If hope is as Rahner defines it (1978) in *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, the capacity to accept the uncontrollable, a decidedly post-second order definition, then hope was not something many Romans would have valued.

[26] See Dale Martin (2007), *Inventing Superstition: From the Hippocratics to the Christians.*

[27] For Roman views of the Jews, see Martin Goodman (2007), *Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Civilizations*; Peter Schaefer (2003), *History of Jews in the Greco-Roman World: The Jews of Palestine from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest.*

[28] For Jewish Sybilline books, see John Joseph Collins (1997), *Seers, Sybils, and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism.* See also, John Joseph Collins (2005), *Jewish Cult and Hellenistic Culture: Essays on the Jewish Encounter with Hellenism and Roman Rule.*

vulnerable populations. Piety and immediate, concrete results are bound together in such a way that it was impossible, or nearly so, to imagine gods who could not be *made to happen*, gods who were relational and covenantal rather than merely functional; communicating gods whose utterances did not come on the flight of birds or the entrails of bulls; whose manifestations did not exist exclusively to serve immediate, local human interest; gods whose epiphanies were not simple affirmations of grand human projects, but revelations of a divine word and god's grand projects, human transformation one among them. For Romans, "It was always a matter of diverting threats from the heavens rather than humbly submitting to their effects" (6).

Meaning Making Threshold Required in Roman Religious Practices

Turcan offers his analysis of Roman practices using language remarkably similar to what constructive-developmentalists refer to as the simple reciprocity of concrete instrumentalism. The "you do for me and I'll do for you" logic of human and divine interaction, was a contractual rather than relational arrangement. The concern about what the gods could concretely do to them in terms of today's plans, and pragmatic rule following and rule creating all suggest an imperial/instrumental order of mental complexity. While the rigorous ritual scrupulosity of the Romans may have been unusual, it required no greater complexity of consciousness than that of Kegan's second order. This is not to say that some were not beyond second order, but that the practice of religion likely emerged from and supported second order consciousness. Romans constructed a religious world grounded in rules, inherited roles, the meeting of immediate needs, in simple reciprocity, and in concrete as opposed to abstract reasoning. This

construction represents a complexity of consciousness, however, that was not

qualitatively different from the broader Greco-Roman world, at least as experienced by

non-elites. Harland writes of that world:[29]

> Within the Greco-Roman context, we are dealing with a worldview and a way of
> life centered on the maintenance of fitting relations among human groups,
> benefactors, and the gods within the web of connections that constituted society
> and the cosmos. To provide a working definition of "religion" or piety in
> antiquity had to do with appropriately honoring gods and goddeses…in ways that
> ensured the safety and protection of human communities (Harland, 2003, p. 61).

The client-patron system that governed human relationships may also have its

roots in a socio-cultural order of mental complexity. Andrew D. Clarke highlights the

system of benefaction, or patronage, and its connection to honor and shame that

permeated the Greco-Roman world: "It should not be overlooked that patronage only

functioned effectively in that society because it operated by means of the ubiquitous

Mediterranean culture of honor and shame which was active at *all* levels of society, and

not just at the more rarefied level of the elites" (2000, p. 60, emphasis original). In an

urban context, the system of benefaction required that only the wealthiest citizens could

attain the highest local offices since many of the important financial burdens of cities

were funded not by taxation, but by the patronage of unsalaried office holders. They

were expected to self-fund various projects from food procurement, to providing wood

and oil for the baths, and funding for religious festivals and public games. In return for

their patronage, leading citizens acquired great honor that came in the form of increased

social deference, statues, monuments and inscriptions dedicated to the magistrate, the

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[29] Here Harland is also critiquing the tendency among some scholars of antiquity to bring into their research
modern notions of individualism, religion, and religious worship.

best seats at the games or the theatre, and not least, immunity from prosecution. Patronage should not be regarded as a modern form of philanthropy but as an advantage-seeking, self-benefiting pursuit of honor (Clarke, 2000, p. 46).[30]

Honor was a "thing" one could possess; something that could increase through the performance of certain public acts, and diminish through the public acts of others (shame, humiliation, a public insult by a person of "lesser" status). In a manner similar to the contractual relationship experienced in the human-divine interaction, the honor or *dignitas* conferred by the recipients of patronage among the plebs would quickly dry up once the funds did; that is, when the source of the funds among the patricians ceased their benefaction, the honoring among the plebs likewise ceased (Clarke, 2000, p. 48; Harland, 2003, pp. 97-101). The honor-shame culture also existed among non-elites; in the many voluntary associations that proliferated throughout the empire, that culture thrived. Citizens and non-citizens could join various associations and guilds, and achieve status and a degree of honor that was otherwise denied them because of their class (plebs, as opposed to members of the senatorial, equestrian or decurion orders), or social standing (family, ethnicity, occupation, education), or their legal status (slaves, freedmen or free born; citizen, non-citizen). Not only did its members compete for honors, but associations competed with other associations for honors, and cities themselves competed with each other for special recognition by the imperial elites.

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[30] In the late Empire wealthy elites became less interested in funding public needs out of private resources, which may have been a consequence of a slow disintegration of the patronage-for-honor system during this period. Future research on the change in the behavior among many of the elites may find its source in a change in complexity of consciousness. Elites above second order of consciousness would likely be less attracted to honor acquisition and more drawn to value integration, a change that understands *dignitas* as who one is rather than what one has.

Conclusion

In this brief analysis of the religious and social practices the Greco-Roman world, one observes a religious consciousness organized around concrete needs and interests, regulated by rules that governed relations between gods and humans, and did so on the basis of a simple system of tit-for-tat reciprocity. The patron-client system that mediated the contractual relationship between gods and humans, as well as the relationship between imperial elites and the vast majority of plebs at the lower strata of society, fits well within second order consciousness. The ethos of honor/shame meant that disadvantaged groups that sought benefactions from imperial elites and other patrons would likely do so in order to increase their status, or social standing, and would likely not be motivated by a felt experience of oppression. Nor for that matter would elites at the top who received honors in the form of monuments and statuary and forms of deference in exchange for benefaction likely experience themselves as manipulated by a disadvantaged population. All of this suggests a world that required no greater mental complexity than the "imperial" second order of consciousness. Third order individuals, if present, would likely constitute a very small percentage of the population, and exist for the most part among advantaged groups.

Voluntary Associations as Cultures of Embeddedness

Recent Scholarly Developments

Voluntary associations and guilds provide a helpful analogy for understanding the formation and organization of the early Christian church. Recent scholarship in early Christianity has been moving toward analogical methods of comparative research, and away from so-called "genealogical" methodologies that inadvertently isolate the church from its Greco-Roman cultural context. This new perspective is particularly helpful in our study since it provides a better lens through which to view non-elite populations; a lens that is also better able to filter out the imposition of modern assumptions about religion (eisegesis and anachronism) onto ancient evidence. Part of the reason for this shift is the work of Jonathan Z. Smith (1990) in the area of comparative religion. Smith argues that scholars have overemphasized the "uniqueness" of Christianity and have used inadequate methods of comparison when searching for the socio-historical origins of the church.[31] Smith's recommendation is for scholarship to shift toward a more analogical approach that does not seek direct comparisons between the church and other groups, but instead looks for both similarity and difference within a specific set of data.

Both Richard S. Ascough (1997, 1998, 2000) and Philip A. Harland (2003) pick up Smith's critique and construct methodologies of analogical comparison. Writes

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[31] Smith calls earlier methods "genealogical" because their strategies of comparative analysis emphasize the unique origins of Christianity (pedigree) or they emphasize Christianity's direct dependence on other religious groups whose practices and beliefs it borrowed. Rather than arguing that Christianity is a cult association/mystery religion, or that the church is modeled after the synagogue/philosophical school/voluntary association/Greco-Roman household, one is better served by using comparative methods that preserve difference while at the same time acknowledge similarity.

Ascough, "The analogy rests in the mind of the scholar conducting the investigation and helps one to understand how things might be conceived or redescribed… Through such a comparative method of emphasizing similarities and difference, the scholar gains a perspective on the material which leads to a more nuanced analysis of the material than simply postulating genealogical relationships" (1998, 96-97). The benefits of this approach include no longer isolating Christianity from the surrounding Greco-Roman culture and letting go of sweeping generalizations (for example, "Christianity is a mystery religion") in favor of more modest and defensible claims (Ascough 1998, 97; Harland 2003, 211). An important benefit is that it represents an inductive method that begins with available data, and from these moves onto theory-building, rather than beginning with assumptions (deductions such as, "Christianity is unique") that seek evidence in the data. It is more likely therefore to allow first century meaning making structures to emerge because it is less likely to impose modern notions of "religion," "ideology" or "community" onto the people of antiquity; i.e., less likely to impose modern "made meanings", to use Kegan's terminology (1982), on to ancient "meaning making."

Another reason Ascough and Harland (and Meggitt, 1998[32]) are helpful in this study is their critique of earlier scholars who rely too heavily on ancient literary sources and neglect archaeological, epigraphic sources for their interpretations of the social, cultural and historical context. Exclusive reliance on extant literary sources inevitably

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[32] Meggitt, responding to critics of *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (1998) states, "The basic methodological assumption of the work is that we need to include the undocumented dead of antiquity in our reconstructions (and primary deliberations) and cannot allow our dialogue with the past to be one where we are deaf to the great mass of those who lived and died in the period in which the New Testament was written and who left nothing, except perhaps their bones or ashes, behind them" (2001, p. 87).

reads antiquity through the lens of an elite population that enjoyed privileges and advantages not available to well over 90 percent of the population, such as wealth, education, and insulation from a precarious existence endured by a considerable majority of people (Meggitt, 1998). The scholarly sources relied on in this case study place as much or more weight on epigraphy as they do on literary sources, which provide a more balanced view of the world as lived by most of its inhabitants.

Voluntary Associations

Voluntary associations, also referred to as cult societies, clubs, or guilds (in Latin: *collegia, sodalitas, fraters*; in Greek: *thiasos, synagogue, ekklesia,* and *koinon*), are groups where individuals choose freely to join, and are accepted in freely; where rules are well defined and enforced; that are based on a contractual relationship binding the individual to contribute time and money to the association, and the association to fulfill certain obligations to its members (Ascough 1998, 74; Clarke 2000, 62). During the period of the early Empire, voluntary associations increased in number (Meeks 1983, 77) and in influence. They provided a crucial social context for many urban poor, but others as well, to exercise some measure of influence by means of the association's many titles and honorifics that mimicked those of the civil magistrates (Clarke 2000, 60; Harland 2003, 106).[33]

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[33] Harland, commenting on the ambivalent quality of "citizenship" (which excluded women, rural inhabitants, foreigners, and slaves) quotes P. M. Fraser (1977, 60) with regard to an association of immigrants in Hellenistic Rhodes, "with their grandiloquent titles, their own magistrates, priesthoods, assemblies, cults, and social services, they provided foreign residents… with the same type of social environment, the same modes of advancement, and the same opportunities for lavish benefactions, as were provided by the civic organization for Rhodian *demesmen*, who themselves rarely, if ever, belonged to [associations]. They were, so to speak, a microcosm of the state, and loyalty that they evoked in their

Most associations and guilds are best classified by membership profiles according to John Kloppenborg (1996), who identifies three main types: those based on households, occupation, or cult. Association gatherings were occasions of conviviality, feasting, tackling practical business related to the group, and of course, piety that included prayers, pouring of libations, and sacrifices. "It is important to note, that for virtually all associations and guilds, sacrifices and libations in honor of the gods accompanied or preceded the banquet" (Harland 2003, 77).[34] Rules were very visible features of voluntary associations, some of which have been preserved on monuments and other statuary. These could include purity rules, particularly before participating in sacred rites. Harland quotes one such inscription in Philadelphia that calls for appropriate sexual relations, to refrain from deceiving other members, and to honor the gods who "will be gracious to those who obey, and always give them all good things, whatever gods give to men whom they love. But should any transgress, they shall hate such people and inflict upon them great punishments" (Harland 2003, 70). The first part of this code could find similar sentiments in many religions today for its obedience-equals-rewards formula. The second part – disobedience-equals-punishment – represents a similar understanding of divine-human relations, one less visible today; but it is the same morality at the base of

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members was rewarded with honors similar to those awarded by the state" (Harland, 2003, p. 102. Brackets original).

[34] Harland emphasizes this point because many scholars both ancient (Philo and Tertullian, for example) and modern assume that the social and feasting functions of associations and the drunkenness that sometimes occasioned these, meant that the groups were *only* concerned with such activities and by implication, for modern scholars at least, were not sincere in their piety or serious in the business of the guild. Piety for most associations, however, cannot be separated from any of the other purposes they served; moreover, most included codified rules for behavior with accompanying punishments that served to mitigate excesses such conviviality invited.

both statements and is suggestive of second order mental complexity.[35] Failure to pay monthly dues could lead to denial of burial rights for the deceased. Fighting, or publicly causing shame to an individual of greater *dignitas* could lead to expulsion for freedmen and free-born, but to brutal flogging for slaves (Clarke 2000, 67).

Embedded in an ethos of honor and shame and the patron-client system (benefaction), associations of various kinds naturally sought connections to imperial and municipal leaders that would provide tangible advantages (as in the case of receiving financial assistance or securing a good location for a shop; Harland 2004, 152-153) and symbolic prestige within the polis. In seeking such advantages, were associations broadly conceived seeking to enhance their own status for the purpose of better meeting their needs (second order), or were they seeking to establish or enhance a relationship between magistrate and association based on an "internalized" value such as cooperation for the purpose of improving the working and living conditions of its members (third order)? Did associations understand leaders as objects that were "suppliers of the self," to use Kegan's term (in the sense that they existed to meet the needs of the association), or did they experience leaders as authority figures from whose expectations members derived values and beliefs to which they were loyal? In short, are needs and interests organizing actions or are values and beliefs organizing actions?

One inscription of Demeter worshipers from Ephesus (ca. 90-110 CE) may shed light on these questions. The following inscription is quoted in Harland, whose purpose

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[35] It represents an "unbounded" functional ethic where one asks, "what will happen to me if I do this; how will it help/hurt me?" rather than an ethic of obligation that binds one to a set of values (third order); or, for that matter, an ethic of responsibility where one binds oneself to one's own internally generated standards (fourth order).

is to point out how pervasive the imperial cult had become in the early Empire, how

sincere its adherents were, and how it had been incorporated into the gatherings of

various groups from mystery cults (as is the case here) to voluntary associations. The

quote also suggests a particular complexity of consciousness.

> To Lucius Mestrius Florus, proconsul (*anthypato*), from Lucius Pompeius
> Apollonios of Ephesus. Mysteries and sacrifices… are performed each year in
> Ephesus, lord, to Demeter Karpophoros and Thesmophoros and to the revered
> gods (*theois Sebastois* [emperors, living and deceased, as gods]) by initiates with
> great purity and lawful customs, together with the priestesses. In most years these
> practices were protected by kings and revered ones, as well as the proconsul of
> the period…, as contained in their enclosed letters. Accordingly, as the mysteries
> are pressing upon us during your time of office, through my agency the ones
> obligated to accomplish the mysteries… necessarily petition you, lord, in order
> that, acknowledging their rights…(Harland 2004, 118).

In the above inscription, the remainder of which is lost, a representative of Demeter

worshippers at Ephesus is petitioning the current Roman proconsul for certain favors

regarding the public celebration of their mystery rites. Favors include the proconsul's

acknowledgment of their "rights" – rights which are not construed as "right to celebrate,"

as if without his permission they could not (2003, 118); but construed as "right to be duly

recognized by important public figures such as yourself." If this is so, then the petition is

suggestive of a group that construes important leaders not as those whose expectations

matter, but those whose status does matter. Leaders in this case are suppliers of needs

who are not sought out because of a value-based relationship but as ones whose office

and official recognition would increase the group's status. This is confirmed by Harland

who writes that the group of Demeter worshippers are "seeking the prestige that further

acknowledgment by important officials could give them" (2003, 118). It therefore

suggests a needs-based relationship. In this case, the proconsul is sent other correspondences perhaps memorialized by the group in the form of monuments as an attempt, through honorifics, to persuade him to act on their request.[36]

Voluntary associations, even those formed around particular trades, were not analogous to modern trade unions since there is no evidence that such guilds militated for worker rights, better working conditions, increased wages, etc (Ascough 1997, 227; 1998, 76). Associations "were economically all but impotent," they "rarely took any corporate action to defend their members' economic interests" (Meggitt 1998, 171). Instead, associations were as Harland states, "collectivistic" which I take to mean clubs of individuals from among poor urban plebs including slaves and freedmen, organized around rules and roles within a system of patronage whose purpose was to honor divine and human benefactors in order to achieve concrete advantages. The association, in this sense, acted more like a collective of *individuals* than a community (itself an abstraction invented by modernity for the purpose of aiding conceptualization) from which its members derive benefits (a guild hall to gather in, feasts, divine and human protections, and an honorable burial that relieved one of the posthumous shame of having one's remains consumed by dogs) in a contractual exchange for the promise of honoring divine and human patrons (in the form of prayers, monuments, etc.). All of this is suggestive of

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[36] Harland brings to his analysis an argument by G. H. R. Horsley who asserts that this kind of communication is a use of precedent "that would make it hard for the official to deny what they wanted" (2003, 118; Horsley 1989, IV. 22). If this is so, it remains an open question why it would be hard to say "no." If the leader, whose response we do not have, finds it hard to say no because he cannot pass up on an opportunity to increase his *dignitas* through honor-enhancing monuments commissioned in his name, in exchange for recognition of a mystery rite, then the leader may be demonstrating second order complexity. If a leader cannot say no because he fears the power of the group or is concerned about wounding their presumed loyalty to Rome and to himself as its agent, or is embedded in perceived expectations of the group, then he is demonstrating a more complex, but in this context not necessarily more helpful, third order consciousness.

second order instrumentalism/imperialism. Further, the lack of interest in improving

economic conditions or of using the collective power of the association to influence

social change favorable to its members suggests members who may not have been able to

form generalizations about their society or their place within it (the use of evidence to

make an inductive leap). Harland is nevertheless suspicious of scholars who dismiss the

possibility that associations could be considered "communities." However, he does not

argue that associations were in fact communities. Rather, his concern is the tendency of

some scholars to caricature voluntary associations while presenting an idealized version

of the Christian church where "true community" purportedly abides (2003, 181).[37]

Conclusion

Thus, one sees in the voluntary associations a familiar advantage-seeking, rigidly

defined rules for rituals and relations, divine and human role models that contract

bargains with people according to simple tit-for-tat reciprocity within a system of

benefaction. The patron-client system not only cultured (nourished, supported) second

order consciousness, it was likely a construction of this same order of mental complexity

among an adult population; honor/shame was how the world turned and how things got

done in a culture dominated by an imperial cognitive constituency (second order). This is

not qualitatively different from the religion of Rome discussed earlier. With the brief

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[37] If community means a gathering of people organized around a powerful set of values, beliefs and traditions (not simply needs and interests) that are capable of attracting the loyalty of its members; where fidelity to these values, beliefs and traditions are internalized by the members through socialization (who believe them and follow them even when leaders are not looking or when immediate needs and advantages must be deferred); and where revered leaders human and divine are not simply powerful, heroic role models who supply needs and issue punishments, but role-conscious authorities commissioned with the responsibility to confer an identity on its members; a community identity that organizes roles and ground rules (rather than roles determining identity and rules determining membership), then voluntary associations do not appear to be communities. Whether the Pauline churches were communities as just defined will be taken up in the next section.

study of voluntary associations, however, one sees in greater detail the social and religious practices of the lower strata of the Empire. In divine-human interaction in both examples the motivation is to control and direct the gods toward the successful enactment of human endeavors through a system of rules, rather than forming a relationship with them through the mediation of a covenant; or yielding human control to a divine wisdom that shapes human values, beliefs and actions. Such religious sentiments and organizational propensities are suggestive of a second order of consciousness.

Coach Paul and the Corinthian Church

Paul, a Common Laborer and "Religious Genius" Among the Urban Poor

A constructive-developmental hermeneutic of Paul's Corinthian letters allows one to reframe the scholarly debate regarding the central issue of the presence of factions within the community and, connected to this issue, Paul's apostolic authority. Rather than understand the source of the factions in socio-economic terms, one might be better served by asking what the correlation was between the expectations of Paul and the capacity of the community to meet them. Whether the struggle was between the rich and poor, as suggested by Gerd Theissen (1982), or among the poor themselves, as suggested by Justin Meggitt (1998), or among more advantaged leaders, as suggested by Stephen Chester (2003), what may matter more is the possibility that the struggle was a consequence of a particular culture of mind organized around needs, interests, and

advantage-seeking in conflict with the mutuality demanded by Paul. The theory proposed here does not replace other theories from New Testament studies but regrounds them in a prior, more general, theory of cultures of mental complexity.

Paul's First and Second letters to the Corinthians provide more information about the social context of the early church than any other part of the Pauline corpus (Clarke 2000, 185). Situating Paul and the Corinthian community in the Greco-Roman world is important in the present study in order to properly assess the mental complexity of Paul's "community organizing" and the community's experience of Paul's demands. Much has been written during the last hundred years about the social setting of early Christianity, and a great deal of the literature addresses Paul's place in that setting. An earlier view, popularized around the turn of the nineteenth century by Adolph Deissmann, argued for relatively humble social circumstances for Paul because of his trade; but not one of absolute poverty because of his Roman citizenship and his unliterary, though "not vulgar" use of Greek (Meeks 1983, 52). Deissmann complained that the majority of the extant literary material was the work of upper class elites, "which almost always had been identified with the whole ancient world of the Imperial age" (Malherbe 1977, 32). The windfall for Deissmann was the discovery of papyri and other fragments from the period which provided a glimpse into the lives of the common people. This glimpse gives a more accurate view into the social conditions of the class out of which Paul emerged and to which he preached. Deissmann, therefore, situates both Paul and the members of his communities in the "middle and lower classes."

Around the middle of the last century, however, a "new consensus" began to emerge, according to Abraham Malherbe, which argued for a social setting among the Pauline communities that represented a "cross section" of society that included the wealthy and powerful as well as slaves and the free poor (Meeks 1983, 52; Malherbe 1977, 61). "The more recent scholarship has shown that the social status of early Christians may be higher than Deissmann has supposed" (Malherbe 1977, 31). The new consensus also paints a portrait of Paul as well educated, cosmopolitan who, if not himself wealthy, was able to move well in elite circles; a man of letters more than a man manual labor.

It is precisely this claim that Justin Meggitt calls into question (1998, 2001). He challenges the emergence of the new consensus concerning the social status of Paul and his churches, particularly scholars who argue Paul was economically above the great mass of *plebs urbana* and perhaps even affluent. Key among the arguments of the new consensus is his Roman Tarsan citizenship, his elite education and his attitude toward work (Meggitt 1998, 80).[38] Against this conclusion Meggitt argues that, far from residing comfortably among the so-called *bourgeois* middle class, Paul worked in the trades, probably as an artisan leather worker (1998, 75);[39] precarious work consisting of long hours of hard manual labor. Paul did not, subsequent to his conversion, choose a life of

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[38] Against the new consensus, Meggitt argues that Paul's father or grandfather could in fact have been slaves manumitted from a Roman citizen, thus securing their own citizenship (81-82); that education and wealth are not inextricably bound together (83-87); that Paul's assumed "snobbish" attitude toward work and the assumption that he felt, along with elites of the ancient world, that labor was degrading, can just as easily be countered with the opposite argument that work was a source of pride for Paul. In any case, says Meggitt, neither pride nor embarrassment regarding manual labor are indications of an elite status for Paul (87-88). Also listed by Meggitt as reasons for Paul's so-called higher status, are Paul's reaction to social affronts; his ability to socialize with elites; the tenor of his ethics; his treatment by Roman authority; lineage; Pharisaism; and his use of a secretary.

[39] He references 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:7-8; 1 Cor. 4:11-12; 1 Cor. 9:6; 2 Cor. 11:27.

manual work; nor was his poverty voluntary; nor, for that matter, did the financial

assistance he occasionally received cover anything more than the loss of income he

experienced as a result of his itinerate lifestyle. Says Meggitt, "We can, therefore, I

believe, affirm with some confidence A. Deissmann's contention, that Paul was a

craftsman whose wages 'were the economic basis of his existence'" (1998, 79).

Accordingly, he argues that Paul was born into, and shared throughout his life in

the dismal conditions of the great mass of impoverished humanity that made up, Meggitt

argues, 99% of the Roman Empire in the first century (1998, 99).[40] Thus, not only Paul,

but virtually everyone else in the first century, the elite 1% aside, were among the

destitute masses who, "lived subsistence or near subsistence lives, in which access to

necessities was inadequate and precarious. Like their neighbours, none was potentially

more than a few weeks way… from a life-threatening crisis, with little to call on material

resources when in such need" (Meggitt 2001, 86). Meggitt suggests that it is precisely

the "genius" of Paul that can distract scholars from the inescapable facts of his low social

status, poor education, and economic destitution.

> Undoubtedly Paul was not a 'typical' artisan of the Graeco-Roman world – he
> would not have left such a mark on history if he had been – but his uniqueness,
> particularly the uniqueness of his religious genius, should not blind us to the fact

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[40] He states here that the, "Pauline Christians *en masse* shared fully the bleak material existence which was
the lot of more than 99% of the inhabitants of the Empire, and also, as we have just seen, of Paul himself…
To believe otherwise, without clear evidence to the contrary, given the near universal prevalence of poverty
in the first century world, is to believe the improbable" (99). Meggitt defines the poor with Garnsey and
Woolf (for reference, see his note 17, page 5) as, "those living at or near subsistence level, whose prime
concern it is to obtain the minimum food, shelter, and clothing necessary to sustain life, whose lives are
dominated by the struggle for physical survival" (5). Even the "wealthiest" of the poor, artisans, lived in
constant anxiety and desperation as demonstrated by their use of *defixiones* (curse tablets) against their
competitors: "The lives of the artisans were characterized by extreme privation" (56). Other factors
contributed to impoverishment such as food shortages/costs leading to frequent hunger and starvation (59-
62), affordable and available housing (63-67), old age, gender, ill health, overcrowding, economic
disruptions and slavery.

that his experience of material existence was far from unusual: it was nothing less than the arduous and bitter experience of the urban poor (Meggitt 1998, 96).

While his treatment of Paul's actual status and the social and economic conditions of much of the first century Greco-Roman world is persuasive, Meggitt perhaps overcorrects the new consensus. While it is highly probable that most of the early Christian communities contained a majority of poor, few if any wealthy, and no elites (senators or equestrians), not every Christian community fits his description of near total, abject poverty. Corinth is an example. As we have already seen, it was founded as a Roman colony with an unusually high percentage of wealthy freedmen, and may have enjoyed immunity from certain tax burdens that crippled much of Greece and Asia during the costly wars that led up to the Principate established by Augustus. Pheme Perkins argues[41] that many of the Corinthian concerns, such as their admiration for rhetoric and wisdom, and their concern about Paul's appearance, indicate an elevated cultural condition not consistent with Meggitt's portrait. Moreover, in 2 Cor 8-9, Paul states that they are better off than other churches who, though poorer, are contributing more money to the Jerusalem collection (such as the Macedonian churches). According to Perkins, Paul's use of the prospect of public embarrassment to shame the Corinthians into generosity assumes a more economically differentiated community than Meggitt allows.[42] Thus, she concludes that, while not wealthy persons of noble birth, the Corinthian community must have consisted of not only desperate common laborers, but also a class

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[41] Personal communication, Fall, 2003, at Boston College.
[42] See Gerd Theissen's response to Meggitt (2001, 375-377). He similarly argues that Corinth was wealthier than the Macedonian churches and both were better off than the Jerusalem church and that Corinth must have contained at least a small number of well-to-do members who were influential in the congregation.

of artisans and merchants whose skill and wealth somewhat insulated them from the immanent threat of starvation. In fact, says Perkins, there were enough people of stable position to successfully de-stabilize those with a more precarious status. "They are not wealthy; just better off."[43] While over-correcting the new consensus, however, Meggitt's work remains an important source for understanding the social context of non-elites and the social and economic location of Paul. It is Paul's status that many within the Corinthian community reacted to. The resulting conflicts, in turn, become a lens through which to see different cultures of mind in operation.

Paul's Leadership and the Cognitive Location of the Corinthian Church

From the above argument, the religious, social and cultural context present in Corinth in the first century CE likely required no greater complexity than second order consciousness for the great mass of people. That is, second order was the *convention* of the times; *post*-conventional *third* order would likely be a subdominant order of mental complexity present in considerably smaller numbers, and fourth order would be achieved by only the tiniest percentage of the population. The likely connection between advantage and orders of consciousness[44] means that for individuals to reach post-conventional third order, certain supports would need to be in place, such as access to at least some education, certain distance from destitution, and families or communities that cultured (nourished, supported) post-second order consciousness.

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[43] Personal communication, Fall, 2003, at Boston College.
[44] See the thirteen dissertations that informed Kegan's 1994 work (195).

I argue here that Paul, however disadvantaged, likely received enough support

and challenge to grow beyond the current convention. Whether this can be attributed to

his famous conversion and emersion in the new Christian community, or to his Jewish

roots and experiences within family and synagogue, is not a matter for this dissertation.

As is a pattern in this dissertation, my aim is to search for the curricular complexity that

leaders such as Paul educated toward rather than speculate about their own order of

consciousness (beyond saying it was post-second order). Examining the mental

complexity of Paul's leadership will proceed together with an examination of the

cognitive complexity of the Corinthian church as a group.

Paul's Subordination of Status to Identity in the Body of Christ

The Corinthian letters indicate many conflicts and concerns within the community

surrounding the issues of marriage, eating meat sacrificed to idols, use of spiritual gifts,

proper sexual norms, and liturgical etiquette. Ascough argues that most of these can be

subsumed under the crisis presented by the presence of factions within the community

(2002, 4) which came in the form of members' attaching themselves to honored role

models. Paul, rejecting appeals to powerful individuals, instead appeals to Christian

unity. He writes:[45]

> Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
> that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that
> you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to
> me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters.
> What I mean is that each of you says, 'I belong to Paul,' or 'I belong to Apollos,'
> or 'I belong to Cephas,' or 'I belong to Christ.' Has Christ been divided? Was
> Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul (1 Cor. 1:10-
> 13).

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[45] All biblical quotes from NRSV.

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It is clear that Paul is not only unimpressed by their behavior, he likens those who attach themselves to prominent leaders to "infants in Christ" whom he has had to feed "milk, not solid food" (1 Cor. 3:2).

Clarke (2000, 178) argues that the factions had their source in the patronage system, features of which we have already examined. Paul as founder of the Corinthian community refused to be considered its patron (1 Cor. 1:13). In this way, Paul preemptively discharged members of the community from the debt of honor owed to patrons. This move, however, may have been lost on the Corinthians who proceeded to attach themselves to certain leaders – i.e., act as a client in the client-patron relationship – and boast about the heroic qualities and accomplishments of their leader. Promoting the reputation and status of apostolic figures was simultaneously self-serving for it enhanced the status of the client by association, and became a source for competition and conflict. Paul writes in response, "let no one boast about human leaders" (1 Cor. 3:21) because in the Christian community, leaders are "servants" (1 Cor. 3:5) and "stewards" (1 Cor. 4:1), not powerful, eloquent public figures. Besides, argues Paul, you already have everything because in Christ, "all things are yours, whether Paul, Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future" (1 Cor. 3:22). "I have applied all this to Apollos and to myself for your benefit…so that none of you will be puffed up in favor one against another" (1Cor. 4:6). Writes Clarke: "Such boasting in people was commonplace in Graeco-Roman society, and although flattery of others was, on the surface, self-effacing, it elicited its own gratitude and possibly even reward. It was an acceptable mechanism in contemporary society of self-preferment and self-advancement" (2000, 178).

Looking at this from a developmental perspective, Paul has relativized status-seeking by turning the client-patron system on its head: Paul and Apollos are the servant-clients to the patron-community – the Body of Christ – whose exclusive "patron" was the Risen Lord. In doing this Paul was pointing out that status was not a thing one could possess or lose, but a value one held. Paul asserted that "all things are yours" in Christ, and that therefore the Corinthians ought to cease their habit of trying to gain by human efforts what God has already given them: a new identity in Christ.

Paul next subverts the honor-shame ethos behind patron-client relationship in this mocking passage:

> Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Quite apart from us you have become kings! Indeed, I wish that you had become kings, so that we might be kings with you! For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, as though sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to mortals. We are fools for the sake of Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we are hungry and thirsty, we are poorly clothed and beaten and homeless, and we grow weary from the work of our hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted; we endure; when slandered, we speak kindly. We have become like the rubbish of the world, the dregs of all things, to this very day (1 Cor. 4:8-13).

When we read this today, we may feel sympathy for Paul's many sufferings, particularly his difficulties with and anguish over the failure of many within the Corinthian community to live up to the expectations of his gospel vision. But if the Corinthians to whom this passage was addressed were embedded in the socio-cultural expectations of the day, including a second order "cultural mind," they would likely have been baffled and possibly offended by Paul's rejection of the honor some had tried to bestow upon him, and perhaps deeply embarrassed by an apostolic figure so willing to denigrate his

own reputation and rightful status, so willing to sully his own honor, comparing himself to garbage. The mocking irony of the passage may have been entirely over the heads of members[46] whose concrete thinking would not have constructed their founder's weakness/fool metaphor as, "God cares for the lowly, humble, poor, and uncredentialed servants, like Paul; and in fact God prefers these to be divinely sanctioned spokespersons over what the world considers to be worthy and honorable," but perhaps as, "we have been mistaken about Paul; he may embarrass us in the eyes of other Corinthians and diminish our standing in the city."

Paul anticipates the latter response from his audience in the next line of the passage: "I am not writing this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children" (1 Cor. 4:14). What did Paul mean by "make you ashamed," and what kind of shame was he assuming the community might be feeling? We may read this as if Paul had just delivered a painful moral rebuke that he was assuming would be received by the Corinthians in a particular way; that he believed they would make the connection that *this world* and its practices are judged by *the community of grace – the church*; that what the world esteems and what God esteems are in conflict and that the latter trumps the former. Further, we may assume that the shame Paul anticipates the Corinthians to feel might be expressed as "Look how our behaviors are in conflict with the gospel we value," or "look how poorly we are integrating the gospel we value with the behaviors we engage in!"

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[46] I acknowledge Pheme Perkins for the following 10/03/2007 comments. "This observation can be supported by the subsequent conflicts in 2 Cor. 10-13 over the "super-apostles" who may have come closer to meeting the Corinthian expectations."

But shame of another sort may have been what they felt and what Paul feared they might be feeling. Rather than "we feel ashamed of ourselves," their response may have been "we feel ashamed of our leader"[47] whose strange teaching and behavior regarding honor and status would cause them to lose face in the eyes of others. They may have feared that they would be exposed as a contemptible association with a vulgar leather worker as their patron; a patron whose tremendous spiritual glory that formerly some community members had exploited ("I am of Paul") – after all, he had heavenly visions and talked to the Risen Lord! – was now made meaningless to them because Paul counted it as insignificant next to the glory of a transcendent Christ (i.e., a figure without a figurine, a state without a statue, a moment without a monument). In short, by sticking with Paul, they risked the shame of being exposed as defective and of being publicly denounced as such.

Conflict as a Mismatch Between Paul's Leadership and Corinthian Capacity

The distancing of many in the Corinthian community from Paul, clearly supported by the evidence in his letters, might have its source in a mismatch between the order of mental complexity Paul preached and mental complexity of the community who heard his preaching. It is possible that they felt overwhelmed by the challenge of his expectations; but it is just as likely that they were not overwhelmed but, rather, offended by it and by Paul's repeated refusal to give them what they wanted: a status that had real currency in Corinth such as increased social standing and bragging rights. The Corinthians were not

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[47] I acknowledge Pheme Perkins for the following 10/03/2007 comments. "In 2 Cor 5:12 Paul has this paradoxical statement that he's not really boasting (its all from God, not himself) but he's giving the Corinthians a way to answer those who evaluate him by external standards – so they appear to have had some help in feeling ashamed of their apostle as it were."

necessarily attracted by a gospel of the cross: their god was a human who rose from the

dead and whose spirit gave supernatural gifts to everyone, gifts which are on display in

the gatherings of the assembly on the first day of the week. Unfortunately, their god

might also have one or two unworthy apostles who claimed authority within the

assembly, but who did not measure up according to everything everyone has always

known about authoritative leaders – that they be honor-*able*. Paul, as Perkins states,

"could not produce the goods" (2004). Evidence for the Corinthians' distancing

themselves from Paul can be seen in their various confrontations: they began to scrutinize

his apostolic credentials, his physical appearance, his performance as a public speaker,

and his management of finances, all of which may amount to a second order bid to *either*

find a true and correct leader beneath Paul's incomprehensible practice of hiding or

denigrating his status, a leader worthy of the honor they wanted to bestow, *or* to

manipulate Paul into behaving like a true and correct leader through the threat of public

humiliation.

Relationships deteriorated. Traveling missionaries arrived who persuaded the

Corinthians to accuse Paul of being "crafty" and that he took them in by "deceit" (2 Cor.

12:16). The Corinthians demanded proof that Christ was speaking through him (2 Cor.

13:3) and, when Paul refused their patronage while at the same time receiving aid from

the poorer Philippi, they accused him of financial mismanagement (2 Cor 11:7-12; 12:14-

18). In terms of personal accomplishments, Paul also came up short. Apollos was a

trained rhetorician whereas Paul was an ineffective public speaker, a fact pointed out by

members of the Corinthian community (2 Cor. 10:1) who referred to his presence as

"lowly" or humble in contrast to his letters that, written from afar, were bold. A few verses later Paul complains, "For they say, 'His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible" (2 Cor. 10:10). He admits in 2 Cor. 11:6, "I may be untrained in speech, but not in knowledge." Clarke argues that rhetoric was of particular importance in Roman Corinth for public leaders. Paul's appearance and speech was regarded as an embarrassment to many in the community who responded favorably to other missionary preachers with greater rhetorical skill and appearance, missionaries whom Paul mockingly refers to as "Super-apostles" (2 Cor. 11:5-6; 12:11).

What we have as Paul's second letter to the Corinthians (probably a compilation of two or three letters) reveals additional conflict between the community and its founder. In 2 Cor. 1:23-2:11, and again in 7:8-12, there is evidence of a "disastrous visit in which a member of the church had publicly humiliated Paul" (Perkins 2004, 31); an experience his letters attempted to overcome. The incident of public shaming was likely the source of Paul's very harsh letter to the Corinthians, which has not survived, and his decision to not visit the church at a time when they were expecting him. This led to further attacks on his character by members of the congregation. Perkins writes, "2 Cor 2:1-3 indicates that a canceled visit to Corinth led to recriminations over the integrity of Paul's word. His refusal to accept Corinthian patronage, while at the same time receiving aid from the Philippians and soliciting funds for the poor Christians in Jerusalem, led opponents to accuse him of fraud" (Perkins 2004, 37-38, n. 39).

Paul's refusal to play the honor-monger so prevalent in the Greco-Roman world, preferring leadership characterized by service and putting others first, one that sought not human honor but God's honor, left a community that was deeply embedded in an established view of its needs and interests little recourse but to attempt to shame him into compliance. Shame works when one's self-value comes from what one has (second order meaning making); but not when one's self-value comes from who one is (third order), or who one is becoming (fourth order). In Paul's case the shaming incident greatly troubled him, but did not alter the substance of his preaching or leadership approach.

Paul's Third Order Curriculum

Paul was not just content, but *able*, to live within the glory (a non-concrete honor) of a timeless, transcendent, grace whose spirit called into being a mystery in the form of a local, immanent, gifted community of Jews and gentiles. He was content therefore to refer and deflect all worldly honor away from himself and onto Christ crucified and risen. This *ability* is aided by a certain capacity to hold the points of view of self and other simultaneously and internally (Lahey et al. 1988), to abstract and generalize; to allow the *other* to be authoritatively determinative of the self; in this case, the other as Christ/Church/Body of Christ/members at Corinth, especially the weakest and most vulnerable "members" within the body. All have a prior claim on the self. Many among the Corinthians may not have been so able to defer or transfer honor to what may have been nothing more than an unintelligible abstraction for them. Christ present *as* the Church (and not present as some guy who is there-but-not-able-to-be-seen-right-now-by-me); my participation as a necessary and vital part of the *whole* body (one part of a whole

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rather than a collective of many *ones*); and Christ's honor as my honor insofar as I remain

faithful to Christ, and true to the idea that dying somehow completes my participation in

the mystery of Christ's dying and releases me to a participation in his rising (an

ideational movement of honor from the concrete to the abstract); all of these features of

Paul's vision would be understood differently depending on whether a person was second

or third order consciousness.

Third order is a radical achievement, one that may be troubling and even

annoying to adults who are second order and experience its presence. Socrates traveled

around Athens in the late 5th century BCE trying to get someone, anyone, to give him a

definition of something, anything. And of course, no one could. Not even Socrates

(Lonergan, 1972). No one could *define* "courage" in a way that excluded all not-courage,

and included all courage, without simply stacking descriptive *examples* of courage –

because they could not perform third order abstractions and generalizations. Socrates

"corrupted the youth" by pointing out to adults that they had no claim to wisdom if they

could not define wisdom and, of course, he was forced to take hemlock for his crime of

offending adults. Paul too was accused of many wrongs by a community underwhelmed

by his curious tendency to make them feel that they could never do things correctly, and

his own inability to do correctly the most basic requirements of an honor-shame system.

Paul's Relativization of Roles-for-Self to Gifts-for-Others

Paul was careful to avoid establishing visible, formal structures of leadership by denying the use of as honorifics; he refused to explicitly single out individuals with formal titles.[48] This effectively vacated the conventional means by which role differentiations were made. Instead, Paul placed emphasis on the manifestation of the Spirit within the community through various gifts of the spirit, as the sole means for role determination. According to Paul, charisms are expressions of grace within and among the body of Christ. Though they are not only the means of differentiation within the community, they are the means by which the community can be referred to as a body. For Paul they "are essential to the very structure of the Christian community. In the certainly authentic letters of Paul we find no other principle of differentiation in the Christian community than the charisms: no other basis for the decision as to who is to be a leader, who a teacher, who an administrator, than the charism that each one has received" (Sullivan 1982, 19). Paul's concern with the Corinthians is that they not forget that a person having spiritual gifts is not necessarily a spiritual person. The hermeneutic of love, chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians, is to be the only criterion of one who is walking in the Spirit (Sullivan 1982, 25). Moreover, there is a difference between expressing a charism and having the gift, or vocation of the charism. For example, prophesy. All

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[48] I acknowledge Francis Sullivan, S. J. (personal communication, December 27, 2007) for the following observations: He notes that, "in the salutation of the letter to the Philippians [Paul] gave the '*episkopoi*' and '*diakonoi*' special mention. In 1 Cor 16:15 he urged the Corinthians to be subordinate to Stephanas and his household." Paul understood that certain community leadership tasks would fall to a group of individuals, and that respect should be paid to these as well as heads of households, such as Stephanas, in whose house the community gathered. It is noteworthy that *episkopoi* and *diakonoi* were not formal titles in the mid first century, and both are used in the plural, referring to groups rather than individuals.

share in Christ's prophetic office and all should desire the charism of prophesy. But not all share in or possess the charism of the prophet (92).

In contradistinction to Paul's teaching on spiritual gifts, the Corinthians turned these gifts into matters of competition and advantage seeking, choosing the more visible gifts such as tongues as evidence of spiritual status. Stephen J. Chester pinpoints the chronic confusion between Paul's expectations of the purpose of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:1-14:40) and how the community made use of such gifts. He attributes their difficulties to the influence of voluntary associations on the members of the Corinthian church. He does not argue that voluntary associations provided a model for how the early church organized itself, but that they explain how the Corinthians thought about status and authority; a thinking that was in stark contrast to Paul's own. The titles and honorifics that proliferated in clubs allowed many members to achieve a status not otherwise possible in the larger civic arena. While Paul was largely uninfluenced by voluntary associations in his own attempts to found churches, the members of his Corinthian community exhibited many signs that they were, in fact, heavily influenced by them, particularly in matters concerning status. Chester argues that, while many in the church had undergone genuine conversion which emphasized transformed social practices, the community nevertheless fell short of Paul's expectations, particularly with regard to the Jerusalem collection, attitudes and practices during the common meal, spiritual gifts, and litigation.

What distinguished the Corinthian community from associations was the fact that there were no officials or title-bearing leaders in the church. This can be traced, as we

have seen, to Paul's leadership and his insistence that the hermeneutic of love (1 Cor. 13) serve as the principle around which the Corinthians were to organize themselves. It is a hermeneutic which not only relativized earthly honorifics, but also flashy gifts like tongues. Thus, social obligation became based around a kind of status-free mutualism, as argued by Meggitt (1998, 163) and Ascough (2002). The Corinthian struggle to grasp the significance of what Paul was calling for can, according to Chester, be traced to the fact that simply removing the social mechanisms whereby patrons could be honored for their benefactions and clients could benefit from their association with such renowned leaders, did not end all status-seeking in the community. Chester sees the rivalry between these groups "as a struggle for ascendancy between their local leaders" who had few other avenues for status in the Christian community (2003, 241).

What I argue is that something more significant grounded both voluntary associations and the Corinthian conflicts: a mental complexity organized around concrete needs and interests. More significant than the social influences Corinthians brought to the church was the mental complexity organized around second order consciousness. Chester's argument is convincing in its explanation of the social influence of voluntary associations on the Corinthian members who vied for prominence, but why they may have done this may have more to do with a second order way of knowing than post-conversion social influences. Knowing how a community makes meaning provides a more inclusive and comprehensive framework for assessing conflicts within the community and conflicts between the community and its founder.

Paul's Mutualism as a New Cultural Medium

Richard Ascough (2002) has recently brought together the literatures on organizational change and New Testament studies by arguing that Paul's leadership style and strategy for community organization can be likened to "chaordic leadership" as understood by Dee Hock. Ascough's analysis of Paul and Pauline communities is particularly helpful and appropriate, from the current study's perspective, when it is also connected to the constructive-developmental literature. Paul's curriculum subordinated the place of status and club rules to a community standard of mutual love. Paul, argues Ascough, puts stress on three simple principles: Spirit-guidance, "mutual up-building of one another in love" (1 Cor. 13:1-14:1; 16:14), and "choosing to serve others as a slave" (1 Cor. 9:15, 19; cf. 7:22). He argues that Paul did not offer a clearly defined set of rules about how a community is to structure and govern itself, but he did insist on a few simple values, which can be summed up as a command to put others first. "Throughout 1 Corinthians Paul advocates that the Corinthian Christians recognize the rights of one another and that they be sensitive to one another… In terms of ethical behavior, Paul emphasizes that the corporate body takes precedence over the individual and the rights of the individual are embodied in the group" (Ascough 2002, 4). While Ascough's use of a language of "rights" and "the individual" is problematic, he underscores the thrust of Paul's teaching. From a constructive developmental perspective Paul's de-emphasis of concrete rules in favor of the *value* of "putting others first" amounts to a demand upon the Corinthians to hold needs and interests as object; his frequent return to this theme

suggests that many in the congregation at Corinth struggled to achieve this and failed, or saw no reason to struggle at all.

What Ascough and others do not address is the fact that Paul's theology of mutualism came with the high price of letting go notions that individuals are valued, or made worthy, by their status-accruing honor; that therefore advantage-seeking opportunism must diminish and other-attending values must rise; and that shame did not in fact have anything to do with self-value since such value is grounded in a relationship with the Risen Lord and the community of salvation that was the Body of Christ, a relationship that governed all human relations. "Shame" in Paul's curriculum, had to move from its place as an external, public event, to an internal, personal conviction; public shame had to become personal guilt (third order internal censor) or possibly regret (fourth order self censor). Whether the practice of economic mutualism in the face of extreme privation put flesh on the bones of Paul's theology of putting others first, as Meggitt argues (1998), is an open question. It is clear that Paul challenged the presence of advantage-seeking opportunism among the Corinthians. The effectiveness of the supports Paul put in place, supports that at least implicitly acknowledged the cognitive location of the community and confirmed its steps toward the mutuality he preached, is a matter for future research.

Paul's Holding

Paul was obviously aware that he needed to practice care in his preaching, that he not go over the heads of the community: "For we write you nothing other than what you can read and also understand; I hope you will understand until the end – as you have

already understood us in part – that on the day of the Lord Jesus we are your boast and you are our boast" (2 Cor. 1:13-14). At the same time Paul may have underestimated the kind of conversion necessary – transformation toward increasing mental complexity – for the community to, as he had done, subvert the social and cultural expectations of the period.

In his final letter to the community, he altered his approach, perhaps to better engage the learning edge of the community. Holding onto the teaching that God's power is manifest in human weakness, he lists an even greater catalogue of his spiritual credentials of humiliations (2 Cor. 11:21-12:10), but only by sandwiching them between affirmations of "honors" the Corinthians may have been better able to recognize. He begins his catalogue by pointing out that he is a better Jew than the interloper apostles (11:23) because of his Hebrew/Israelite/descendent of Abraham/Minister of Christ pedigree. He closes his catalogue of weakness by reporting on his supernatural visions and of being "caught up to the third heaven…into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat" (1 Cor. 12:2-4). It is difficult, as Paul discovered, to convince advantage seeking opportunists to embrace the humiliation of beatings, imprisonment, and malnutrition for no immediately good reason. But it might be less difficult to first convince them of your hero-status and then, on the strength of that honor-enhancing credential, nudge them toward a meatier mental complexity that acknowledged the priority of the other and the capacity of vertical (heavenly) and horizontal (earthly) relationships to transcend time (as more than a chronicle of "nows") and immediate needs and interests. Paul may have learned this too late to realize

significant development in the Corinthian community, however. Writes Perkins, "In the final section of Paul's Corinthian correspondence (2 Cor 10-13), there is evidence of his deep disappointment and anger over the persistent challenges to his ministry as an apostle whose life exemplifies Christ crucified" (2004, p. 34).

Conclusion

Voluntary Associations as Cultural Schools among the Urban Poor

Voluntary associations could be understood as cultural schools among the urban poor that coached a curriculum of mental complexity challenging to many adults in that period – rule following (control impulses), simple reciprocal responsibility-taking (pay dues, receive burial), role-taking (join a club, be part of a team), and learning to take the point of view of the other. In fact, it is reasonable to assume that the heavy emphasis on club rules and punishments[49] means that there was present a cognitive constituency within the adult population whose lawless, impulsive propensities, it was assumed, required them; startling as this may appear, there may have been a population whose mental complexity was beneath second order consciousness.

Voluntary associations may have been schools within a second order imperial world that were *defending against* the presence of first order, impulsive adults; schools that were not simply celebrating their capacity to generate rules and accrue status. As

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[49] Rules and consequences for breaking them were as prominent on some inscriptions as other information such as an associations origins, and its "connections" among urban elites

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difficult as it may be to come to terms with a potentially large minority of adults in 21st

century United States that are below third order, there is no point in dismissing the fact.

In the same way, when one considers the ubiquitous presence and violent treatment of

slaves,[50] the extreme destitution many experienced, and the significant use of curse

tablets,[51] it is not hard to imagine some, perhaps many, exploited children exposed to

physical, mental, psychological and spiritual trauma growing into adults who were

unsuccessful in evolving beyond first order consciousness. Voluntary associations may

have represented one cultural instinct to coach impulsive adults embedded in their own

perceptions toward a more stable, productive, and useful order of mental complexity.

They may have been schools of mental cultures where one's *place* is not mediated by

force but by status; where the *other* is not just there (as in a self-other-than-me), but there

with (as in other-on-behalf-of-my needs and vice-versa); where one is supported and

challenged in the emerging capacity to negotiate and follow rules, and to take roles;

capacities that enable one to be among clever "Greeks" who build a world, rather than to

be a heroic "Achilles" building a lonely ego. They were schools that may have coached

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[50] See Jennifer Glancy's (2006) work, *Slavery in Early Christianity.* Slaves were referred to simply as "bodies", *soma,* and as things, *res*; were often found by slave traders as infants left to die on garbage heaps (exposed) and nursed by other lactating slaves; were often raised as child and adult sex workers; had to stand in their master's stead when a sentence of corporal punishment was handed out; and were excluded from the honor/shame system because they were in a state of perpetual shame. Her work is a chilling reminder of the horrible conditions slaves in the Greco-Roman world lived in. She specifically highlights the conflict slaves were put in by Pauline household codes for sexual purity since slaves did not enjoy bodily integrity and were therefore unable to resist the sexual advances of their masters, or to prevent him from bringing them to the harbor to serve as a source of prostitution income.

[51] Curse tablets, or *defixiones,* were small lead tablets on which were inscribed various spells and curses. Rivals who were neighbors, fellow artisans, laborers, etc. invoked the underworld gods and demons to immobilize (*defixio*) or bind their opponents through curses. Meggitt (1998, 32-34, 56, 145, 170) argues that this represents further evidence of the precarious existence of 99% of the inhabitants of the first century CE who resorted to the use of curse tablets to gain some advantage in achieving economic stability. Turcan (2001, 148) points out that they represented a rise in magic and astrology during the early Empire, even among elites. This resort to magic and belief in its efficacy may represent the construction of a first order adult mind.

one toward the understanding that the world was bigger than, and often very different from, one's own perception of it, and that that is actually a good thing. They were schools lasting for nearly a millennium whose "job" it may have been to patiently exclude from the adult population an order of consciousness better negotiated in early childhood;[52] just as various cultural schools in the modern West (unknowingly) carry on the new job of patiently excluding from the adult population a second order of consciousness by better supporting its appearance and evolution in childhood and early adolescence.

Paul's preaching and community organizing, then, could have disturbed the second order members of the Corinthian community for another reason. Not only were they confused by Paul's refusal to credit honor with any merit, they may have been frightened by his doing away with shame, since the shame of exposing impulsive adults to public corporal punishment and expulsion may have been the only tool they, or the culture, knew how to use against rule-challenged adults. To put it another way, third order's invitation to internalize values meant that right behavior had to move from following the rules because failing to do so could hurt my body, my status and my life, to fidelity to values because failing to do so could let my people down, hurt my relationships, and grieve my leaders. Shame had to become guilt. But guilt is a

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[52] I realize this is a problematic statement since "childhood" is not only a modern concept but a modern invention. Consideration of the child *as a child*, and not as a "little adult" that can be made to work in fields, shops, brothels and factories; one who enjoys certain rights as a child to bodily integrity, safety, healthcare, education, and freedom from labor, is a very recent, and still inadequately realized, development. My point is that the "exclusion" of first order consciousness from the adult population would likely come from supports and challenges within an adult culture of embeddedness geared toward second order, *but especially* from creating a small space within childhood (first eight years), and properly supporting and challenging children therein, where many more children as children could make the move from impulsive to imperial order of consciousness.

dangerous thing in a shame-based world because it undermines the power behind shame, not by breaking the stick of punishment, but by bringing the stick "inside", to whack oneself, as it were, for failing to live up to the values and expectations of valued relationships, revered leaders, and sacred traditions. When a community embedded in needs and interests (second order) is invited to move the source of punishment within the individual, when you turn the stick into a metaphor (because you *can* at third order), it represents an invitation that may have troubled such a community brooding over some of its members who are not even aware that there is a stick! Paul's invitation to move the stick inside may have terrified rule-following adults whose own stick-fearing behavior led them to believe that only this could work against the impulsive adult (who likely feared neither sticks nor shame) struggling to be "socialized" into a second order world.

Conversations at Cross Purposes in First Century Corinth

When the Corinthians might have been expecting rules, Paul handed them values from which rules were derived; gospel values about caring for those who went hungry in the assembly meals while others gorged and drank to excess. This meant rules, too, had to "go inside," to be relativized by internally operative values constitutive of rules. When the Corinthians sought status and vied for roles of prominence, Paul relativized all roles by doing away with status altogether. When the Corinthians sought high profile leaders to "belong to" such as Cephas, Apollos, or Paul, whose status could rub off and increase their own, Paul insisted that they belong, not to elite individuals, but to a new *community*

whose gathering was constitutive of the Body of Christ. Paul addressed their concrete

sense of belonging through a highly abstract notion of community. He highlighted a

relationship to Christ through baptism and guidance by the Holy Spirit such that their

coming together in love constituted the very making-present the Body of Christ; that

disrespecting a disadvantaged member meant profaning Christ whom Paul equated with

the church. Thus one's relationship to Christ transformed the place of roles in the

"association" that was the church, subordinating them to the gifts of the spirit in a

hermeneutic of love that put others before one's own needs and interests.

It is helpful in examining the New Testament corpus to differentiate the Pauline

churches from Paul himself. The members of the community at Corinth clearly took their

experiences and understandings, not only of voluntary associations, but every aspect of

their Greco-Roman experience with them into the new Christian community founded by

Paul. What was different, and perhaps "uniquely" baffling for many of the members of

the community, was *Paul* who challenged them to form a community grounded in

mutuality. If we read Paul's letters not as descriptions of the communities he founded,

but as the expectations he had for their members, one quickly recognizes that the

community acted very much like other inhabitants of the Greco-Roman world, including

those within voluntary associations; a fact which was the primary source of conflict with

their founder whose practical theology included mental demands that were confusing at

best, and offensive at worst. The "uniqueness," though it is hardly an appropriate term,

may have been the revolutionary third order expectations demanded of its members;

members who nevertheless failed to adequately achieve them. A world dominated by

second order mental complexity, a world whose laws celebrated a precarious victory over a lawless primitive order of consciousness where magic and violence were once ubiquitous; a world strongly defending against the "reckless" appearance of a minority first order consciousness in the adult population, could recognize and respond to, and even be converted by, the gospel of Jesus Christ as preached by Paul, but only from an order of mind structured around concrete needs and interests.

Clearly Christian conversion is not always an indication of transformation toward increased complexity of consciousness. The limitations of this mind to live up to the call to live for others, to subordinate *self* interest to the *corporate* interests of the Body of Christ, to subordinate rules and roles to a divinely established relationship that grounds both, and to see their assembly not as a locus for status seeking but as an organic Christic unity, caused much vexation for Paul. But beyond bafflement, it perhaps caused little trouble for the members of the Corinthian community who stood ready to unseat their founder at the appearance of a "better," more credentialed role model possessing greater rhetorical skills (Apollos), or higher spiritual pedigree (Cephas and the "superapostles"). It has caused, also, some scholars to read Paul as if they were reading the communities Paul founded. That is, scholars may have confused the expectations of the community's founder with the community itself, assuming that Paul's expectations were, though rarely realized, entirely within their grasp; or the fact that they failed to achieve these expectations was a consequence of social, economic, or political factors rather than the mental complexity of the community.

Paul may have been among a tiny minority in the first century CE who constructed meaning above the second order. But third order expectations apparent in Paul's preaching were probably not unique to Christianity in the first century. It is likely, though not part of this study, that other communities (the Jewish synagogue, or philosophical schools, for example) had members who were beyond the cognitive-cultural threshold of second order, or had leaders who placed expectations on their members that were beyond what was expected in the Greco-Roman culture. What may be different is not the uniqueness of the Christian church in terms of its origins and pedigree but that, along with other select communities, the revolutionary challenge to practice third order mutuality came with leadership and community supports that made evolving toward it a real possibility. It remains for future study to determine if Paul himself put in place such supports that adequately "held" a community whose members were called to live, not for self but for others.

What this case study demonstrates is a community and its founder in what Kegan refers to as a consciousness conversation at cross purposes. But Paul did not exactly put the community in over its head. That is, there was no emergent third order in the general, non-elite, population that was organizing beneath a culture dominated by second order consciousness that, while not dominant, was determinative of cultural expectations. If the evolution of consciousness requires certain advantages (for example, education and a significant distance from destitution – something between 1%-9% of the population enjoyed in the first century CE), then Paul was among a tiny elite that, far from placing mentally complex demands on less complex masses, was likely hoarding an epistemology

all to itself. It belonged to an elite that was more likely to punish or exploit displays of

mutuality or actions of obedience arising, not from subservience to system of honor-

shame, but from a commitment to the gospel, since such displays would be perceived as

destabilizing the "imperial" axis around which the world turned.

Visions often come complete and their ability to retain their original fecundity

depends on the recipient's ongoing availability to the vision. Had Paul been more

attentive to the limitations of the second order mind; had he ended his defense at the

articulation of his impressive credentials without detailing his many humiliations

including corporal violence reserved for slaves, he may have been more convincing to his

mostly gentile audience embedded in a culture of honor and shame. But we who dwell in

a period one hundred generations later would be the worse for it. He preached an

attractive risen Lord whose spirit bestowed palpable and useful gifts within the

community. But he preached, too, a dying Lord whose humiliations and embarrassments

may be enacted in those who follow him in this life. The Corinthians may have preferred

only the former – an impressive, mighty man-god who breaks the bonds of death and

promises to all who believe a similar death-breaking – rather than a human being who

suffered a shameful death reserved only for the slave and the criminal; a being whose

sufferings Paul saw worked out on his own body and in his life and ministry. But Paul's

great vision is seminal today because he attended not only to the needs of the people he

encountered, but also to the demands of the vision itself. He provided what might be

considered an inadequate holding environment to first century inhabitants because he

attempted to hold not just their world, but a world in motion; a world that, while moving

and transforming throughout the ages, would continue to find vitality in the gospel vision he made himself available to.

Implications

What this chapter has attended to is the possibility of doing a constructive developmental hermeneutic of groups in antiquity. By examining the first century religious, cultural, and social context, and situating the Corinthian community squarely within that context what emerges are "cultures of mind" constructing meaning recognizable ways. A constructive developmental hermeneutic of groups does not only look for a dominant order of consciousness, it also posits developmental complexity in which multiple orders of consciousness are present. Further, it posits that developmentally diverse groups are also dynamic in which the motion of different orders of consciousness are related, correlated, and coordinated to each other. By positing complexity and dynamism researchers may be in a better position to nuance their interpretations of community behavior. For example, in Corinth, tenacious two's (second order) were not only reacting to an audacious three (third order) curriculum, but also defending against ferocious one's (first order) who, as this study argues, were likely present in the community. The tenacity of the dominant second order constituency is reflected in its struggle to maintain its balance against Paul's destabilizing preaching at one end of the plank, while simultaneously maintaining its balance against the presence of impulsive, first order adults at the other end.

What this study argues is that Paul's curriculum was radically new and therefore little understood in a community that had a tiny or non-existent third order constituency. Therefore, there were few members of the group who were able to "get it" and act as internal leaven, creating intra-group supports for and challenges to late second order members. In first century Corinth, it was a first order constituency that likely felt in over its head, but one that found at least some support and challenge in various voluntary associations. Third order in the Corinthian church had not risen to the level where its demands were culturally determinative, where mutuality, for example, is a source of confusion and trouble for a second order constituency. It is likely, in fact, that communities in the West took well over a millennium to grow a third order base sizeable enough to begin to generate a cultural curriculum that would put a majority second order population "in over its head." Third order in the early Empire could only be cultured on the sly, in select communities who supported and challenged their members to evolve beyond an imperial, second order convention.

Instead of reading ancient texts such as Paul's letters and either ignoring the mental make up of the community, or assuming that its response to Paul would fall within a range of mental complexity qualitatively much like our own, a constructive developmental hermeneutic insists on reading the community's response through its own orders of mental complexity. It requires asking not only the manner in which they responded to Paul, but in what way was their response a reflection of *how* they were knowing. In the next chapter I take up features of Bernard Lonergan's theory of cognition and epistemology. It sheds light why concrete, practical knowing is so

"tenacious" and difficult to evolve beyond. We will also look at Lonergan's realms of meaning in which he plots very generally the evolution beyond concrete common sense knowing to theoretical knowing and what he refers to as interiority. In chapter five, I attend to his treatment of dialectic as a way of surfacing different ways of knowing and drawing attention to the necessity for conversion. Doing so will help address some of the challenges highlighted in chapter two about adapting constructive developmental theory to groups.

Chapter Four: Bernard Lonergan's Theory of Cognition and Epistemology in Group Settings

Theorizing out of different fields of study, Bernard Lonergan (philosophy and theology) and Robert Kegan (psychology and adult education) provide us with complex theories of human transformation. Bringing these two theorists into conversation helps to better understand the mystery of human transformation, and further ground this study's theory of evolving groups. Including Lonergan in a study of group cognitive development is helpful for several reasons. First, Lonergan's theory offers a helpful framework for assessing the cognitive complexity of the pedagogical context within which dialogue occurred between laity and hierarchy. It allows one to ask several important questions: What did diocesan leaders expect of lay parishioners in terms of cognitive complexity; what was the heuristic quality of the discovery parishioners were expected to make (for example, did the pedagogical context anticipate the creation of new knowledge?); and how did the curriculum account for unanticipated outcomes? Relying on Lonergan, chapter six and Appendix 2 provide a detailed analysis of the complexity of the pedagogical context and reveals that from 2001 to 2004 the groups of this study demonstrated a group cognitive complexity that went considerably beyond the complexity of the hierarchy's curriculum.

Second, Lonergan's theory provides a helpful lens through which to evaluate group knowledge production and the capacity of that new knowledge to direct action. What the group came to know is an important component of this. However, was the

experience of coming to know transformative for the group as measured by what it did

with its new knowledge? While Kegan's constructive developmental theory is relied on

for determining group complexity (diversity of orders of mental complexity), Lonergan

and Kegan together (chapter five) provide a theoretical lens through which to examine

group dynamism, or conflict, through which the groups over time turned knowledge

production into increasingly complex forms of group action. Finally, Lonergan's theory

helps to address a very perplexing question in constructive developmental theory: *how* do

individuals evolve into later orders of mental complexity? While the conclusions I draw

are not without problems, they nevertheless provide a helpful way of assessing how a

given cognitive constituency (members of a group who share the same order of mental

complexity) might evolve in the context of intentional groups.

Lonergan's Theory of Cognition and Epistemology

Intentional groups wonder. What they wonder about orients the problems they

see and pose. But orienting wonder is directed toward varying notions of what

constitutes the "reality" groups inhabit. What is wonderable and what is real is

experienced differently depending on the mental complexity of a given cognitive

constituency.[53] The capacity of one cognitive constituency to grow into the awareness

that there are other ways of asking questions and judging reality is a profoundly social

and socially constructed experience. Lonergan provides a helpful framework for

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[53] A cognitive constituency is a term used to describe the members of a group who share a particular order
of consciousness (Kegan) or pattern of knowing (Lonergan).

discovering different patterns of knowing that, when applied to organized social settings, furthers this study's development of the idea of complex, dynamic, and evolving groups. It is important therefore to review Lonergan's cognitive theory and epistemology.

Lonergan asserts that human knowing is both conscious and intentional; a consciousness and intentionality set in motion by the underlying dynamism of the unrestricted desire to know. What Kegan refers to as the self, Lonergan refers to as the subject. Consciousness refers to the operating subject and intentionality to the objects intended by the subject. Said differently, the subject *is* operative consciousness; what the subject *does* is intend objects. Because the world, and one's experience in the world, is wonderable, one's experience becomes generative of an increasingly complex set of questions as one moves, in inquisitive wondering, from experience to understanding; in critical wondering, from understanding to judging; and in ethical wondering, from judging to deciding. As one moves toward increasing complexity, one is increasingly more self-aware and therefore more world-distinct (Lonergan, 1972, 29).

Wonder, being, and the good[54] are root ideas in Lonergan's cognitive theory, epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics. Groups understand, they judge, and they choose. The groups of this study moved from inquiry within a practical world of rules and roles to inquiry about the values that include and transcend rules and roles. But the intra-group and intergroup values were discovered to be in conflict. Conflict, or dialectic, exposes the different patterns of knowing within which values are articulated by members of the group and therefore becomes a potentially transformative experience for the group. It is

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[54] It should be noted here that Lonergan tends to use common terms and uploads them with significant meaning.

here that a group can discover that the transformational experience of knowledge production and enactment is guided and directed by a nascent vision that itself needs to be articulated. A vision can be understood as an organizing narrative of intentional groups that brings together conflicting values into a coherent account of what constitutes the "reality" they inhabit (being – metaphysics). This is taken up in detail toward the end of the next chapter, and its implications are reviewed in chapter six. Better understanding this necessitates a review of Lonergan's root themes, particularly wonder, being, and the good.

Wonder is the orienting, underlying, and unrestricted desire that permeates all human knowing. But this potency, or desire to know, is always directed to an object of knowing, which is some aspect of reality, or being. All knowing is ordered to and ordered by being; being understood as object(s) within the horizon of all knowing. Lonergan does not begin by defining being or the notion of being (the task of metaphysics, or a theory of reality); nor does he begin with determining the validity of knowledge and how "subject" is differentiated from, but related to, "object" (the task of epistemology, or a theory of objective knowing). Rather, he begins with cognitive theory by asking: what are we doing when we are knowing (1972, pp. 25; 261)? Lonergan's deceptively simple answer is that human beings experience, understand, judge, and decide.

As one evolves toward "differentiation of consciousness," or a change in the complexity of one's knowing, one's capacity to wonder more explicitly directs and orients the data of sense and the data of consciousness. This movement corresponds to

the increasing personal stake one has when one moves from experience to understanding to judgment and to decision (Flanagan 2002). As choosers of the good, we are most invested in and tend to carefully deliberate about the process of choosing because in doing so we not only commit ourselves, we create ourselves. As judgers of the real and the true we are also heavily invested, though less so than choosing, in the process of coming to know, because what we judge requires that we take responsibility for our judging. Insight, however, is a spontaneous function of consciousness which seeks patterns in the data of experience. Even so, we can make insight more likely by how intelligently we ask the question and whether or not we proceed heuristically toward the unknown. Though spontaneous, insight it is not entirely out of our control. Experience is most spontaneous; senses attend to smells, touch, taste, sights and sound and present their data to consciousness; memories pour fourth; and imagination creatively erects schemes of the real and the possible. If wonder is at one end of the process of coming to know, being and the good are at the other end. Being and the good draw one toward becoming a knower of the real and a doer of the good.

Transcendental Method

Lonergan's transcendental method is a method of self transcendence that describes and explains the subject's movement through a succession of differentiations of consciousness. Each differentiation as a form of self transcendence is an experience in which the subject "objectifies" his own "subjectivities" (1972, pp. 14, 262).

Transcendental method consists of "a heightening of consciousness that brings to light our conscious and intentional operations" and leads to the answers to cognitional, epistemological, and metaphysical questions (1972, pp. 25; 261). Cognitional theory as the starting point represents a reversal of the Aristotelian starting point of metaphysics, from whose terms and relations he (Aristotle) derived epistemology and a theory of cognition.

To repeat, the question, "why is doing that knowing?" is an epistemological question whose terms and relations are derived from a theory of cognition. Epistemology concerns itself with the validity, or objectivity, of human knowing (Flanagan, 140). It is a theory of objective knowing and, according to Lonergan, usually begins by posing the wrong question, such as, how do I know that objects in the world correspond to what is in my mind? This not only posits a dualism between known objects and knowing subjects, but also assumes that both are already known, and known immediately through experience and perception (Flanagan, 141), rather than known through the tripartite structure of human knowing (experience, understanding, and judging). Lonergan's way of asking the epistemological question, (why do I do knowing?) seeks to attain some grasp of being or reality. Being, or what one judges as so or not so, makes knowing what it is; being or reality is the objective of knowing, and correct judgment (and the totality of all correct judgments) makes one an objective, valid knower. Being is the subject's grasp of object. This becomes a crucial connection between Lonergan and Kegan below.

Everyone already knows transcendental method in the sense that everyone is at least to some degree attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible. At the same time,

using it can be quite challenging since it is "a matter of heightening one's consciousness by objectifying it, and that is something that each one, ultimately, has to do in himself and for himself" (1972, p. 14). Consciousness objectified reveals *operations* of consciousness.[55] But these do not just happen; they are operations related to each other occurring in an observable pattern. Lonergan defines method as "a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results" (4). He uses the metaphor of the wheel to describe transcendental method; it is a wheel that turns *and* rolls along.[56] The operations of consciousness both recur according to an "unrevisable" pattern generating cumulative results, *and* develop, generating progressively more complex patterns of knowing. A subject is a knower capable of developing ever more complex patterns of knowing in the transformational process toward self-appropriation.

Object and Intentionality

Lonergan refers to the operations as "transitive" in the sense that they take objects (we hear something, we inquire into something, we have insights about something, we verify something, etc). He means this not only in the grammatical sense, "but also in the psychological sense that by the operation one becomes aware of the object" (p. 7). Thus the operations of consciousness are *intentional* in that they intend objects, which can be

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[55] For example, experiencing ("seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, inquiring, imagining" p. 6), understanding ("understanding, conceiving, formulating," p. 6), judging ("reflecting, marshalling and weighing the evidence, judging," p. 6), and deciding ("deliberating, evaluating, deciding, speaking, writing," p. 6).

[56] The turning, rolling wheel is a powerful metaphor that helps to link Lonergan to constructive developmental theory. The turning wheel may be understood as the operations of consciousness, akin to Kegan's notion of meaning making. The rolling wheel may be understood as the realms of meaning which we take up below, akin to Kegan's notion of development through various adaptive balances.

objects from sense experience (sense, feelings, memory, and imagination) or objects of consciousness (the intelligible, the true or real, and the good). For the former, the object of sense experience is intentional by *attending* to the data of experience. The latter, objects of consciousness, represents a qualitatively different mode of intending. On the level of understanding, for example, consciousness spontaneously seeks patterns in the data of experience; the discovered pattern (Eureka!) comes in the form of insight or, as Aquinas held, insight into the phantasm (image). But the image of insight may or may not correspond with the actual data of experience; it requires an intelligent organization of the data in conception, formulation, and verification (p. 10).

Consciousness as *intentional* intends qualitatively different objects; the operations of consciousness as experience intend attention; as understanding intend the intelligible; as judgment intend the true/real; and as decision intend the good/value. Attention, the intelligible, the true, and the good are what Lonergan calls transcendental notions that are derived from objectifying the content of intentionality and serve the purpose of moving one from ignorance to knowledge (p. 11). Knowledge is not the product of "thinking" but of knowing; that is, of judging insights into experience. Transcendental intending is unrestricted, comprehensive, and invariant and therefore drives toward ever more questions in the quest for a whole, or totality, but in the awareness that answers are always incomplete (p. 11). The operations of consciousness in this radical intending therefore lead to four transcendental precepts, or imperatives: be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, and be responsible. Each transcendental precept has orienting questions. Being attentive asks who, what, where, how and when. Being intelligent asks these as

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well (leading to potentially descriptive knowing), but also why (leading to potentially

explanatory knowing). Being reasonable asks whether it is so, true, or real. Finally,

being responsible ask whether it is good. Each imperative is a qualitative movement

beyond the previous operation. Therefore, the operations themselves are progressively

more complex but, as we will see, the operating subject is him or herself also a "genetic"

or developing subject moving toward increasing complexity of knowing.

Subject and Consciousness.

The operations are intentional, which presumes an intending operator: the

conscious subject. In a psychological sense, the subject is aware of himself operating, he

is "present to himself operating, experiencing himself operating" (Lonergan, 1972, p. 8).

With intentionality, objects are made present to the subject; and with consciousness, the

subject becomes present to himself in the operations (p. 8). In a conscious state, there are

four qualitatively different levels of consciousness: the empirical, the intellectual, the

rational, and the responsible. The empirical level consists of experiencing one's

experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding. But since the person has her focus

on the object with the operations themselves in the background, it remains "just

consciousness" as Lonergan states (p. 15). One must struggle to attend not only to the

object intended, but also to the intending subject in order to notice or become aware of

(conscious of) what one it doing when one inquires, experiences insights, crafts these into

concepts, critically reflects, assembles and weighs the evidence, judges, deliberates and

decides. The subject as conscious and intentional also evolves toward increasing

complexity of consciousness or, what Lonergan refers to as a differentiation of consciousness. He explains this in what he refers to as the realms of meaning.

Realms of Meaning

Lonergan's realms of meaning are common sense, theory, interiority, and transcendence. They represent an evolutive transformation or developmental movement from undifferentiated consciousness in common sense, to a fully differentiated consciousness in interiority. One can fit what Lonergan says about the realm of transcendence on a postage stamp but, as we will see when we take up conversion, there are significant implications for this post-interiority realm, particularly for religious conversion (below, and in chapter five). The operations of consciousness operate within each of the realms of meaning with increasing complexity. The realms of meaning are successive stages and represent a qualitative, meta-growth of a person toward self-appropriation, or the self-knowing, self-transcending self. This qualitative growth from the previous realm neither destroys nor simply advances, but transforms by way of "sublation" that which came before. Sublation is a term Lonergan derived from Karl Rahner and means "transcending and including."

Primitive Consciousness

Lonergan refers to primitive consciousness in several places in *Method*, but he never develops it as a realm of meaning. It is a fully undifferentiated consciousness. In primitive consciousness, language is used to point out what can be directly and

immediately presented to the senses or represented to the imagination in the case of symbols (1972, 87); however, the generic, or general, can be neither presented, nor represented nor, for that matter, directly perceived. Lonergan points out that in Homer there are words for glancing, peering and staring, but no word for seeing (87). Relying on Bruno Snell's classic, *The Discovery of the Mind* (1960), Lonergan describes this "realm" of consciousness as not thinking, but as conversing with objects of sense and imaginable experience (262). In Homer, "inner mental processes are represented by personified interchanges. Where we would expect an account of the hero's thoughts and feelings, Homer has him converse with a god or goddess, with his horse or a river, or with some part of himself such as his heart or his temper" (88). "Within the literary tradition there occurred a reflection on knowledge. For Homer, knowledge comes by perception or by hearsay" (90).

In primitive consciousness, because the world is as one perceives it to be (the world has no autonomy or integrity apart from one's perception of it in the parlance of Kegan's first order consciousness), wonder could be understood to reside in objects themselves. Wonder is extrinsic because the ego projects sense, feeling, memory and imagination onto objects in the world. Because memory, for example, is projected onto stories, myths, places, objects, and people, it suggests that it cannot be internally accessed by individuals as a resource for aiding intelligent action. Therefore, the consequences of one's own past actions may be beyond one's mental reach as a reliable guide for directing present choices. Questions regarding self experience – questions that are directed to one's own experience *as one's own* – are therefore rare. The movement beyond primitive

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consciousness may be referred to as an encounter with the juridical exigence,[57] by which I mean that, at some point in the history of human development thoughts and feelings began to be juried inside.[58] That "point" is common sense.

Common Sense Knowing

One of the charges against theories of psychological development is that they are prone to elitism; that their proponents sit at the peak of a developmental mountain looking "down" on foothills of the "lower" slopes of everyone else. This seems to imply that later or higher stages are somehow "better" or make one a better person, and that the task of education is therefore to "move" learners "up" the developmental mound to later, higher, better stages from which they, too, can look "down on" (or so the elitist charge suggests), others "beneath" them. Whatever the merits of this charge, Lonergan partially solves it by making everyone common sense knowers, at least at times. He does this by referring to cognitive *contexts* one can move in and out of as needed, a notion developed more fully in the next chapter. Because contexts change, the exigencies of that context call for different ways of knowing. The broad social context in which communities get things done and solve practical problems on behalf of improving day to day living, is a common sense context. Even theorists and scientists must, as Lonergan points out, leave the lab and return to homes where common sense, not theory, operates (1972, 83).

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[57] We take up Lonergan's various exigencies in more detail in chapter six. He refers to the systematic exigence, critical exigence, and methodological exigence as critical moments in the West where new stages of meaning were introduced. He did not use the term, juridical exigence, nor did he explain how human cognition evolved from primitive consciousness into common sense knowing.

[58] I use the term "juried inside" to emphasize the experience of internally thinking and feeling rather than projecting both onto external objects; this internal regulation does not mean that one is aware of what one is doing when thoughts and feelings are juried inside.

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Common sense is an adult pattern of knowing that has been operative from antiquity to the present. The difference between then and now is that the content available to common sense knowers has vastly increased. Common sense knowers use practical reason to address current, local, everyday problems on behalf of living more intelligently and successfully. Joseph Flanagan, S. J., a thorough and accessible interpreter of Lonergan, states that this realm of meaning is a "specialized pattern of knowing" that relates things and others to the self – it understands things in subject-centered ways (2002, 127). Common sense does not abstract from the particular and the concrete to wonder about things as they relate to each other or things as they are in themselves, because it operates entirely within a *descriptive* context. That is, common sense does not seek the universal and comprehensive within an *explanatory* context that relates and correlates things as they are in relation to each other. To repeat, common sense relates things and others to the self – its knowing is subject-centered. However, common sense can and does make correct judgments within its descriptive context. Moreover, this realm of meaning can correctly generalize from particular instances to a succession of similar cases (Flanagan 2002, 128) so that development in knowledge occurs.

Common sense also does not seek to move out of its own descriptive context. Its driving question is "what" something is, not why it is the way it is, and so it does not abstract from sensible, material presentations to discover patterns or forms (the "why" of things). Therefore knowing and choosing occur within the level of the senses, feelings, memory and imagination – what Lonergan calls the level of experience or the empirical

level of consciousness. It is a purely descriptive context; that is, non-abstract relation of things to the subject, which makes understanding undifferentiated from experience itself – one has insights without knowing what one is doing when one has insights. And so, contents (objects of intentional consciousness) understood and contents defined are all derived from sense, memory and imagination. However, things are the way they are not because of the material parts, but because of the patterns in which things are embodied; patterns or forms which are abstracted from the material parts (Flanagan 2002, 19).

In common sense, one could say that wonder is directed toward and orients experience. This makes experience – sensing, feeling, remembering, and imagining – internally wonderable. Experience has "gone inside" which enables one to access past consequences as a reliable guide to present choices; to hold memories internally without their needing to reside exclusively in or be distributed to tribal myths, physical symbols, sacred rituals, photo albums and the like; to generate imaginative schemes of the possible; and to internally wonder about and reflect on one's own sense experience. It is for this reason that practical knowing, the what of things, is such a powerful, if exclusive, way of knowing for common sense knowers. When one becomes differentiated from one's own experience, it becomes wonderable in new ways: it can become intelligible, it can be reflected upon, and it can be deliberated about. In primitive consciousness, experience is assumed; to use a Kegan term, one is "embedded" in experience. Therefore one cannot deliberate about it, reflect upon it or make it intelligible *as* experience; one simply experiences. To make experience an object of intentionality (common sense) greatly adds control to human experience. What remains undifferentiated is

understanding. Since common sense derives its objects exclusively from experience, understanding is assumed.

Common sense and Kegan's second order of consciousness have important points of connection, one of which is the question of certainty. Common sense can be understood as an explicitly adult version of second order consciousness. A difficulty is presented when leaders chafe at the need common sense knowing and second order consciousness has for being "correct", as if the correctness is the problem. Common sense knowers, because they can judge correctly, are able to *be* correct and to know with certainty; they judge within a limited horizon, but they can arrive at certainty within that horizon. Any "bolt from the blue;" that is, *any* knowledge coming from a horizon of greater complexity, is translated by common sense into common sense content, and is judged as such. The problem is not the correctness and certainty common sense knowers so strongly defend. The challenge is recognizing the limitations of common sense knowing presented by its "location" exclusively within a specialized and limited descriptive context, and it is in recognizing the tendency of common sense knowers to feel they are omnicompetent, as Lonergan puts it (1972, 53, 231); to not notice the horizon of knowing within which they operate, nor its limitations. The problem is, again, not the certainty, but inability to reflect on the limitations of one's present common sense horizon – that *what* one knows is not *all* there is to know, and *how* one knows is not the *only* way of knowing. One implication for leaders may be to not confront the correctness by pointing out how it is "wrong" within a broader context. Rather it is to affirm its correct status within its specific context, and then present new problems and questions for

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wonder that cannot be answered within the framework of common sense knowing. It is

not to confront the caboose and its cabin of correct answers, but to frontload new

questions at the head of the train in the hopes that it will switch onto the tracks that take it

out to the country.

Theoretical Knowing

Lonergan's examples of theoretical knowing, naturally as the name indicates,

come almost entirely from the fields of mathematics, physics, and other sciences.

Theoretical knowing uses technical language as opposed to ordinary common sense

language, in service to working out the relations of things to each other. It "refers to the

subject and his operations only as objects" (Lonergan, 1972, 257). In other words,

theoretical knowers are using the operations of consciousness in a more differentiated

manner than common sense, but they have not fully appropriated the operations of

consciousness in the sense that they are aware of what they are doing when they are

theorizing. Theoretical knowers are not self knowing knowers, however vast and

complex their theories prove to be. Having transcended and included descriptive

knowing, they are knowers within an explanatory context. That is, they are not simply

the interested knowers of common sense whose knowing is subject-centered, but are

"disinterested knowers" seeking the relations of things to each other. The disinterested

knower means one recognizes a world utterly distinct from one's own self and one's own

experience; a world of ideas where things are subsistent and intelligible with no

immediate or necessary connection to the subject and his imagination.

Lonergan highlights two key points in history where theory made its entrance: Fourth century BCE Athens and Renaissance science. In the former, Socrates initiated the "Greek discovery of the mind" by asking a question that had never been asked before; the question of the definition of things such as wisdom, courage, holiness, and love. While Socrates failed to achieve satisfactory definition, Aristotle worked out not only definitions of all the virtues, but included "sins", or vices, of excess on either side of each virtue (Lonergan, 1972). The key figure in Renaissance science is Galileo who was the first to articulate the laws of terrestrial motion in a systematic treatise that included experiments that tested and verified his laws. In theoretical knowers, wonder orients experience and understanding. It is the beginning of inquisitive knowing that moves beyond practical knowing directed to the self to understanding patterns and the relations of things to each other. It is the beginning of the capacity for abstract thinking, of constructing intelligible meanings that find invariable sequences or laws in the variables of experience; it is the capacity to discover the invariant form (the pattern) in the variables of a given experience (the parts).

The presence of common sense and theory can be seen in the dialectic, or conflict, that occurred in the 2001 parish group. In order to limit the workload of parish priests in an era where their numbers were declining while the number of parishes remained stable, diocesan leadership either established a rule, or insisted on the execution of a pre-existing rule (it is unclear in the documents), that priests were not to celebrate Mass more than four times on a given weekend. Given the continual decline of priest numbers, the rule meant that within a five to ten year period some parish communities would have to

consolidate or close in order to continue to celebrate weekend liturgies (that is, if priests were to preside at no more than four liturgies, and priest numbers were in continual decline, then the number of parishes had to decline if all were to continue to celebrate the Eucharist on weekends). Consistent with the newly emphasized rule, the diocese proposed a series of consolidations and some closures. One of the parishes of this study was proposed to be "closed (or sold)" (parentheses original).

Some in the group experienced the situation within a purely descriptive, common sense, context. It was a simple matter of determining what the problem was (they might lose one of their parishes to closure because of the priest shortage), and to propose what alternative solutions were available (finding more priests, reducing the number of times Mass was celebrated, using retired or foreign priests). In proposing these solutions they took for granted the rules (in this case, bishops make the rules, and priests are not to celebrate more than four Masses per weekend), the established roles within the church (bishop, priest, deacon, lay people), as well as the established jurisdiction of each (the bishop has total local jurisdiction within his diocese, priests partial but comprehensive jurisdiction within the parishes they pastor, and lay people nominal jurisdiction within parish finance councils).

Others in the group, however, were able to abstract from the rules, roles and jurisdictions out of which the proposal emerged to ask why things were the way they were. These same members went beyond how the proposal might affect them practically and immediately, to understand how the various orders in the church stood in relation to each other; and further, that the bishop's proposal did not seem to them to consider the

whole church, but only its ordained members. That is, these members were not

considering the crisis exclusively in relation to themselves, but had abstracted from the

concrete particularities of the immediate situation and attended to how the orders of the

church are in relation to each other, and how the needs of one order (priests and the need

to place limits on what could be asked of them in the exercise of their pastoral

responsibilities) must not ignore or trump the needs of another order (lay parishioners and

the need to keep viable parishes open despite a shortage of ordained leaders). Having

abstracted thus, they then returned to the immediate, particular context and judged that

the bishop's proposal represented a strictly priest-centered model. It was, to them, a

model that exclusively favored the needs of pastors to not be overextended, but did so at

the expense of parish communities whose viability was now tied, not to the adequacy of

their own exercise of ministry and mission, but to the availability of priests. In the 2001

group, however, there is little evidence that its members went beyond the complexity of

the above two arguments and assembled a response grounded in interiority, or fourth

order consciousness. For example, understanding that relations (a theoretical context)

constitute rules and roles (common sense context), they did not in 2001 organize this

value (relations) together with other values (mutuality, ministry, mission) under a more

comprehensive vision (such as *Lumen Gentium's* notion of the church as the People of

God and church as Sacrament which ground church as institution).

The Self-Knowing Knower: Interiority

Interiority is the achievement of differentiated consciousness. Interiority for

Lonergan not only grounds one in a proper theory of knowledge, it enables one to give an

account of his/her own operations of consciousness, thus enabling one to *take* responsibility resulting from the heightening of consciousness that is for Lonergan self-appropriation, or the "objectification of the subject" (Lonergan, 1972, 262, 14).[59] In self-knowing knowers, wonder underlies and orients experience, understanding and judgment. It is the beginning of critical wonder where one moves from understanding to verifying, affirming and judging whether what is understood is also true or real. Interiority is treated more extensively in the next section.

Lonergan is particularly useful because his theory of cognition posits that each realm of meaning has a corresponding stage of meaning (not a psycho-social stage of an individual, but a stage in human cognitive history) in which a new pattern of knowing appeared in the history of the West; that each appearance was precipitated by a crisis in the reigning realm of meaning, a crisis he calls an exigence, or need that exposed the fundamental weakness of the earlier realm of meaning's capacity to answer new questions and address new problems. Within a given historical stage of meaning, the new realm of meaning that appears operates along with previous realms. Within individuals, many realms can operate depending on various exigencies. Sublation (what both Lonergan and Kegan refer to as transcending but including) does not mean the disappearance of earlier realms, but that they are ordered and directed by the new, more inclusive and more complex realm. Key here is the recognition that crises precipitate transformation, understood as the evolution into a more complex realm of meaning, or

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[59] This is another subject-object-like statement in *Method*. Cast in Kegan's language, through the achievement of "interiority", one is no longer subject to, but holds as object, key capacities of the self and can, accordingly, look at, examine, decide about them rather than be embedded in them.

meaning making system. It is the argument of this study that groups within a given culture also evolve through stages of cognitive development. The model developed looks for conflicts that precede and resolve particular crises in groups. The conflict can be within a particular order of mental complexity (for example, conflicts between parish and diocese that are argued or negotiated from theory, or third order consciousness, each with a different assumption about what constitutes "convention"), or between different orders of mental complexity (for example, an argument from established convention against an argument from ideology).

Lonergan very generally dates and locates the emergence of new patterns of knowing in the West, particularly the emergence of the realm of meaning of theory in, as he claims, fourth century BCE Greece. What Lonergan leaves under developed is the likelihood that other, earlier, realms of meaning, remained dominant in the culture. He is interested in the appearance of the new realm of meaning, but leaves unsaid the fact that its presence operated in a small elite enjoying many advantages (sufficient wealth that purchased both leisure and education) the rest of the population did not enjoy or were unable to access. Though theory made its appearance, it likely took centuries, even millennia, before it became common in the general population. It is probable therefore that individuals in the general population continued to operate from the realms of common sense and what he calls primitive consciousness, with theory present in a tiny, highly advantaged, and therefore educated, elite.

Operations of Consciousness within Realms of Meaning: An Interpretation

It is curious that Lonergan did not explain how the different operations of consciousness differently inhabit the realms of meaning. How does common sense, for example, experience and understand *judgment*? What might interiority be assuming about *decision*? Below is an attempt to address what an individual in each realm of meaning might be assuming about the operations of consciousness within Lonergan's own framework.

As stated above, in primitive consciousness the self is undifferentiated from experience itself and therefore is not able to reflect upon it. The subject *is* its senses, memory, and imagination, and feelings; one is one's experience. The achievement of common sense is the capacity to reflect on experience. One can now notice what one is doing when imagining, remembering, sensing and feeling. However, common sense knowers, using understanding, do not reflect on understanding. Therefore insights are assumed to be full explanations of reality. That is, common sense knowers do not test or verify insights beyond "what works" in a descriptive context oriented to the self. Insights can be verified, but only those provided by the data of experience. What works for oneself *is* what is true and good within a consciousness that differentiates self and experience, but is undifferentiated from understanding.

The achievement of theoretical knowers is the capacity to reflect on both understanding and experience. The data now reflected on is provided by experience (sense, imagination, etc.) and consciousness (the intelligible, the ideational), which

allows the self to recognize not only the patterns in things related to the self, but also ideational patterns abstracted from material presentations. The self is differentiated from experience and understanding, however reality or truth remains "outer" or extrinsic to the self in that one does not self-consciously judge it as true or real *on one's own authority.* Judgment for the realm of theory concerns the verification of ideas (as in insights conceived and formulated), not the verification of the knowing self. Common sense makes valid judgments within a descriptive context and theoretical knowers make valid judgments within descriptive and explanatory contexts; however, theoretical knowers are not judging their own judging because judgment remains assumed. One's "truth" or "reality" resides in explanatorily verified ideas and therefore is outside the self. As with Kegan's third order consciousness, theoretical knowers are "embedded" in the ideational. This has two implications. First, the self is not the source of authority, *even the authority of its own ideas*; rather, the source of authority resides in correct explanatory judgments (not the authority of the judging self). Second, authority is *constructed* by a self that is unaware that it is investing authority to something outside itself. Therefore, while using cognitive theory and epistemology, theoretical knowers lack a self-conscious metaphysics. Theoretical knowers do not recognize that it is *they* who have judged something to be real, *they* who are correctly affirming the reality of what they have come to know, rather than simply stumbling upon, discovering, and working out the axioms of an already-out-there reality or truth – one whose valid out-there-ness is authoritative.

The achievement of self knowing knowers, or interiority, is the capacity to notice and reject the self investiture of authority outside the self, and therefore, to "bring it

inside the self." It is the capacity to recognize one's own capacity as a judger of the true

and real – to not simply affirm one's own ideas and those of others as real or otherwise,

but to judge oneself as a subject-authoring judger of the real. One does not simply verify

and affirm "being", rather, one takes responsibility for, and stands on, one's own

construction of what constitutes being or reality. This stance, however, a fully

metaphysical stance, assumes decision. It therefore, lacks a self-conscious ethic able to

regulate and organize competing metaphysical ideologies under a more comprehensive,

universal, and unified system. As with Kegan's fourth order consciousness, ideology by

itself is unable to construct a comprehensive ethic because it cannot see beyond the

powerful horizon of its own self-knowing agency; or rather, the ethic it constructs is

overly agental, privileging the interests of the individual, of the human; over-attention on

human rights that can trump the rights of a planetary community; an ethic that justifies

the metaphysical space one's ideology has excavated within which to backfill the whole

world.

Theoretical knowers, assuming they are also third order consciousness,[60]

construct an ethic that is overly communal, privileging the interests of local human

communities, values of ethno-mutuality that can trump the rights of individuals and the

interests of different communities. Something beyond both is needed to construct a

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[60] The cognitive capacity that enables theoretical knowers to construct vast scientific systems, laws, and theories, is likely the same capacity that enables third order meaning makers to abstract and to hold multiple points of view simultaneously and internally. Both theoretical and third order knowing place authority outside the self. What Lonergan describes as the "outer realm" of theoretical knowing is its ability to know within an explanatory context, to see the relations of things to each other and not just to the self. Kegan describes third order as embeddedness in relationships – in Lonergan's terms, it is an embeddedness in the relation of things to each other (subject to) while the self holds as object the relation of things to the self. In other words, it is the same cognitive capacity that underlies both the construction of abstract theories and human relationships grounded in mutuality.

universal and comprehensive ethic that attends not only to the relations of human

communities to each other, but also to the relations of humans to all other psychic (as in

conscious, feeling animals) and biological forms (as in non-conscious living organisms);

to every planetary system that is the condition of the possibility of life; and, finally, to the

relation of the whole material cosmos to its spiritual origins and ends.

Horizons, Conversion, and Conflict

The notion of horizon is, as Tracy points out, a core analytical tool for Lonergan

(1970). What this section attends to is the relationship between horizons as qualitatively

different ways of knowing, and conversions as modalities of transformation. It is argued

here that conflict, or what Lonergan refers to as dialectic, provides a social medium that

helps expose and clarify the different patterns of knowing inherent in conflict. For

Lonergan, the critical variables are not differences in ideas or interests, but differences in

horizons brought to light in dialectical opposition. This illumination, in turn, suggests

that the way forward is brought about through conversion, or horizonal transformation.

Intergroup and intragroup dialectic is addressed in the next chapter as an important

source of group cognitive development.

Lonergan defines horizon as follows:

In its literal sense the word, horizon, denotes the bounding circle, the line at
which earth and sky appear to meet. This line is the limit of one's field of vision.
As one moves about, it recedes in front and closes in behind so that, for different
standpoints, there are different horizons… Beyond the horizon lie the objects that,
at least for the moment, cannot be seen. Within the horizon lie the objects that
can now be seen (1972, 235-236).

Lonergan defines conversion as "a transformation of the subject and his world. Normally it is a prolonged process though its explicit acknowledgment may be concentrated in a few momentous judgments and decisions" (1972, 130). There are three modes of conversion: intellectual, moral, and religious. One is tempted to see the three different modes of conversion as "successive stages" and, therefore, as what we ought to link with the "realms of meaning." There is, however, no necessary chronological priority of one mode of conversion over another whereas realms of meaning represent successive stages of differentiation. Lonergan states, "In order of exposition I would prefer to explain first the intellectual, then moral, then religious conversion… In order of occurrence I would expect religious commonly but not necessarily to precede moral and both religious and moral to precede intellectual" (quoted in McShane 1971).

When asking what horizons are for Lonergan one might also think intellectual, moral and religious conversion. They are not the same thing as conversion, however. Rather, a horizon is an evolutive stage one achieves, and is closely linked to the realms of meaning. Conflicts within, between and among horizons reveal a need for a qualitative transformation; they reveal the need for intellectual, moral and religious conversion. Horizons are Lonergan's attempt to explain not simply the particular "viewpoint" or "world view" of a person, but to explain different patterns of knowing within which positions and counter-positions get sorted out. Horizons, then, may be understood as epistemologies; they are various stages of knowing whose criteria of objectivity, or validity, moves from the simple (what works; what makes sense) to the complex (what is real; what is good). He states that horizons "are related as successive stages in some

process of development. Each later stage presupposes earlier stages, partly to include them and partly to transform them" (Lonergan 1972, 236). These horizonal stages therefore are not the movement from intellectual to moral to religious conversion, but *qualitatively* different and more complex patterns of knowing. In conversion, then, one experiences the *changing* of one's horizon; conversions are not "stages" but can be understood as a series of experiences through which horizonal structures of knowing are transformed toward self-appropriation and self-transcendence.

Conversion is an experience of an individual that also has a communal dimension. When a significant and intense experience occurs in many individuals, "they can form a community to sustain one another in their self-transformation and to help one another in working out the implications and fulfilling the promise of their new life" (130). When this occurs conversion takes on historical significance as communities evolve through generations and move into different cultural milieus. As personal, communal, and historical, "conversion calls forth a reflection that makes the movement thematic, that explicitly explores its origins, developments, purposes, achievements, and failures." Conversion made thematic is what Lonergan calls foundations. Dialectic exposes the need for conversion while foundations establishes a new horizon within which the meanings of conversion can be reflected on, worked out, and appropriated (131).

Intellectual Conversion

Lonergan identifies three major categories of conversion: intellectual, moral and religious. Intellectual conversion is overcoming the persistent myth that knowing is like looking; that the objectivity and validity of knowledge can be had by taking a good look

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(1972, 238). It is overcoming a kind of correspondence theory of truth, which holds that objectivity involves verifying that what is in one's head corresponds to what one is looking at in the world of experience. "Knowing, accordingly, is not just seeing; it is experiencing, understanding, judging, and believing… The reality known is not just looked at; it is given in experience, organized and extrapolated by understanding, posited by judgment and belief" (238). Intellectual conversion begins with cognitive theory whereby one is able to give a proper account of knowledge – that it is the fruit, not simply of "thinking", but of the threefold structure of knowing: experience, understanding, and judging; of attending to wonderable experience, intelligently seeking and finding the patterns in experience (insight/understanding), and of correctly judging one's insight into experience as true, actual, or real. However, the capacity to give an account of what one is doing when one is knowing is only possible in the realm of interiority where one is a self-knowing knower (1972, 261). Given this, Lonergan appears to reserve intellectual conversion for interiority, as a movement into fully differentiated consciousness.

Moral Conversion

Moral conversion "changes the criterion of one's decisions and choices from satisfactions to values" (240). Lonergan compares the moral decision making of children who act rightly through compulsion and persuasion, and the decision making of more developed human beings who find their own authenticity through responses to human values. Here, "our mentors more and more leave us to ourselves so that our freedom may exercise its ever advancing thrust toward authenticity… when we discover for ourselves

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that our choosing affects ourselves no less than the chosen or rejected objects, and that it is up to each of us to decide for himself what he is to make of himself" (240). The move from satisfaction to value is not the same as moral perfection and requires the uncovering of individual, group and general biases. Since Lonergan situates biases in common sense, moral conversion might indicate a transformation into theoretical knowing. However, Lonergan goes on to assert that moral conversion results in the capacity to open oneself to criticism, and enables one to scrutinize "one's intentional responses to values and their implicit scales of preference" (240). The complexity suggested by this is highly developed as it requires a capacity to internally generate, organize, and evaluate values and one's response to them.

Religious Conversion

In the realm of transcendence, the self is related to divinity in prayer and silence (257) in a "cloud of unknowing" (266). Religious conversion is being grasped by ultimate concern and can theoretically occur in every realm of meaning. Lonergan describes it as the experience of "falling in love with God," which is experienced differently depending on one's horizon of knowing. Lonergan's notion of religious conversion is taken up more fully in the next chapter.

In closing this chapter it is important to note a key challenge presented by Lonergan's cognitive theory and epistemology. As can be observed from the above, his notion of conversion as a modality of intellectual transformation seems to represent a movement from the outer realms of common sense and theory to the inner realm of interiority; his notion of moral transformation suggests a move from common sense to

theoretical knowing, or possible a post-interiority transformation. But is it not likely that a tripartite form of conversion occurs between every pattern of knowing? How can Lonergan's notion of conversion be better integrated with the realms of meaning? Addressing this question might also address the overly intellectual/cognitive feel one gets with regard to the realms of meaning. That is, as Lonergan describes them, one wonders about the relationship between cognitive and affect, between individual and social, and between biological and spiritual. The three modalities of conversion address each of these relationships, but primarily for late-stage development. To repeat, how might each realm of meaning be understood as an achievement of some form of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion? The next chapter takes up this question, as well as others, as the theories of Lonergan and Kegan are brought into a mutually critical correlation in service to better understanding intentional groups. Having discussed the central ideas in Lonergan's and Kegan's theories, as well the complexity that flows from them, the next chapter puts both of these theorists in conversation for the purpose better understanding intentional groups.

Chapter Five: Lonergan and Kegan in Conversation

Before returning to intentional groups as complex, dynamic, and evolving, it is

important to put the theories of Lonergan and Kegan in conversation for the purpose of

working toward a mutually critical correlation between them. This is the goal of the first

part of this chapter. It is not the intention here to "synthesize" Kegan and Lonergan into

a more general theory of individual growth, or to subsume one into the other, since both

stand within different fields of knowledge and each represents a comprehensive

reintegration of various traditions of scholarship within their fields. Thus, while standing

in their respective fields, they are considered here to stand *alone* with respect to each

other. That said, each nevertheless provides a helpful lens through which to see

subtleties, gradations, and possible lacunae in the other that might not otherwise be

apparent. By highlighting key points of connection and difference, the goal here is to

generate a more integrated theoretical grounding for the notion of evolving groups. The

second part of this chapter begins to more rigorously work out a framework for

understanding cognitive groups. It does this by addressing how notions of being

(metaphysics) and the good (ethics) might be experienced by different cognitive

constituencies within groups; and how the dynamism of object-subject reactivity, as well

as agency-communion reactivity, between different orders of consciousness contributes

to group evolution.

Both Kegan and Lonergan build labyrinthine systems whose complexity is

grounded in and governed by a few simple ideas – foundational ideas whose simplicity

can be easily overlooked while glorying in the vast edifice erected on their footings. A student might therefore find himself racing toward the complexity, but because these are robust theories of human transformation, it becomes a race whose finish line ends in a confrontation with the self. Switching to an ecological metaphor, it can be likened to a hike up a great mountain where the foliage changes and the views expand with altitude. At the top, where you thought you'd find a self that is "post" whatever is meant by "self authored," or "self appropriated," you see instead a guru-mystic uttering incomprehensible noises and utterly uninterested in your presence. What with the thin air, the great height, and the baffling, offensive stranger, you begin to make your way back down. Distracted by the failure to find yourself in the higher altitudes, you slip and tumble down the remainder of the mountain until, at the foothills, you look around at the familiar and comprehensible. And you discover that where you have landed is where you *once* were, and you rest there for awhile observing everything in a new way. You rest not in the mountain's complexity, but in the simplicity of an ascending, descending, transcending self. Somewhere between where you might be and where you have been lies the becoming you; and that "becoming you" is a *motion* and an *activity* in Kegan's and Lonergan's ingenious systems. Nowhere is this more evident than in their respective use of the terms subject and object.

Chapter Five: Constructive Developmental Theory and Transcendental Method in Conversation

Lonergan and Kegan on Subject/Object Activity/Motion

Lonergan and Kegan differently use the terms, subject and object; however, both use them to convey the notions of motion, activity, and intentionality. For Kegan, the philosophically attuned psychologist and educator, there is no article; there is *subject* and there is *object* in the unity that is *the self.* Subject is identified with the self; it is the structure of knowing that organizes content, or object. For Lonergan, the psychologically attuned philosopher and theologian, there is *the* conscious subject and *an* intended object. The subject as conscious experiences, understands, judges and decides, and the subject as intentional intends objects of attention, the intelligible, the true, and the good. Thus, intentionality may be a term that unifies both Kegan's and Lonergan's understanding of object. Object for Kegan is that which is acted upon by the self within a particular order of consciousness; i.e., object, because it can be reflected upon, or held, is able to be an object of intentionality. For example, the third order self can be intentional with regard to needs, interests, point of view and the concrete.

The terms activity and motion are also notions that govern the relationship between subject and object in these different systems. What governs the relationship of subject and object in Kegan is the meaning constitutive evolutionary activity of human be-ing and growth; motion, activity is the ground of the subject-object relation. For

Lonergan, what governs or grounds the conscious subject and her intended objects of sense and consciousness, is the movement of the recurrent and related activities of the operations of consciousness as they flow from the desire to know (wonder) and are ordered to being and the good. In both systems, activities are the means by which we know (subject for Kegan; subjectivities for Lonergan), and content is what we come to know (object, objectivities). Lonergan puts it this way:

> I have used the adjective, present, both of the object and of the subject. But I have used it ambiguously, for the presence of the object is quite different from the presence of the subject. The object is present as what is gazed upon, attended to, intended. But the presence of the subject resides in the gazing, the attending, the intending. For this reason the subject can be conscious, as attending, and yet give his whole attention to the object as attended to (Lonergan, 1972, p. 8).

Finally, there is for both an organism-environment or self-world distinction. We have already discussed Kegan's understanding of this. Lonergan states: "It is only in the process of development that the subject becomes aware of himself and of his distinction from his world. As his apprehension of his world and as his conduct in it develop, he begins to move through different patterns of experience" (1972, 29). Kegan, however, places stronger emphasis on the fact that the self that holds, notices, reflects on objects is a self that is also embedded in what he is subject to, which can be noticed or reflected upon only with difficulty – or not at all. Only in the evolution from one balance to another – in which what was once subject becomes object – can the self notice "subjectivities," and then, only as they become object.

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On Directionality

When Kegan's constructive developmental theory is introduced to an audience a question that is certain to arise is whether a person can move up *and* down the orders of mental complexity. We have shown that Kegan's system involves an invariant, uni-directional movement always toward increasing complexity, but we have only touched on Lonergan's multi-directional movement. Lonergan's system explicitly holds that persons, however complex, operate at times in different contexts of complexity. That is, a highly differentiated, self knowing, self appropriated individual may at times not only exist in a common sense context, but *think* in practical, problem-solving common sense knowing. The critical piece here is Lonergan's concept of context. If the context calls for common sense problem solving, then all that is needed is practical reasoning. Kegan's second order consciousness is sufficient to handle such a context. Were third or four order individuals to reside in a common sense context, then common sense is what they would employ to successfully meet the exigencies of that context however relational/socialized or self authored they were. You don't need a guru to solve a plumbing problem; but if all you have is a guru, then she will use common sense to fix the leak.

A few points of clarification are in order here. First, the multi-directionality in Lonergan's system is a directionality reserved for differentiated consciousness (1972, 272). Theoretical knowers (for example, scientists) can operate within theory, but also

common sense. Self-knowing, subject-aware knowers operate within interiority, but also within theory and common sense – and know when they are doing it. However, undifferentiated, descriptive knowers operate exclusively within common sense. Second, what determines the level of complexity deployed is both the subject and the context. In the case here, the context discloses a set of interlocking questions and answers that can be answered within a given horizon (1972, 82, 163, 313). Exigencies arise when that horizon proves inadequate to answer new questions. These include the systematic exigence between common sense and theory, and the critical exigence and methodological exigence between the "outer realms" (common sense and theory) and the "inner" realm of interiority (83). Therefore, the context discloses the kind of questions asked and answers sought, and the exigence discloses the horizon within which the answers may be found. Context and horizon are nearly interchangeable terms for Lonergan with the exception that horizon assumes both a subject (the operator) and an intended object while context seems to assume only an object – a wonderable text, a perplexing problem, need, or situation.

If one's consciousness is undifferentiated and one begins to wonder about why a set of relationships seem to be ordered to each other in a particular way, one encounters what Lonergan calls the systematic exigence. It represents a challenge to evolve beyond a purely descriptive *context*, and an invitation to seek a new, explanatory context within which to discover answers to a set of new and more complex questions. If one operates within the realm of interiority, one is able to shift from one context to another depending on the exigencies demanded. Two things can be noted here. First, it is doubtful that

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Lonergan would argue that an individual who has achieved interiority retreats from her own self-appropriation when she deploys practical, common sense knowing because of the exigence of a given context. Second, when all that is called for in a given context is common sense, attempting a theoretical response is hardly appropriate. Further, when what is needed is a theoretical construction or deconstruction of a given set of relations, interiority is unnecessary. A biologist does not need to be a self-knowing knower in order to construct a complex theory of organic matter; but that biologist may, in fact, be a self knowing knower using theoretical knowing in his given scientific context.

It is precisely here that we see simultaneously a point of contact as well as a point of difference between the two theories. Lonergan's is essentially a cognitive-epistemological-metaphysical theory of self transcendence grounded in ethics, while Kegan's is a psycho-social-cognitive theory grounded in meaning constitutive evolutionary activity. The fecundity that lies in coupling these two theories resides in part in the cognitive piece. If one were to bracket out the intrapersonal (psychological) and interpersonal (social) from Kegan's theory, and focus on the cognitive, then clearly, *even in Kegan's theory*, if one is fourth order, one can move back and forth from the concrete, the abstract, and abstract systems depending on the exigencies of the given cognitive context. However, since the self is a unity of all three, one's order of consciousness *does not* change together with the cognitive exigencies (unless the subject-object relations are transformed by such exigencies). At the same time, Lonergan's "cognitive" theory cannot "fit" entirely into Kegan's cognitive piece since, as we will see

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when we return to conversion, it includes the social and intra-psychic dimensions of human knowing.

On the "How" of Transformation

Conversion as a tri-part modality of transformation into a more complex horizon of knowing and choosing helps to understand the *what* of change. The following addresses the question of how Lonergan and Kegan might construe the *how* of change in mental complexity.

The Role of Assumptions in Kegan and Lahey

Both Kegan and Lonergan understand human being as an activity or motion whereby one moves toward and through increasingly complex orders of consciousness, in the case of Kegan, and realms of meaning in the case of Lonergan. Since any object in motion moves as a result of some force exerted upon it, a critical question can be raised for both Lonergan's and Kegan's theories: what is "causing" the mental movement? Another way of asking the question is *how* does one move from one order of consciousness or horizon of knowing, to another; how does change in mental complexity occur? Kegan's earlier work attends more to the argument *that* it happens and *what* it is that is happening rather than *how* it happens. In his collaborative work with longtime colleague, Lisa Lahey (Kegan & Lahey, 2000), the authors proposed "seven languages of transformation," or what might be called a constructive developmental pedagogy for human growth. The *how* of change and growth in this work seems to be the uncovering of hidden assumptions that govern a set of tacit values that are in conflict with one's

espoused values. These hidden, orienting assumptions serve the purpose of keeping one in a state of dynamic equilibrium; a state that continually rebalances the self-system when attempts at change and growth destabilize the system. In other words, tacit values and hidden assumptions work against transformation. In this work, Kegan and Lahey keep constructive developmental theory to a minimum; what is highlighted is a process of moving what is at the back of one's knowing (subject territory) toward the front of one's knowing (into object territory) in order to understand it, reflect on it, and make decisions about it.

A critical question here is whether uncovering and challenging hidden assumptions can bear *all* the weight of change. To stick with our metaphor, are undisclosed assumptions the inertial drag that keep a person from changing her direction or rate of acceleration, and is the process of discovering and challenging assumptions a force "massive" enough to initiate change in direction and velocity? Assumptions may indicate what one is subject to, but they come from somewhere. In Lonergan's system, they are judgments; when they are hidden, they are tacit, implicit answers to yes/no, true/false questions. But judgments are derived from insights into experience, and these from orienting wonder. Therefore, any assumption, whether hidden or not, is a judgment one made about an experience understood – however inattentive (overlooking key bits of data), unintelligent (poorly conceived pattern or insight), or uncritical (unverified truth claim) one was with regard to the experience understood and judged. Assumptions as judgments once made also have a countervailing influence on how one experiences (what

one attends to) and how one understands one's experience (what bits of data become organized into a pattern as well as how that pattern is conceptualized).

The question remains whether a process of uncovering hidden assumptions and commitments is also capable of initiating the movement from subject to object. Kegan/Lahey's constructive developmental pedagogy includes Lonergan's operations of consciousness, but with a "from above" emphasis. That is, it represents a pedagogical moment whose goal is to lead participants to the discovery of hidden, growth-preventing assumptions that govern a set of tacit values that, in turn, direct action away from explicit attempts at change and growth. As a "change machine" (2000), its goal is to destabilize the self-system by initiating simple low-risk tests of one's formerly hidden assumptions to verify them, in Lonergan's terms, as "unreal" or "untrue." It does so, however, without a "from below" description and explanation of their origins in *experience*, how that experience was interpreted in terms of understanding, and how that understanding was affirmed as real or true in terms of judgment.[61] One never makes the attempt to source the native experience. Rather, Kegan and Lahey seem to have proposed a pedagogy of descent that moves from above, down toward new action – from judgment (a discovered assumption) to new understanding, and to new experiences. But if, in one's own learning and growth, experience is the root, understanding the trunk, and judgment

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[61] Kegan and Lahey employ a four column exercise that includes, in column two, an inquiry into the behaviors (experience) that one engages in that ensure one's espoused values (column one) will not be effectively enacted because of the presence of hidden commitments (column three) and assumptions (column four). While this may represent a from-below attempt to source the problem in experience, it in fact observes experience in order to uncover operative disvalues and assumptions on behalf of testing their validity. What remains unobserved is the *originating* experience that explains the recurrent pattern of behaviors that work against one's espoused values. Discovering that native experience, however difficult it might be to retrieve, might be worth the quest; for in it, one may also discover the sense-making one engaged in at the time (understanding), and the truth-making, reality-making assumption (judgment) that was carried into the future as a hermeneutic that mediates the self/other dialectic.

the branch, it seems that uncovering assumptions may amount to mere leaf rustling if it does not also include the establishment of a heuristic method for discovering the *origins* of the assumption in experience and in understanding.

The Role of Discovery in Lonergan

Lonergan attends to the change process which he developed throughout his long career. It is both individual and social in that one discovers the existence of a horizon that must lie just beyond one's own, a discovery made through encounters with others. Wonder, "exigencies," and heuristic structures are key categories for Lonergan that not only describe the *that* of change, but also attempt to explain what changes, and how it changes. Stated most simply, for individuals one of the critical sources of change in mental complexity is brought about by wondering and asking questions. Change can be horizontal or vertical (1972, 40, 237); in the former, one grows within the same context, or horizon, of knowing (content); in the latter, one transforms one's current horizon by moving it into a more inclusive, general and universal context or horizon. How this happens is through the discovery that one has been asking the wrong question, or is asking a new question that cannot be answered within one's present horizon. Lonergan refers to the former as an inverse insight whereby one discovers that one's question or line of questioning cannot lead to anticipated discovery – it is simply the wrong question. In the case of the latter, the potential discovery is a known that is "out there," but beyond one's current horizon. It remains unknown but not unattainable; it is what Lonergan calls

a known unknown.[62] When one discovers that one does not know, and knows that he

does not know it, he is poised for setting up an anticipatory heuristic method for attaining

the unknown. One does not set up a plan, which includes not only a process for attaining

the goal but also a known goal. A heuristic method begins with what is already known.

It establishes a process of new discovery guided by the heuristic, or question, toward an

unknown goal (Flanagan, 2002, 14, 95).

Anticipatory, heuristic structures reveal 1) an operating subject; 2) the operations

of consciousness through which the subject operates; 3) the context or horizon within

which he operates; and 4) the context or horizon toward which he is moving. This

amounts to a temporary retreat from the anticipated answer to the originating question in

order to examine its heuristic quality, or capacity to rightly lead one toward discovery.

Kegan and Lahey's constructive developmental pedagogy is precisely such a heuristic

method for discovering hidden, unknown assumptions, one that begins with leading

participants to the discovery that there is an unknown about themselves they can, with a

little work, come to know; and knowing, can make choices about. Another set of

heuristic structures, however, can be set up where one can source one's own assumption

generator (why did I go about verifying/validating the assumption the way I did? What

can I discover about the way I select and judge evidence?); or one's own insight

generator (why did I select this particular pattern about the why of things and not others?

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[62] Lahey et al. (1988) address this more comprehensively in the development of their method for interpreting subject-object interviews. Four basic heuristics function as guides for assessing the epistemological quality of a given participant's response: a) what does she know and know she knows it; b) what does she know, but does not know she knows it; c) what does she not know, but know she does not know it; d) what does she not know, and does not know she does not know it? In Lonergan's system, b) and d) are not relevant; a) and c) refer to what we are treating above – a heuristic for making known a discovered known unknown.

What can I discover about the way I conceive and define insight?); and finally, source

one's own experience generator (why was my attention attracted to these data? Why did

my senses, memory or imagination select these bits of data and ignore other bits that,

upon more careful observation, are clearly present?).

Social Dimension of the "How" of Transformation in Lonergan

Lonergan's understanding of transformation is not simply a private, individual

affair. Change and growth is a social, dialectical phenomenon that requires the presence

of others, of a community. For Lonergan, conflict, or dialectical opposition, exposes the

different delimiting horizons through which people perceive the world. These are not

simply differences in ideas, but of persons operating within fundamentally different

horizons. Horizons, as we have seen, are structures of knowing; they are "the condition

and the limitation of further development… they are also the boundaries that limit our

capacities for assimilating more than we already have attained" (Lonergan, 1972, 237).

Dialectic involves "an objectification of subjectivity," (Lonergan, 1972, 253)[63] through

which horizons are *revealed* in conflict but only *changed* through intellectual, moral and

religious conversion, each of which is a modality tending toward self-transcendence

(1972, 238-243).

Looking solely at an individual tells us little about the how of transformation.

Both Kegan and Lonergan underscore the fact that individual transformation is largely

unintelligible apart from the communities of which one is a member or in which one

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[63] Dialectic is Lonergan's 4th functional specialty, revealing the need for interiority and conversion, see *Method*, 235-266. The 5th functional specialty, foundations, "objectifies conversion" (144), meaning that in foundations, one is *standing on*, *operating out of*, or in Kegan's language, *holding* one's own conversion.

takes out membership. It is in families, intentional groups, and various communities of worship, work, and play, that individuals grow. As argued here, individuals grow because they are in groups. And the corollary is also true: groups grow because the individuals within them grow. While this does not solve the problem of the *how* of change, it nevertheless provides a starting point for understanding cognitively reactive groups; how they are and are not construed in this study: they are not collectives of individuals, nor are they cognitive monoliths (evolving, but as a single organism). To summarize and review, groups are complex in that they are made up members who are cognitively diverse (many orders of mental complexity); they are dynamic in that their movement toward growth is a factor of the interaction and conflict between and within cognitive constituencies, a factor that simultaneously is the critical source of growth for the individuals themselves; and finally, groups evolve in observable ways toward increasing capacity in the way they generate, recreate, and enact a clear, coherent, and rigorous vision of who they are and what they are about.

On Conversion

Revisiting the theme of conversion has important implications for understanding the evolution of complex and dynamic groups as it highlights the cognitive, social, and intra-psychic elements of horizonal shifts. Lonergan's theory of conversion is very helpful when understood as a modality of horizonal transformation – of moving toward increasing differentiation. It is a theory, however, that requires further development in

order to recognize the possibility of gradations within the experience of conversion. Constructive developmental theory can help fill in these perceived gaps. One notices in each mode of conversion as Lonergan describes them a preference related to Kegan's notion of fundamental yearnings (1982). For example, intellectual conversion, since it is described as a move into interiority, is a conversion that strictly favors agency; moral conversion as a possible move into Kegan's third or fifth orders of consciousness, is one that favors communion. How might intellectual conversion be understood as also appropriate to communion, and moral conversion appropriate to agency? How might a tripartite conversion be understood to mediate the move into each realm of meaning?

Intellectual Conversion Revisited

If each is understood as a modality of self transcendence, then some mode of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion would likely occur during *each* horizonal "sublation" or transformation. Therefore, Lonergan's explanation of intellectual conversion as directed at philosophers might also occur between common sense and theory; that is, a form of intellectual conversion must also mediate the move from concrete, subject-centered, descriptive knowing to abstract, disinterested, explanatory knowing. Further, a form of intellectual conversion would likely have occurred between primitive consciousness and common sense where direct perception evolves into perception of the general or generic – a kind of proto-abstraction where, for example, complex terms ("seeing") are discovered to be capable of including within their meaning a host of simple but related terms (glancing, peering, staring, looking).

Moral Conversion Revisited

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Moral conversion represents a movement from interest to value, on one level, but on another level, the movement from being a knower of the intelligible, true and real to being a chooser of the good. In the former, when one moves from interests to values, the complexity of this move depends on where Lonergan locates interests and values. In Kegan's system, it would constitute a move from second order to third order consciousness if one became disembedded from needs and interests and began to internalize values such that they were authoritatively operative in the self. Values in third order consciousness can be chosen and even constructed, but not self authored since their authority resides in sources outside the self – sources the self has invested with authority.[64] This is perhaps why Lonergan refers to common sense and theory as "outer realms" – one is not aware of what one is doing when one bequeaths authority to ideas, traditions, texts, schools of thought, and leaders, since one is not a self-knowing, self authored knower. In this sense, the third order mind constructs not only values, but also their authority. However, values are not *self* authored because there is no self-as-author; rather, there is other-as-author whose authority is bequeathed by a third order self. Lonergan's moral conversion presents another difficulty when he describes a person's transformation from a knower of the real to a doer of the good (a judger of value). If

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[64] While this remains an arguable point for individuals, in groups with a majority constituency at third order, leaders do not simply shape and mold groups according to their own theoretical or ideological designs. Rather, the leader herself is constructed by the third order group and is granted a particular kind of authority to govern. The ease with which such a leader can be so constructed depends on what order of consciousness she is balancing. A third order constituency as "other authored" makes known in various ways to leaders the quality of leadership expected of them. Therefore, a third order leader can become "authored" by the group and, because he is a third order, socialized knower, may feel reluctant or be unable to challenge the group. A fourth order leader may recognize this group dynamic and resist how a group is constructing her. This was particularly noticeable in the 2003 group which was asked by its leader, Fr. Charles, to "vision" with him about what it means to be church. One group member said, "We look forward, Father, to your views on the matter" – a cue to him on how to govern and lead. The leader, perhaps over-bluntly, rejected this invitation and challenged her to think for herself about the question.

interiority makes one a knower of the real (where one, as a metaphysical knower, judges the knowing self), it suggests a move from Kegan's fourth order to fifth order consciousness where, as I argue, ethics begins to ground self-authorship.

As suggested above, what is not apparent in Lonergan's treatment of moral conversion are the agental transformations between primitive consciousness and common sense, and between theoretical knowing and interiority. In the former, moral conversion can be understood as a move from "me" consciousness to a rule constructing, rule following adult able to take a role and work with others on behalf of subject-centered interests. In the latter, it can be understood as a move from an other-oriented responsibility (where the self holds others responsible for its own experience and takes responsibility for the experience of the other) to a subject-generated responsibility that allows others to be who they are, and allows a high degree of self-creation where the expectations of others can be valued, but are no longer determinative.

Religious Conversion Revisited

Religious conversion can also be illuminated by putting Lonergan and constructive developmental theory in conversation. Religious conversion might, from a human perspective, be understood as a progressive release of God from what one has held as object, toward a progressive subject-yielding into God.[65] As humanity achieves a new horizon of knowing, it liberates God from its previous mental construction and sets itself to the arduous task of immobilizing God within the horizon of that new knowing.

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[65] The following is not interested in the question of "God," as in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the God of Jesus Christ; or God as God is in Godself (intra-divine life of God as Trinity). Rather, it is interested in how human beings differently hold God as an object of human consciousness depending on one's order of mental complexity.

Primitive consciousness makes material figures and images and invests them with divinity. God is a mobile object one literally touches and holds, a fact which represents a kind of *uber*-control over God. Ritual does not require intentionality; simply uttering the words or retelling the myth *brings one into* "dream time"; the shaman puts on the mask or animal skins and *becomes* the divine being or original ancestor (Eliade 1994). The sacred object, whether mask or figurine, can be likened to a magical talisman.

Common sense is able to move God from a material image to an object of imagination. God is wherever imagination takes God. It constructs God as an object whose favor is secured through a contractual relationship based, not in magical incantations, but in ritual protocol (the rules and roles of religious ritual); rituals through which God is made to supply human needs and interests (gaining favor, averting divine and earthly threats). Ritual is now intentional, but represents an intentionality that is assumed rather than reflected on. When the God does not come through, one need only tweak the ritual or, as we saw in chapter three, one can punish God – whose knockable presence is "objectively" available in totems, temples, and tabernacles. Because intentionality is assumed, it is projected onto the god's. It is the gods' intentions that matter, not the supplicant's; ritual makes those divine intentions known. In this realm, communities retain an iron grip on divinity, an object tightly bound within the hold of sacred words and actions enacted on behalf of immediate, practical needs and interests.

In theoretical knowing, one may reject the notion that God can be imagined and therefore made into a material image or an anthropomorphized object of imagination. God is pure intelligibility, pure relationality; but at the same time an object of one's

theoretical construction – one that may be understood as establishing a communion among the people themselves, and a communion between God and the people of God.[66] As ideational, it is a non-imagined, non-material *relationship* that grounds human/divine interaction in this life and the next. Ritual moves from a transaction to a *conversation* between a people and God; ritual protocol mediates that conversation through which all parties, including God, are made present – that is, efficaciously available, one to the other. Intentionality is no longer assumed and projected onto the divine, for God's intentions are known, and known to be gracious. Intention as an inner disposition (rather than religious perfection as an outward "status") is now required for both the priest and participant in order to make present the divine mystery. Theoretical knowing constructs a covenantal mutuality where obedience moves from correctly fulfilling rules and roles, to fidelity to human and divine relationships.

In the realm of interiority one begins to recognize that God is not simply an object of one's own understanding; God cannot be "materialized" or anthropomorphized; nor can God be "idealized" or conceptualized. God as mystery is simultaneously incomprehensible and present. God is actuality, truth, and life as affirmed by one's self-knowing judgment. Ritual becomes a here-and-now participation in the everywhere-and-

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[66] This enabled, for example, meeting of the "systematic exigence" (Lonergan, 1972) that occurred in the first five centuries of the Church as a result of the Trinitarian and Christological controversies. Through the experience of religious, moral, and intellectual conversion that moved many theologians in the Church beyond common sense, the meaning of terms such as being (*ousia*), nature (*physis*), objective reality or individual (*hypostasis*), and person (*prosopon*) became clarified and limited in the attempt to define relations *in* God while preserving the unity *of* God – one being, three persons; and the two natures of Christ (a hypostatic union in the person of the Logos (who is one in being – *homoousios* – with the Father) with Jesus of Nazareth), both subsisting, "without confusion," in a fully human nature and fully divine nature. This relational understanding of both the Godhead and Christ, who in Christian theology becomes the source of a new relationship between God and all of creation, as well as a new communion among humanity itself, is not possible in the realm of common sense, but is in the realm of theoretical knowing. Moreover, it lends itself to reinterpretation in the realms of interiority and transcendence.

always-present divine mystery perfectly realized in the liturgical action. In the world, one imperfectly enacts God's presence in human-divine solidarity through which one's own self authored actions are made available to a transcendent Other. In this way, one "realizes" the myth; that is, makes real, here and now, a sacred narrative stripped of its magical, mythical features through an ongoing intentional inhabiting of its truth. But this ideological construction of participation in the immanence of God through self-authored solidarity means that God nevertheless remains an object of human agency.

The more world-distinct one becomes (Lonergan), or the less one confuses self and world, organism and environment (Kegan), the more of the world one holds as object. This is inversely proportional to the degree to which one holds God as a material, imaginable, intelligible, and immanent object. Said differently, the degree to which one objectifies God may be proportional to the degree to which one is subject in a transcendent economy. It is not that God comes closer or moves further away; in successive religious conversions, the self slowly releases God from the chains of human consciousness, to let God be "Wholly Other." And, perhaps, as one achieves this one becomes an articulate subject/object of the self communication of an incomprehensible God – a God not ordered by ideological or instrumental agency, nor by an ideational communion or material fusion, but a God allowed to orient the self, and the world the self holds as object.

Human history might be understood as a ten thousand year struggle to manumit God from the bondage of human consciousness. A world wholly other, a self no longer subject to it, may allow one to become wholly the subject of God's self communication

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and, simultaneously, allow one to become an incarnate object of the divine presence, or grace: not for self alone, not for humanity alone, or humanity's "world"; but also for the Earth – the fullness of the world God creates, sustains, and loves. This idea of self-as-sacrament suggests a kind of subject-purging *kenosis* which, however it is accomplished (whether in the silence of Lonergan's clouds of unknowing, or in self-emptying *kenosis* of Rahner's theology of incarnation – "man is insofar as he gives himself up" to be delivered up and abandoned, is an open question), presents a self unfettered from "subjectivities" and able to offer itself to a God unfettered from former ties to human "objectivities." A liberated self no longer world-subject, no longer holding a bondsman-God may be better material, or form, to be in-formed by grace for the transformation of the world.

While humans have always been inventing a humanized, "holdable" God in their own images, ideas, and ideologies, Jewish and Christian theology have also noted that God has always been liberating and divinizing a people created in the image and likeness of God on behalf of that great object of God's love: the world (John 3:16). If evolution has achieved consciousness in humanity (Chardin 1959, 1969), then it seems evolution's human eye has yet to turn its gaze from the mirror of its own majesty and the glory of the constructed God it sees therein. Loving Earth, loving *that* God-object, may be humanity's unique challenge; for that object in ancient Hebrew cosmology was uttered into being by God's word. In the theology of the Jewish Christian, John, God as love

uttered Godself into that which God created in the Word made flesh (John 1:1-18).[67]

Love "languaging" matter into being; God organizing matter toward life, and life toward

consciousness and voice in the human creature; God as Love becoming the material

world in the Word made flesh; may mean that nature's conscious eye must turn its gaze

away from the mirror and onto nature itself in order to inhabit the mystery of an utterly

hidden and incomprehensible God (*Deus absconditus*) who is simultaneously other and

same; distinct from and one with the world. God speaks in order to create not-god;

creates in order to give Godself to not-god; gives by becoming matter in order divinize

not-god; and divinizes in order to hear the human sound of God. Dwelling for a moment

in the irony of this, a fifth order atheist who loves the Earth and humanity in it may more

fully inhabit the *Christian* mystery than a fourth order Christian whose theology is part

idolatry.

Conversion as a process of horizonal transformation, then, achieves different ends

depending on the complexity of consciousness one evolves into. They are not stages or

realms of meaning. Rather, as argued here, they represent different modalities of

transformation between different orders of mental complexity. What seems evident is

that intellectual, moral, and religious conversion, as modalities of horizonal

transformation, must occur at each order of mental complexity, whether construed in

Lonerganian terms or constructive developmental terms. Each developmental change in

mental complexity likely includes a threefold transformation of one's knowing

(intellectual conversion – knowing being/reality/truth), one's choosing (moral conversion

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[67] See Karl Rahner, "Theology of the Symbol" (1966a); "Theology of the Incarnation" (1966b); and "Consideration on the Active Role of the Person in the Sacramental Event" (1976).

– choosing the good on behalf of self and other), and one's intra-psychic loving (religious conversion – falling in love with God; letting go of God as object; God having a more self-available, subject-free self to hold). That is, when fully integrated with the realms of meaning, conversion as understood by Lonergan includes Kegan's cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal framework.

Evolving Groups: Connecting the Philosophical and Psychological Pieces

Though there are overlaps and challenges in any comparison between the systems of these two theorists, somewhat expected since one theorizes out of a theological method and the other out of constructive-developmental psychology, what can be observed so far is that there are remarkable points of contact. The point of this study, however, is not only to bring Lonergan and Kegan into conversation, but to see if their theories can be extended beyond individuals (in the case of Kegan) to include groups, but ones considerably smaller than "the West" (in the case of Lonergan).

Knowing Reality, Choosing Goodness: The Metaphysics and Ethics of Groups

Cognitive constituencies in groups are related, correlated, and coordinated to each other by the object-subject[68] relations between them, and by the fundamental yearnings of

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[68] Subject-object relations refers to individuals in constructive-developmental theory. I use "object-subject" relations to refer to the socio-cognitive dynamic between constituencies within consecutive orders of consciousness. While this may be very uncreative example of altering established terms to account for the new context in which they are used, it is also a morphology I find helpful in that it describes and

communion and agency. Lonergan's notions of being and wonder can be helpful here by asking: what is the reality, or being, that orders the constituencies within common sense/second order, theory/third order, and interiority/fourth order? For second order, reality is what works; for third order, reality is what makes sense; and for fourth order, reality is what is true/real as judged by the self. But being is oriented by questions, by wonder, which leads to the question: what is the fundamental heuristic that orients each order of mental complexity? For second order, it is concrete, inquisitive, descriptive wondering about the what of things directed to the self; for third order, it is abstract, critical, explanatory wondering about the form of things, the why of things as they are related to each other; for fourth order, it is reflexive (in the sense of critically reflective and self-reflective) wondering about the reality of things, whether they are so or not, true or otherwise, real or not real, as affirmed (judged), not by outside authority, but *by the self*.

The different notions of being and the different orienting questions of each order of mental complexity may be a root source of conflict in groups as each cognitive constituency struggles to enact what it defines as "the real/actual" (what it considers knowable reality) or "the good" (what it considers actionable). The good constitutes a nascent ethic within each cognitive constituency. Being is that which is judged to be so, real, actual, or true within a descriptive (second order), explanatory (third order), and self-knowing/self authored (fourth order) context – what works, what makes sense, what is true. The good is the enactment of that judgment in real time and; and for second,

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explains the fact that the object of one order of consciousness is identical to what the previous order of consciousness is subject to; a fact what constitutes the cognitive relations between them.

third, and fourth orders of consciousness, is ethically grounded agentally or communally, but not both. Third order's ethno-centric ethic is grounded by communion, but in an ideational context that assumes the truth or reality of the good (it doesn't self-consciously judge it). Second and fourth orders are grounded by an ethic of agency. Second order's instrumental, ego-centric ethic assumes the self-evident nature of what is good, and does so without awareness that its subject-centered "good" lacks other-oriented mutuality. Fourth order's ideological, anthro-centric ethic assumes the completeness of its self-authored vision without awareness that its own self-knowing ethic of agency can be relativized by a more general and comprehensive ethic that integrates both agental and communal yearnings; one, moreover, that is not exclusively human attending. Theoretically, a fifth order ethic would be eco-centric, one that assumes the interpenetrability of all planetary communities and systems.

Object-Subject Reactivity as a Modality of Group Transformation

As stated at the end of chapter two, for a given cognitive constituency, say third order, what it has transcended differentiates it from second order, and what it includes constitutes its real relation to second order; what second order is subject to, third order holds as object. This represents a sharing of properties that is constitutive of the socio-cognitive relationships within group settings that bring together consecutive orders of consciousness. It is a sharing that is an *exchange* of properties where two different "natures" are brought together by the relation between them; and where one is assumed

by the other into a new form that includes the one in its totality, and simultaneously transforms it by virtue of its more radical, more universal nature. In the case of consecutive orders of consciousness, it is not that the two become one, but that in the continuous relation between them the one becomes other. This cross communication of object-subject contributes to the volatility, or reactivity, that makes cognitively diverse groups *dynamic*.

Understood from Lonergan's cognitive theory, second order cannot comprehend the horizon within which third order makes meaning. However, second order can come to *know that it does not know* something others seem to know. A horizon, to recall, is the totality of one's knowing within a given and limited frame of reference. In the interaction and conflict with third order, second order can discover a known unknown and begin to construct a heuristic method for making it known. Heuristic methods begin with what is known; what second order knows is "what works" in a practical, descriptive context. What it does not know is how to relate things, not to self, but to each other. To take one example, coming to know this as a known unknown may have to do with the discovery that rule following and role taking do not always lead to favored outcomes; that there is something beyond rules and roles that constitutes and organizes both in a higher, more general context. The discovery that there is a horizon of knowing beyond the horizon within which it knows does not cause a movement into that horizon. This study proposes that what causes the movement is interaction and conflict with a constituency at third order of consciousness, where third's object can, for second order (which is subject to it), be discovered capable of becoming intended rather than just assumed – it can move

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from subject to object – through an exchange of properties in the dynamism of cognitively complex groups. In this particular exchange, late second order members may come to recognize that they have been distributing knowledge of mutuality to others and, in the exchange, begin refusing to continue doing so.

Some members of the 2001 group discussed the fact that their participation in the 1994 parish restructuring events and in the 1996 merger was understood by them as following the rules and doing what they thought was necessary to keep their parishes open. The diocesan proposal in 2001 to close or sell one of the merged parishes as a solution to the priest shortage was therefore a source of consternation and anger for a constituency that relied on rules to measure not only their own performance, but that of the diocese as well. The discovery that the diocese did not seem to follow the same set of rules that parishes were following, and were expected to follow, constituted the discovery of a known unknown: Rule following alone is not a reliable enough guide for assuring parish sustainability. Following all the rules, faithfully, even rigidly, could still result in the closure of the parish. Something else had to be in place that governed not just rule following, but rule construction. That "something" was values; values that relativized parish and diocesan rules under an organized set of norms that created a shared reality under which all orders of the church could work together toward a mutually beneficial outcome. When rule following and role taking present a disorienting dilemma for a second order constituency embedded in descriptive knowing, they may begin to question their own horizon of knowing, and reevaluate the frustration they feel at a third order constituency's advocacy of community and values of mutuality – an advocacy that before

was experienced as slowing progress down because it refused to simply name a problem, define rules and assign roles, and then act on them. Rules and roles may, after all, be created and organized by something more complex and comprehensive. But a second order constituency will discover this in an encounter with a third order constituency. In the same way, third order's encounter with irreconcilable conflict between competing authorities (the pastor they support and a bishop they do not, for example) can disclose a known unknown that sets up the condition of the possibility for transformation. In this case, what third order "sees" is an unknown but achievable, and perhaps even desirable, horizon; a horizon within which fourth order holds with facility several conflicting authorities, and does not seem bothered by that fact.

In the thousand year evolution of the ancient Greek term, *prosopon*, the object-subject exchange between consecutive cognitive constituencies can be understood as a mediating experience where one first puts on the "mask" (the original meaning of the term in fifth century BCE Greek drama); a mask that in time becomes the "face"; a face that becomes one's "presence"; a presence that becomes the "person"; a person that is the organizing principle that governs the sharing of multiple "natures" in the one dynamic, unconfused union that is the group. It is a union that does not blur the distinction of different orders of mental complexity, but mediates their motion. *Person* understood as *relation* is a fluid concept. The mask that one takes off in the move from first to second order allows the world an integrity apart from one's perception of it. One can now feel the world's wind on the surface of one's face and know that it is not the smell of one's own breath. In the move from second to third order, that face turns inward as one

becomes an other-oriented presence. And finally, that presence, in the move from third to fourth order, becomes a person who fashions her own mask in a self-choreographed human drama. In groups, *prosopon* may be understood as a relational principle of organization that sustains the object-subject relations. As parishes in canon law are juridic persons, intentional groups may be construed as socio-cognitive persons that sustain and organize the exchange of properties between different orders of mental complexity. Those members who are fourth order and above act upon that socio-cognitive person in ways other cognitive constituencies do not.

Agency-Communion Reactivity as a Modality of Group Transformation

If second and third order constituencies are related by the object-subject relations between then, second and fourth are related by a shared fundamental yearning. Second and fourth orders of consciousness are both oriented to agency; second by an independence that is grounded in an instrumental world of rules and roles, and fourth by an autonomy grounded in an institutional world of ideology. As suggested above, both construct an ethic with a greater emphasis on the individual; second an ethic of duty and honor, and fourth an ethic of human rights. Third and fifth orders of consciousness are oriented by communion; third by an interpersonalism that is grounded in an ideational world of mutuality, and fifth by an intercommunalism that is grounded in an interindividual world of connection broadly construed. Both construct an ethic grounded

in communion; third a relational, other-attending ethno-ethic,[69] and fifth an ecological ethic that situates human communities within the interconnection of all communities, human one among them. Though oriented by communion, the notion of interpenetration in fifth order consciousness (Kegan 1982, 1994) as well as what I argue is its post-metaphysical, fully "ethical" balance (i.e., the good grounds and constitutes the real/true; Lonergan 1972), theoretically means that its ethic would account for both orientations – communion and agency.

A second order constituency conflicts with a third order constituency in the object-subject relations and in differences in fundamental yearnings, or orientations. However, shared yearnings become a source of connection between second and fourth order constituencies. The reason for this is not because second order understands fourth order ideology or the self-authorship out of which it is constructed, but that second order can translate ideology into rules and find for itself discernable roles within such an agental system. Second order may resist a third order constituency's mutuality, or become confused by the fact that it (third order) is comfortable with probability rather than black-and-white certainty, and subordinates results to relationships. Second order attends to what works, and can become annoyed by what it sees as a squishy, distracting intrusion of values (mere "niceness", for example) from a third order constituency that, in its communal orientation, understands "results" as relational rather than simply functional; where the results consist as much of "getting along" as they do of solving an immediate problem.

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[69] The others one attends to here are one's own people, community, etc.

The affinity between second order and fourth order makes a second order constituency potentially vulnerable to manipulation by fourth order whose ideology may be organized on behalf of a vision that excludes the interests of third order's communitarian values while simultaneously exploiting second order's rule following and role taking capacity. Third order's inability to craft a value-organizing vision – one that readily translates into rules by second order – means that the many values it marshals on behalf of its communitarian interests may remain unconvincing to a fourth order constituency since it (fourth order) privileges values of agency on behalf of an institutional vision. A third order constituency's tendency to make others responsible for its own inner states may offend second order whose members would bristle at the suggestion that duty (what I concretely do here and now) or honor (what my status is in the doing) has to be interrupted by other-attending mutuality rather than correctly following a code, and offend fourth order whose members would feel violated by the felt attempt to make them responsible for the experience of others. Second order's "let's just get it done" thrust allows fourth order to decide for them on the doing that gets done. At the same time, third order's attempt to ground the rules of "getting it done" in values whose thrust is "can't we all just get along" may conflict with a fourth order constituency's judgment that getting along will not *necessarily* further the cause of the task at hand whose exigencies go beyond one group functioning well to a well functioning group with a capacity to engage multiple levels of an institution toward the enactment of a coherent group vision. Second order grows because it recognizes a horizon just beyond its own instrumental way of knowing; and that horizon is third order.

In the same way, fourth order provides the context for third order's discovery of a known unknown. Second order *also* grows because fourth order provides a learning context where agency can be enacted on behalf of something other than self interest. When and if fifth order as a constituency emerges in a group, it will provide a context where third order's mutuality can be discovered capable of being enacted on behalf of something greater than the group itself.

What can be reasonably concluded from this is that third order presents a challenge to second order because of its object-subject relation to it, but it may also lack the complexity to adequately support second order. The nature of its challenge, including the expectation to hold multiple points of view simultaneously and internally (Kegan), to see things "disinterestedly" as related to each other and not just to the self (Lonergan) may overwhelm second order if it does not come with supports. Such supports may include helping a second order constituency to relativize "being correct" to a cross-contextual horizon (descriptive and explanatory knowing) where probability is discovered capable of accounting for a broader range of outcomes, especially long-range outcomes – where a demand for certainty settles into acceptance of probability. Supports coming from a third order constituency may have to overcome suspicion coming from a second order constituency. Fourth order may provide receivable support to second order because of its agental relation to it. A self-authored constituency that is developmentally attuned may also be able to challenge second order constituency in a way that does not overwhelm it.

Intergroup Dynamic

The above treatment of groups concerns itself primarily with intragroup complexity and dynamism. Another key factor in group evolution, however, is the intergroup interaction experienced by a group with other levels of an organization. In the case of this study, the parishes experienced five major events with the diocese; a dynamic that constitutes a critical feature of the cognitive evolution of the groups. Dynamism, it will be recalled, concerns interaction and conflict that exposes not simply different arguments and interests, but different horizons, or orders of consciousness from which arguments are assembled. Intragroup interaction and conflict consists for the most part of instrumental, ideational, and ideological conflicts. Not only are there conflicts between these, but there are also conflicts among them. For example, disputes can arise over the question of what constitutes "convention," or what constitutes the status quo; a recurrent conflict in the American Catholic church where many lay parishioners espouse hierarchy but assume democratic participation, and hierarchs espouse collaboration and participation but assume monarchical decision making. We take up intergroup relations more fully in the next chapter. It discusses the two parish communities that, over a ten year period, engaged in dialogue with the diocese over the issues of parish restructuring and priest sexual abuse. The chapter is organized by a description and analysis of the

cognitive development of the groups over time, and by an analysis of the pedagogy

provided by diocese throughout this period. In doing this, chapter six will better support

some of the claims made about complex, dynamic and evolving groups.

The General Structure of Group Knowing

We are now in a position to further clarify the cognitive evolution of complex and

dynamic groups. This study argues that group knowing and choosing occurs within a

fourfold structure of vision, values, rules, and actions. A governing vision has the

capacity to organize values around it; values which in turn construct a set of rules that

direct action toward an enactment of the group vision. This rubric is also helpful when

looking at how one level of an organization interacts with another level as in the case of a

diocese with a parish. Is the diocese guided by a coherent vision; what values does that

vision privilege; are espoused values in conflict with its vision; are there hidden values

that work against it; do those values construct a particular set of rules for research,

dialogue and deliberation; and do those rules set the group in motion toward an

enactment of its espoused vision, or some other vision?

Different cognitive constituencies differently inhabit this fourfold structure of

group knowing. A subgroup at second order recognizes rules and rule following, blinks

at values, and "understands" a clear vision, but only insofar as it is able to translate it into

a set of rules and procedures – a process a *clear* vision allows; a clarity, that is, of the

visional terms and relations. By correctly following an integrated procedure, a second

order constituency enacts the group vision without knowing it is doing so; what it knows

is that correctly following procedures will secure its needs and interests – needs and interests it confuses with the vision. A subgroup at third order recognizes and helps to craft an organized set of values. It recognizes not only values, but the fact that values construct rules and rules assume a set of values; it does not recognize that it is a vision that is organizing its own set of values and is therefore prone to mistaking values for vision. It does not know how to reconcile conflicting values. A third order constituency follows rules, but does so on behalf of the valuing it does, or is subject to.[70] Rules and procedures are subordinated to values. It enacts a vision that is clear *and* coherent – the case the vision makes hangs together because it organizes a *coherent* set of strategic values. A subgroup at fourth order explicitly seeks and seeks to perfect a rigorous, coherent, and clear vision – *rigorous* in that its inferences are known and adequately supported. Fourth order members of a group, while able to bring together a set of conflicting values into a coherent whole, are quick to exclude what it considers superfluous values and may also fail to be mindful of the importance of rules that direct action by assuming their self evident nature.

As we discussed above, there is a natural affinity between fourth and second order constituencies because of their shared agental orientation. However, fourth order members may offend second order members if its vision is seen to conflict with the

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[70] This might seem confusing since, what one is subject to one cannot notice or reflect on; therefore, how can one in third order construct values if one is subject to them? Third order consciousness understands, notices, reflects on, creates, and chooses values, particularly values of mutuality. What it cannot reflect on is that it is the self that is choosing and creating values; it self-consciously values values, but un-self-consciously creates and judges these same values. One "theorizes" values into "being"; the being of which represents a "true judgment" whose truth is assumed. An individual at this order of mental complexity does not reflect on the fact that the values he understands, he also judges as true and real and therefore does not notice that their authority is bequeathed by the unselfconsciously judging, or "truing", self. Accordingly, they remain "outside" the self and the self is therefore subject to them.

"laws" of the instrumental world they inhabit. This is a common experience in Catholic

parishes where highly educated leaders employ ideas and ideologies without awareness

of how they are experienced by various cognitive constituencies. To pick one example,

many leaders uncritically use the historical-critical method in Bible retreats, seminars,

and classes. By uncritical, they employ a pedagogy that is cognitively insensitive to the

developmental diversity that is likely present in such groups. Fourth order individuals are

better able to hold the tension between a Bible that is simultaneously an ancient artifact

(its entire content is historically conditioned and therefore must be critically interpreted)

and a sacred text (it contains claims by the Jewish and Christian people of their

experiences of God; it is the text of sacred liturgy). As one's community of belief is the

link to the worldwide people of God, the Bible is one's link to the history of that people's

coming to know and love God. The Bible as ancient artifact and sacred text can mediate

fourth order's sense of solidarity with the people of the past and with the worldwide

people of today.

For second order, the Bible may be understood as a sacred, inspired, infallible text

in law. It is a concrete, sacred artifact; however, not on the order of a magical talisman

(first order), because any approved version of the Bible will do – so there is no magical

quality to any one text. It is not one's link to the past or present people of God, but a

direct link to God. One need not interpret the text since its meaning is self-evident. "It's

God's word for God's sake," as I heard one person remark. When an educator educates

in a parish context and makes a statement such as, "The First and Second letters to

Timothy attributed to Paul describe a highly developed community structure that reflects

thirty years of development in the church since Paul's death," everything said after "attributed" is lost. "Wait a minute. The letters start out claiming they are from Paul… they contain specific medical advice Paul gives Timothy. What are you saying, that its 'real' author was a *liar*; no, a *clever* liar; that God's word contains *error*; that *God* is a liar?"[71] These black and white choices are not easy to entertain if one is the educator. What the educator has not done is build what Kegan calls a consciousness bridge anchored at both sides of the divide between orders of mental complexity. If the hearer locates himself in the sacred world of the text, the speaker has instead led him by a short route to a chasm that threatens not only a loss of faith, but a loss of meaning.

Understanding the structure of group knowing may be helpful to leaders in the way they offer support and challenge. Support and challenge ought to consider both the object-subject pole as well as the agency-communion pole. Second and third order constituencies conflict on both, but fourth and second agree on agency. Supporting a second order constituency in the object-subject pole is helped by acknowledging its "correctness" however black and white it may seem, since it is a correctness that may be faithful to the rules and roles they find themselves in – rules and roles that are suggestive of a self-evident course of action. Challenging this constituency, as we have seen, does not mean pointing out how incorrect they are when their answers are appropriated to a more complex context – a context they cannot see. Rather, it is continually raising questions that expose the limits of a second order context; questions that cannot be

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[71] Josh McDowell in his early work, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, *Jesus: Lord, Lunatic, or Liar*, and *The Resurrection Factor*, explicitly makes this argument – that if the Bible contains error, then it must be a God-inspired error; in which case, God is unworthy of our worship. But God is worthy of our worship; therefore, God's word cannot contain error.

answered in such a context. This challenge to "go beyond" can be supported by such questions insofar as they reveal a known unknown and the need for a heuristic method for making known that unknown. As suggested above, that heuristic structure can include a tri-part method of uncovering the judgments (assumptions), understanding, and experience of descriptive knowing.

A second order constituency can also be supported and challenged to move beyond the over-independence of its orientation toward agency. Second order is already moving toward communion as "3" is a waxing epistemology within the cognitive structure of second order individuals. A third order constituency may over-challenge a second order constituency on communion, or mutuality; however, fourth order may over-support second order. Finding the right balance may involve coaching second order toward the understanding that mutuality furthers their needs and interests.

As argued above, powerful visions are clear, coherent, and rigorous. In this way, they are better equipped to meet the differing cognitive exigencies of a developmentally diverse community, and are therefore more likely to be practically, intelligently, and truthfully enacted. But visions are not necessarily good. A clear, coherent, and rigorous vision as the construction of a fourth order constituency lacks an orienting and governing ethic capable of relativizing the ideology of its grand story within a more comprehensive and universal system (an ideology of ideologies; a vision that "goes meta"). Without such an ethic, ideology as constructed by a fourth order constituency is inherently vulnerable to acts of exploitation in the enactment of the vision. But this takes us far

beyond the limits of the present study since, as argued in the next chapter, vision

enactment was in a very inchoate form at the close of the ten year period studied.

Chapter Six: A Case Study of Group Cognitive Development within Groups in Two Catholic Parishes

In the iconography of Catholic churches in the American Northeast perhaps the most prominent images of Jesus are the crucified messiah hung behind the altar, and often close by, the holy infant in the arms of the Blessed Virgin. In statuary, paintings, and stained glass, Jesus is depicted at the beginning and end of his earthly life. The teaching, healing, feeding Jesus, or the Risen Christ are often artistic afterthoughts or secondary images to the overwhelming presence of a dead or cooing Lord. Surrounding the assembly are the always-present Stations of the Cross that depict in fourteen images the torturous last day of Jesus on his *Via Dolorosa* between Garden and Golgotha. Even here, there is no "fifteenth" station; there is no Risen Lord. There is Jesus, detested, dying, and dead. Catholic worshippers can never forget this circumference of suffering as they look around at the Stations and ahead, beyond the altar, at a horrible death Adam's "happy fault" seems to have necessitated.

In the larger of the parishes of this study, Calvary,[72] these images are radically reinterpreted, and mixed with moments in the life of Jesus. The cross is suspended high above the altar, but instead of a human being nailed to the wood is an arching figure unfastened and seemingly bursting from a patina cross. It is as if the artist, in fashioning the piece, draped his bronze figure on its back over a large orb and then placed it not on, but in front of the cross. It is a shocking depiction of the crucifixion capturing in this

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[72] At the request of participants, the names of parishes have been changed and the location of the diocese undisclosed.

powerful symbol a moment of transformation between death and life. The three

dimensional Stations, also done in metal, are similarly provocative in that you cannot

immediately tell from what perspective you are viewing the image. The artist has

confused the viewer's location by making her first wonder from what angle the images

are depicted: from above, from in front, from behind? Also prominent in the church are

images of the teaching Jesus in massive paintings, and mosaics of a pair of Apostles

above each of the six doorways. Finally, flanking the sanctuary are large mahogany

statues of Joseph and Mary. They are very tall and thin. Mary lacks any hint of docility,

innocence, or ecstasy; rather, she is depicted as a furrow-browed, fierce looking Jewish

girl with an apprehensive face set like flint toward becoming whatever it means to be

theotokos, God-bearer.

In the smaller of the parishes, All Saints, one is immediately struck by nearly two

dozen large, slender stained glass windows that surround the assembly on both sides of

the nave, depicting saints from Paul and Peter, to Augustine, Aquinas, Catherine of Siena,

and Theresa of Avila, to early modern saints and, finally, North American saints. The

church, in the shape of a cross, depicts the central stories of Catholic faith in huge, round

stained glass windows at each end of the apse-nave axes. In front, behind a standard

crucifix is depicted Good Friday from John's gospel showing a talking, teaching Jesus

even in dying. Directly facing this image, at the back of the church, is the Christmas

image of the nativity. To the left of the crucifixion is the Easter image of the

Resurrection; to the right is the Pentecost image of the birth of the church with the Holy

Spirit in the shape of a dove descending on the infant-free Blessed Mother, symbol of the

church, surrounded by all the Apostles. These images of birth, death, resurrection, and restoration, together with the men and women who stand as a "great cloud of witnesses" across time in the communion of the saints are powerful reminders of the depth and breadth of the Christian mystery. Despite the fact that all the saints at All Saints are either celibate males (except Peter) or consecrated virgins, one feels the penetrating gaze of common women and men who believed and lived this uncommon mystery.

Through years of liturgies good and bad, homilies fine and not-so-fine, through somber processions and light-hearted recessions, through crying babies, angry looks, pious kneelers, jovial talkers, beautiful music, off-key cantors, colorful banners, and tacky banners, these core images continue to teach, to catechize, to evangelize. And what do they teach? Perhaps they teach that the mystery of Christ is a regenerating wheel of birthing, living, dying, and renewing; a turning wheel that becomes a church rolling through history; a church at once made up of the holy and the unholy, the just and the rude; a people and an institution constantly dying and rising as one small prayer in the "terrible and sublime liturgy of the world."[73] At Calvary and All Saints, these multivalent images and symbols may be what lie behind a people, at once obedient and confrontational, that produced the groups of this study who so readily demonstrated their capacity to learn and grow as individuals and as a community in a very challenging context.

Because this dissertation is written within the academic discipline of the humanities and not the social sciences, its primary argument is theoretical. Robert

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[73] The terrible and sublime liturgy of the world is from K. Rahner (1976) who himself got the idea from Teilhard de Chardin's *Hymn of the Universe.*

Kegan's constructive developmental theory and Bernard Lonergan's transcendental method are brought into conversation in service to understanding how intentional groups evolve cognitively and how this evolution can be understood as a consequence of the interaction and conflict between constituencies operating in different orders of mental complexity. This is a theory of complex, dynamic, and evolving groups. At the same time, however, the theory itself has been constructed out of a critical inquiry into a succession of groups that, except for the first (1994), I was a participant in. My growing awareness was that these groups were not just getting "better" at being groups; they were getting better because they were changing and growing; a growth suggestive of an increase in the groups' cognitive complexity over time. The dissertation is a theoretical work grounded in a new theory adapted from the works of Kegan and Lonergan. The empirical study included in this chapter does not prove the theory; rather it offers many critical, and I think convincing, supports to a theory whose central claims will ultimately require further longitudinal research; studies that not only look at group-produced documents and group behavior as a measure of *group* complexity, but also measure the cognitive complexity of its members over time through instruments such as subject-object interviews (Lahey 1998).

This chapter begins with an analysis of the complexity of the curriculum employed by diocesan leaders. It then proceeds to describe and analyze each of the five parish-diocese events between 1994 and 2004. Each event is described from the perspective of group experience; group documents and behaviors are then evaluated for their cognitive complexity; and finally, the dialectic within the group and between the

group and the hierarchy is evaluated. The groups are scored, using a simple adaptation of Kegan's scoring system for individuals; the score indicates not only the presence of multiple orders of mental complexity, but also the relative strength of each. Scores between events indicate the directionality and change in complexity of the groups across time.

Hierarchy Curriculum

Because this study is about evolving groups, and on behalf of keeping this chapter to a reasonable length, treatment of diocesan curriculum will be kept to a minimum here, attending primarily to judgments or conclusions about its complexity. However, because these conclusions are drawn from research of archival material from bishops and chancery officials, I have included a description and analysis of these documents in Appendix 2. This section attends to the complexity of hierarchy curriculum and to three important patterns in how the diocese structured lay participation over a ten year period.

Cognitive Complexity of Diocesan Events

In each parish-diocese event the hierarchy engaged lay participants on the level of common sense (Lonergan, 1972). That is, the kind of participation it invited required no greater complexity than Kegan's second order consciousness (Kegan, 1982). Theorizing occurred on the diocesan level in advance of dialogue with parishes; parishioners,

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however, were never invited to develop, or learn about a preexisting, theoretical framework as an analytical tool for understanding and coming to terms with the priest shortage and its consequences. Instead, the hierarchy produced a set of plans out of its own theoretical framework; one that anticipated a range of acceptable outcomes. These outcomes, known in advance, were presented to lay participants for discussion and decision making. When lay participants went beyond the outcomes anticipated by the hierarchy, proposing their own questions, solutions, and problems, these outcomes were either discarded (1994, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004) or disparaged (1994, 2002, 2004) by the bishop or chancery officials (see Appendix 2).

All of this suggests that the hierarchy's curriculum was not designed to discover unknown knowledge together with its dialogue partners: lay parishioners; it was never structured to make new discoveries. That is, the curriculum was not designed as a heuristic structure, but a series of plans that anticipated a certain range of known outcomes. It was not a process that moved through inquiry, education, and dialogue toward the discovery of a known unknown – toward the production of new, actionable knowledge. This represents a purely descriptive, common sense curriculum that was considerably beneath the capacity of most of the groups of this study, it suggests confusion by bishops of the mental complexity of lay participants who surpassed the limits of a restricting pedagogy; and it suggests pedagogical commitments that set diocesan officials up to misunderstand their own dialogue partners.

The hierarchy's curriculum also had the unintended side effect of diminishing the willingness of participants to take responsibility for the official outcomes of the events.

The pedagogical approach used by the diocese defined a basic problem, suggested possible implications for the problem, proposed various solutions, and finally, gathered lay parishioners to *inform* them about the problem and *form* them toward its resolution. There is a shortage of priests; but we are a hierarchical church in structure and identity; therefore how can we reconfigure the notion of parish in order to maintain that structure and identity as the priest population ages and its numbers decline? We can achieve this by having parishioners discuss and choose how to reconfigure parishes. The problem is posed in advance of the process, rather than emerging from the process itself. Framing the question and proposing answers without a thorough inquiry process into the experiences and understandings of the participants meant that the answers represent judgments that cannot be verified and truly owned because they are disconnected from the present praxis of the learners (Lonergan, 1972; Groome 1980, 1996).

Hierarchical Patterns of Dialogue

There are three patterns that can be observed between 1994 and 2004 in the diocese's attempts to dialogue with lay persons on the question of parish restructuring. One pattern is the dramatic decline over time in the number of lay persons invited to participate. The numbers of lay parishioners went from 8,500 in 1994; to approximately 400 in 2001; to zero in 2003; and 12 in 2004. This precisely coincides with the second hierarchical pattern of structuring dialogue with lay parishioners in settings that over time were further and further removed from the immediate local parish context. For example,

in 1994 the event was held throughout the diocese on the parish level; in 2001 it was held on the deanery level; in 2004 it was held on the diocesan level. The movement is from parishes to deaneries to diocese. That is, the further one moves in time the further lay representatives are removed from their local parish community and the more diffuse is their voice; somewhat ironic since what to do with *parishes* in light of the shortage of priests was the critical question throughout. These two patterns also coincide with a third pattern of becoming less democratic over time in the manner in which lay persons were selected to participate. In 1994, lay parishioners were invited through general bulletin and pulpit announcements to join the process on a volunteer basis; in 2001 pastors were instructed to select two or three representatives from each parish to participate; in 2003, pastors were not instructed to include any lay parishioners; and finally, in 2004, twelve lay persons were chosen by the bishop.

One might conclude from these patterns that as the diocese evolved in its understanding of the challenges posed by the priest shortage for parishes, it moved from broad-based consultation to more focused deliberation – that it moved from the perimeter to the center as it drew closer to a decision on parish restructuring. In other words, the three patterns may simply be the result of an organized strategy of moving over time to an informed, focused decision. This conclusion is, however, not consistent with either the interview data or the diocesan documents themselves. Interview participants reported their perception that each new initiative represented an entirely new attempt at addressing the same problem, and meant that their previous work was either ignored or discarded. Because there was little or no follow up from previous initiatives, because former

experiences were not adverted to, and because new initiatives had no logical connection to previous ones, participants believed they were "starting over" each time.

The bishop himself reinforced this belief. In 1994 he stated in his "Summary Report" that it is merely a "preliminary" report; it is a "kind of first-step in our continuing discussion of this problem [priest shortage]." But after the considerable work done by parishioners, priests and chancery officials in 1994, the same bishop's letter initiating the 2001 process states, "Once again I repeat, these proposals are very preliminary, a starting point." In the 2003 initiative none of the documents reference the previous events by name nor, make explicit reference to the insights gained from them.

In order to conclude that parish restructuring initiatives were related and coordinated requires that knowledge production was cumulative and progressive (Lonergan 1972). That is, learning about the challenges and opportunities presented by the priest shortage and its impact on faith communities would accumulate over time; but this learning would not just stack up; it would *develop* and therefore change the dialogical ground on which new learning in consecutive events would occur. In other words, there would need to be a *method* that governed how knowers from one dialogical event would create new knowledge and how knowers from future events would access that knowledge in service to increasingly complex patterns of knowing. As we learned from Lonergan, transcendental method governs the accumulation and development of knowledge by indicating the cognitive context within which discovery can be made, by exposing the limits of that context to arrive at new knowledge (dialectic), and by indicating the need for psycho-social-cognitive transformation toward increasing mental complexity

(conversion) in order to meet the exigencies required to make new discovery. There is no evidence that such a methodological framework served as a guide for the diocese over the ten year period of this study.

To summarize, by leaving out critical pieces of education and dialogue, and by directing questions not to an analysis of the multi-layered problem, but to how parishioners might experience a loss of a resident pastor and a reduction in Eucharistic celebrations, the diocesan pedagogy is one that, in Lonergan's terms, remained purely descriptive. It directed participants' attention not to the relation of things to each other, but to the self. Without an *explanatory* pedagogy, understanding is limited to affirming and accepting judgments that come "from above," in this case, the chancery. Placing the dialogue within a descriptive context frontloads the presumed needs and interests of participants without inquiring of parishioners what *they* perceive their needs and interest are; it also directs parishioner attention toward presumed needs and away from a more complex analysis of the problem. In short, the hierarchy's curriculum required no greater complexity than second order consciousness (Kegan 1994) and, I argue, represents a mismatch between it and the complexity of mind of most of the participants. While the bishop, throughout the ten year period, used a language of mutuality in his suggestion of collaboration, and used a language of personal authority (a decision-making laity), the parish restructuring processes themselves occurred within a descriptive, common sense context that precluded both. When participants went beyond this context – when they encountered *and met* a real but undisclosed systematic exigence (Lonergan 1972) – and therefore moved into an explanatory theoretical context (third order), the bishop, by

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ignoring or disparaging their responses, domesticated (Freire 1970) the transformational

potential of knowledge production.

Outlined below are a summary of the events pertinent to this study. Of the events

below, five groups were organized, including 1994 (1), 2001 (3), 2002 (4), 2003 (5), and

2004 (6).

1. **1994 Group: "Parish Dialogue on Ministry."** In this initiative parishioners gathered in their own parishes throughout the diocese to discuss the priest shortage and lay leadership with the objective of selecting one of five parish restructuring options. The present study has archival data only from All Saints which met twice.

2. **1996 Merger.** All Saints and Calvary, both in the same town, were asked to formally merge, share one pastor and one pastoral staff. Since the bishop unilaterally decided to merge the parishes after both of their priests retired, no group was formed to discuss the issue.

3. **2001 Group: Deanery Gatherings.** Pastors were invited to come with two or three lay parishioners each of two deanery meetings to discuss a diocesan proposal to merge, cluster, close, or sell parishes throughout the diocese. Participants from All Saints and Calvary met twice at the parish level and twice at the deanery level. Before each of the two deanery gatherings, the pastor gathered eleven parishioners and staff to discuss the proposal and craft an initial response to it and, before the second deanery gathering, to discuss the proposal and the prior gathering. Of the eleven, three had participated in the 1994 group.

4. **2002 Group: Listening Sessions.** A group of about 40 parishioners formed in response to priest sexual abuse crisis gathered for two meetings. A smaller drafting committee made up of nine members from the larger group was formed to draft a letter to the bishop. The group secured signatures from over 350 parishioners and sent it to the bishop who eventually responded. Six members of the larger group had attending the 2001 initiative, and four of these were on the drafting committee.

5. **2003 Vision for the Diocese.** The bishop instructed pastors, in light of the continual shrinkage in the number of priests, to send to him their own vision for the diocese for the next five to ten years. The pastor of the parishes gathered a group of about 15 parishioners and staff for four ad hoc meetings to co-craft a vision for the diocese. Eight participants had attended the 2001 and/or 2002 groups.

6. **2004 Lay Collaborative Inquiry Groups.** Diocesan leaders formulated a new parish restructuring strategy for dealing with the priest shortage under the rubrics of a "new evangelization." The 2004 parish group met six times in the summer and eight times in the fall and winter to educate themselves about what it meant to be a lay Catholic in the church today and to formally begin a conversation with the bishop on the question of parish restructuring. The meetings coincided with the pastor becoming suddenly removed from ministry by a new bishop. The groups took up a leadership role within the parish and went on to craft one letter to the parish and one to the bishop. Of thirty two participants, six had participated in one or more of the previous groups.

1994 Group: A Dialogue on Parish Ministry

In late February, 1994, All Saints and Calvary participated as separate communities in a series of parish meetings referred to as "A Parish Dialogue on Ministry" initiated by the bishop in order to educate Catholics on the looming priest shortage and the consequent need to consider alternative means of staffing parishes. The initiative was designed by a diocesan committee formed by the bishop in 1993 and implemented in all parishes the following year. It was a comprehensive initiative consisting of parish workshops facilitated by a parishioner appointed by the pastor. The role of the facilitator at each parish was to make a pulpit announcement inviting parishioners to attend two or three workshops for the purpose of engaging in a process "to examine its needs and suggest a plan for alternative parish staffing." The facilitator also led each workshop and directed questions and discussion through survey worksheets provided by the diocese, and wrote up a final report that was submitted to the Office of the Bishop. The thrust of the restructuring initiative was far reaching, and the scope of the dialogue was broad based – including every parish in phase one, and deaneries in

phase two. It was an initiative that educated parishioners about the likely consequences

of a significant problem, it proposed various solutions to the problem, and it created a

local context in which participants could discuss both problems and solutions.

Group Experience and Understanding

Of the five groups that gathered from 1994 to 2004, the 1994 group is the most

difficult to assess for developmental diversity (complexity). While there is significant

archival material from the diocese that includes description of the restructuring initiative

as well as an analysis of the results, there is very little archival material from the parishes.

In fact, only All Saints was able to provide data, all of which included the pulpit

announcement, notes, survey, and write up of its one facilitator. It should be noted also

that the two parishes were not formally merged until 1996. Finally, I was not a

participant of this initiative since I did not join the parish staff until 1997. Therefore,

claims made about this group remain very tentative.

At All Saints, the facilitator's pulpit announcement briefly described the initiative

goals and process, and included an appeal to parishioners to participate.[74] Thirty seven

people attended the first session, and forty five attended the second, sixty percent of

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[74] The announcement reads: "The Parish Dialogue on Ministry… can only be a success with your participation. Each and every one of you can help to decide on our fate with God's help. Each and ever one of you has something you can offer to help plan for the staffing and smooth operation of [our parish] in the future. Please consider this a personal invitation to as many of you that can attend to come Tuesday evening and talk to us about your ideas. This is th e first step in the process leading to concrete staffing plans for our parish. For many parishioners it will be the first time we have dealt with these issues. These are challenging times for the Church. However, Bishop N feels that we are ready, willing and able to face the future realistically and unselfishly."

whom were women. Participants represented a cross section of the parish that included concerned parishioners as well as Pastoral Council members, Commission members, and various lay ministers such as lectors and Eucharistic ministers. The first workshop session began with a short video presentation by the bishop outlining the scope of the problem and encouraging the participation of parishioners in the dialogue process. The workshops were organized around survey questions that facilitators used to guide discussion. These included general questions about the priest shortage and its consequences for parishes; questions about lay leadership; and questions about what constitutes a Christian and Catholic community. In the second workshop participants were guided by a document that listed the responsibilities of a pastor; that identified five different models for staffing parishes; and finally, a series of questions designed to help participants reflect on what kind of staff the parish would require in light of its choice of parish model.

In reviewing the archival material from this gathering, it is clear that the bishop proposed three core themes that served to organize the conversation of the participants. These include priest shortage and Lay Leadership, Christian and Catholic identity, and a pastor's responsibilities. Each warrants its own discussion here.

The Priest Shortage and Lay Leadership

To focus the conversation on the impact of the priest shortage participants were asked to indicate concerns they had about the priest shortage and lay leadership. They were invited to select from the following list:

    a) Fear that a reduction in Priests would reduce Eucharist and other sacramental celebrations.

b) Concern over the quality of parish leadership if a Priest is not present.
c) Fear that people will leave the Church if there are no resident priests.
d) Worried that the Catholic Church will become more like the Protestant Churches.
e) Fear that the laity is not trained enough to handle parish responsibilities.
f) Concerned over a lack of priestly presence at times of sickness, death, wakes, funerals.
g) Fear that the Church will become more *congregational* [emphasis original].
h) Worried about losing uniquely Catholic identity.
i) Other.

In the summary report of the survey completed by the facilitator at All Saints, all of these were checked.

The survey worksheet next asked participants' response to "a greater role for the laity in parish ministry," to which they responded "7" on a scale of one to ten, with ten reading "very comfortable." Of the concerns about lay leadership listed on the survey, four were checked off including concerns over

- Lack of sufficient training.
- Fear that they may become an 'elite' or special group within the parish.
- If they are paid, the parish might not be able to afford lay salaries.
- What kind of authority would they exercise.

The three concerns over lay leadership not checked read,

- Lack of confidentiality.
- People who minister would be too well know[n] or familiar to the parish community.
- If a priest becomes available, what would happen to the lay ministers?

Community "Truly Christian" and "Uniquely Catholic"

Following this, the survey records the group's response to two questions on what constitutes "a truly Christian community" and "a Christian community which is uniquely

Catholic." The survey worksheet suggested options for both. For "the most important

elements of a truly Christian community" the options were:

- Commitment to the Gospel.
- Prayer.
- Care for the poor and Needy [sic].
- Work for justice and peace.
- Life modeled after Christ.
- Sense of being an assembly of God's people.

The facilitator wrote in participant responses as: "Belief in Christ and living his

teachings; Family – living and cohesiveness; serving people, especially those less

fortunate than us."

For the elements that "identify the Christian Community as *Uniquely Catholic*"

(emphasis original), the survey listed the following options:

- Mass (Eucharist).
- Sacraments.
- Priesthood.
- Bishop, Pope (Hierarchical Structure).
- Liturgical Celebrations (Holy Days).
- Devotions (Rosary, Benediction, Novenas, etc.) (all parentheses original).

Parishioners responses were: "The Eucharist; Sacraments; Devotions; Consistency of the

Catholic Faith; Hierarchical structure."

Pastor's Responsibilities and Parish Models

At the start of the second session, the group was introduced to a document

entitled, "A List of the Pastor's Responsibilities," as a strategy for dialoguing about the

nature and scope of his duties. The list included fifteen administrative and ministerial

responsibilities.[75] The six follow up questions sought information about how participants understood "the scope and variety" of a pastor's responsibilities as well soliciting ideas on how to better inform the whole parish of his duties. None of the questions asked how these responsibilities might be shared by members of the parish, by staff, or by council and commission bodies. However, in the one open-ended question in this section of the survey ("Please list any comments… made by participants during the discussion period that were worthy of special note"), the facilitator recorded the following: "Pastor is overburdened with administrative responsibilities. This may infringe on spiritual duties." In the final question, "Do you feel it would be beneficial for more of the parishioners to know about the variety and scope of the pastor's responsibilities?" the facilitator checked "yes" and added, "It is difficult because pastor cannot do it all."

Of the five models, parishioners at All Saints chose "model C" which proposed that one priest would pastor a cluster of parishes (two or more) with the aid of Parish Administrators in each parish of the cluster. Parishioners wanted a priest-pastor, but one "relieved of administrative duties" in order to better attend to spiritual responsibilities. They found that a lay parish administrator was "acceptable" but they accepted this possibility "reluctantly" out of concerns for the cost of lay salaries, the lack of clarity as to his or her training, and the scope of his or her authority within the parish.

Two weeks after the second workshop, the facilitator submitted his write up to the bishop, which included a verbatim review of survey responses, as well as a brief

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[75] The survey read: "Financial Oversight… Clerical/Secretarial Oversight… Personnel… Legal Representative of Bishop… Temporal Goods… Eucharist… Baptism... Confirmation Preparation Program… Sacrament of Reconciliation… Sacrament of Anointing… Matrimony… Religious Education… Individual Counseling… Funerals… Special Programs & Parish Celebrations."

summary of the experience. In short, All Saints proposed that the pastor hand over administrative responsibilities to a lay parish administrator, but to a well trained professional. Their chief concerns were twofold: if a priest had to pastor two or more parishes, he would need to be supported by a lay administrator so that the exercise of his spiritual responsibilities could continue unhindered by increased of administrative duties; and second, the exercise of authority of the lay parish administrator, particularly one in a community with an absentee pastor, would need to be clearly defined.

Dialectic: Curriculum and Group Cognitive Complexity

Hierarchy Curriculum

What emerged in this experience was a conflict between the bishop's rhetoric of collaboration with how lay collaboration was actually solicited. In the 1994 process and its immediate aftermath, collaboration was limited to participation in the hierarchy's restructuring plan. Not included in the understanding of collaboration was working together to become better educated about the full scope of the issues (theological, sociological, canonical, and historical), to frame the problem, and to form possible solutions, but to "collaborate" with the hierarchy's pre-existing plan. Lay parishioners in the diocese, however, had a very different notion of collaboration, one recorded by the bishop himself in his Summary Report. He states that there was "a consensus throughout the parishes that indeed the parish of the future will need to operate out of a *collaborative mode of ministry*" and that "the laity will be invited to share in the *decision-making*

process on the administrative and pastoral levels" (emphasis original). Later action by the bishop demonstrated that lay calls for collaboration and decision making were not heeded (see Appendix 2). For example, he unilaterally ordered the merger of All Saints with Calvary in 1996 without calling for the support of a parish administrator, and in 2001 he proposed closing All Saints.

Group Complexity and Dynamism

Unlike the documents produced in the post-1994 groups, the single survey instrument plus the facilitator's write up to the bishop only grudgingly yields complexity; it yields less information on dynamism. What can be stated with some confidence is that All Saints group inhabited with little resistance the framework provided by the diocese, even as the bishop's summary notes that other parishes struggled with the curricular habitat. The All Saints group learned and followed the rules of an initiative designed to choose a parish model for the purpose of retaining their access to priests and the Eucharist as priest numbers decline. It is likely that they assumed that the work they were engaged in was meaningful and that the decisions that they were expected to come up with through their good faith participation would be valued by their leaders. In the bishop's Summary Report, some communities did not make these assumptions; rather they felt controlled and under-challenged. The bishop recorded comments from frustrated lay parishioners who stated that they felt "led like sheep," and asked, "Can we ever be challenged as a people to find some course of action without having to wait for the Chancery?"

It is argued here that the All Saints group not only trusted in the rules of the process, but also that they believed these same rules bound all parties; themselves, but also the clergy and hierarchy. This is based on the feedback of the facilitator of the 1994 group who, in the 2001 group, expressed confusion and anger over the 2001 diocesan proposal to close and sell All Saints as a new response to the same priest shortage problem. He argued that the diocese was not following its own procedures established in 1994; procedures which the 1994 group had carefully followed in order to avoid the permanent loss of both priest and Eucharist – the inevitable consequence of parish closure. This suggests that the 1994 group may have believed that rule following would enable them to come up with a parish model that is right, or correct in terms of maximizing the likelihood of achieving its primary objective; and that the decision they came to would be honored by the bishop when it came time to enact change. The group did not take a perspective on the fact that someone came up with the rules of the process and may not feel similarly bound by them. The group assumed that the implicit rules were self-evident and known by all parties who would adhere to them with equal fidelity.

All of this suggests the strong presence of a second order constituency in the group that had no vision of church and few self-consciously held values. This instrumental thinking, however, is accompanied by another which allowed the group to subordinate some of its needs (of having a *resident* priest) on behalf the needs of the priest – that he not be overworked while serving two or more parishes. This, and the willingness of the group to cooperate with the bishop and the general trust that they exhibited in the process, suggests a loyalty to external authority grounded in third order

mutuality; and suggest further the presence of a constituency able to internalize values and subordinate self-interest to the interests of the group and the broader community. The group was also concerned about the nature of the authority a lay parish administrator would exercise. What we do not have is enough information on why it was concerned.

Other groups in the diocese gave clear indication of "why." These groups saw the introduction of lay administrators through a theoretical framework able to anticipate and construct various patterns of governance. That is, they went beyond simply asking how they might experience a parish without a pastor and how they might come to terms with a lay administrator, to recognizing the relation of things to each other (Lonergan 1972). Accordingly, they asked a more complex set of questions: given a lay administrator, how would this person relate to the Pastoral Council; how would this person relate to the priest and bishop? What they concluded was that in this new situation parish Pastoral Councils would need to be strengthened and that the lay administrator should be accountable to them. In other words, they did not want a *lay hierarch* over them. What no group in the diocese seemed to have taken a perspective on is how parish councils strengthened with governing authority would relate to the bishop and to pastors, or how giving governing authority to Pastoral Councils in a diocese that was committed to exclusive episcopal jurisdiction, might change not only the relations between councils and lay leaders, but also the relations between councils and clergy. The All Saints group, unlike other groups, did not seem to take a perspective on the relationship between lay administrators and Pastoral Councils, nor those that exist between the parish and diocese, and between laity and clergy. Instead, it saw these relationships as an assumed or

necessary component to securing the presence of a priest to preside at the Eucharist, baptism, weddings and funerals.

What can be reasonably concluded is that both second order and third order consciousness are present, but second order likely dominates the group knowing at All Saints. What needs further study is the extent to which theoretical, third order knowers may have simply yielded to a descriptive context created by the diocese. That is, the group argued primarily from an instrumental, common sense knowing even while it may have had greater mental capacity at its disposal had it been challenged to access it. Once they accepted the problem as defined by the diocese (there is a priest shortage/priests are overworked), and the solution (to examine prepared models for parish ministry and decide one that fits their community best), they required no greater complexity than second order consciousness or common sense. The group did not appear to mind or even notice that the diocese posed the key problem, asked all the pertinent questions, and proposed a fixed range of solutions that made problematic the governing of parishes, leaving little room for presentations of theories and visions by lay parishioners. This group can be scored, with the reservations already mentioned, as 2/3(4): second order is the dominant meaning making structure of the group; third order is subdominant, but strong; and fourth order is only hypothetically present.[76]

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[76] The parish data provides no clear indication of a fourth order constituency in the group. However, it is difficult to imagine how displays of personal authority, or value-organizing visions, could appear on the survey instrument provided by the diocese to facilitators. The instrument asked many contained-choice questions that called for respondents to "check all that apply"; many closed-ended questions that called for yes/no responses; when open-ended questions were asked, respondents were often prompted by suggested answers (see above and Appendix 2).

2/3(4)   3/2(4)   3/2/4   3/4/2   3/4(2)

1994
Group

△ The path of 2nd order   □ The path of 3rd order   ○ The path of 4th order
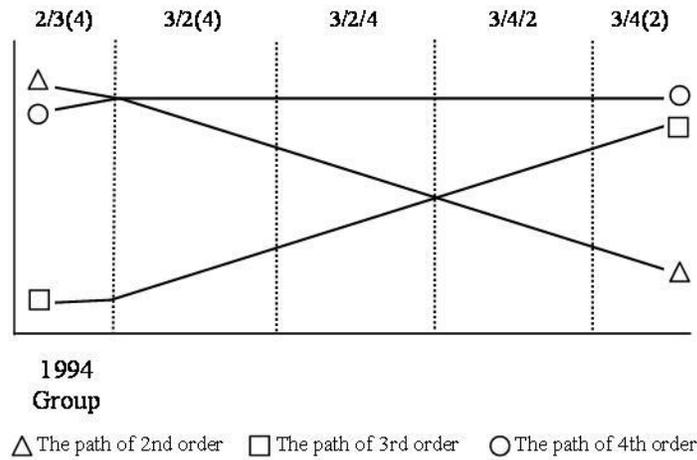
Figure 6.1: 1994 Parish Group Development

Other parish groups as noted above broke out of the second order, common sense

context created by the diocesan process by proposing solutions that would likely

destabilize the balance of current power relations in the diocese. This represents the kind

of dialectic that helps expose different horizons of knowing (Lonergan 1972), in this

case, a conflict between some groups and the diocese. Given the fact that the bishop, in

the following years, dropped the idea of lay parish administrators and waited seven years

before starting over with an entirely new diocesan-wide process of parish restructuring, it

suggests two things: either confusion on his part about what kind of lay constituency he

was dialoguing with; or awareness that participants went beyond where he intended to

take them. Lay parishioners in general were not simply role-taking, rule following

Catholics who fit comfortably into the descriptive habitat stewarded by the diocese.

While mostly compliant many lay parishioners constructed a more complex habitat in

which to engage in dialogue, one that had room for third order knowers who grasped the

relational significance of the restructuring process, and fourth order knowers who grasped

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also that the exercise of personal authority within the Catholic church must occasion

meaningful forums for decision making by the laity. Far from putting people in over

their heads (Kegan 1994), the bishop may have discovered that he had a lake full of

swimmers that would not stay close to the shore.

The 2001 Parish Restructuring Initiative

In the American Catholic Church bishops are by any estimate in an impossible

bind. Unable to discuss women's ordination, unwilling as a national episcopal body to

risk Vatican censure by broaching the subject of relaxing the discipline on celibacy, and

similarly unwilling to consider meaningful forums for lay representatives of parishes to

meet face-to-face with bishops in dialogue, they are nearly bound to offend, unwittingly

or otherwise, both laity and clergy. On just the issue of parish restructuring, they are

caught between the conflicting hopes and dreams of an aging clergy population weighed

down not only by a dramatically increasing workload as their numbers decline, but by a

qualitative change in the complexity of the work demanded of them. All of this is

occurring amidst a rising lay population (at least nationally). On the one hand, bishops

cannot continue to ask priests to take on more parishes as a strategy for addressing their

declining numbers. On the other hand, suppressing viable parishes simply because there

are too few priests to pastor them leads to heartbreak, disillusionment, and defection for

many lay Catholics who find their communities radically disturbed and their sacred

spaces sold. An equally serious dilemma exists on the question of governance. Bishops

cannot indefinitely use a rhetoric of collaboration and participation while simultaneously exercising monarchical control.

The bishop in the diocese of this study made a choice in 2001 that represents the worst of both worlds; he chose to limit the number of Masses priest could celebrate on a given weekend, and he proposed to further consolidate parishes, close some, and sell one. This decision qualitatively changed the way pastors would have to lead parishes by reconfiguring their ministries from single-parish pastors to multi-parish pastors, while simultaneously limiting their spiritual availability to the people. In 1994, lay parishioners clearly spoke up about their desire to have pastors focus on the spiritual responsibilities of their ministries. Frequent requests are that priests spend more time preparing good liturgies and meaningful homilies, and less time balancing budgets; attend to adult religious education and less time planning building renovations. In short, be a visionary, spiritual leader; let go of the responsibility of administering the temporal affairs of the church by giving these to competent, educated lay persons; and make these accountable to Pastoral Councils empowered with governing authority in temporal matters. By further consolidating parishes and limiting Eucharistic celebrations, what the bishop instead chose to do from the perspective of the 2001 group was to *reduce* the spiritual availability of pastors, and *increase* their temporal obligations; a decision that was the exact opposite of what parishioners throughout the diocese had recommended in 1994. This put priests also in an impossible bind. Rather than supporting and challenging them to attend more to pastoral care, something parishioners highly value, priests were asked to assume greater organizational and administrative responsibility, something lay

professionals are as competent, and likely more competent to fulfill. While the bishop may have been attempting to ease the workload of priest by placing limits on the number of Masses they had to celebrate, he went about it in a way that maximized the frustration of both clergy and laity, and had the further negative consequence of pitting clergy and laity against each other.

Group Experience and Understanding

The pastor, Fr. Charles, who was installed in 1996, gathered ten parishioners and two staff members (myself and the deacon) in 2001 for the purpose of drafting a response to a diocesan proposal to consolidate, close, and sell parishes in response to the priest shortage. The two parish meetings were held prior to each of two scheduled deanery meetings. It was here that two members of the group who had participated in the 1994 event made the connection that the hierarchy may have been disingenuous in seeking their earlier participation. Of the two members one was the facilitator of the All Saints group, and the other was a participant in the process for Calvary. My role, together with the deacon, was as a staff representative of the parishes.

The 2001 initiative was experienced as a stunning and traumatic blow to the group participants when they discovered that All Saints was on a list proposing that it be "closed (or sold)." The facilitator for the 1994 All Saints group reviewed the previous parish restructuring process for the 2001 group and argued that the new initiative "completely undermined all that work" in its proposal to unilaterally close and

consolidate parishes. To him, it made no sense why the bishop would seek and receive

input from thousands of Catholic parishioners about how to rethink parish ministry in

light of the priest shortage, and then ignore that input in his new proposal. It was a blow

because not only had they participated in the 1994 initiative to prepare for change, but

they had willingly undergone the challenging 1996 merger and felt their new twined

community had been so successful that their experience could be used as a model for

other communities facing a similar merger. They felt their community was singled out

among all the parishes of the diocese because of the "or sold" parenthetical tag listed by

its name. The provocative proposal by the bishop galvanized the energy of the

participants of the 2001 deanery process.[77]

The event with the accompanying proposal for restructuring was framed as a

"discussion" among the lay and ordained participants and in consultation with not only

deaneries, but also the "Presbyteral Council and the Diocesan Pastoral Council." It is

"only a *proposal*, a place to begin our discussions" (emphasis original) which the bishop

hopes "will, in the end, provide the diocese with a plan that will best serve the faithful."

Some of the governing variables include the fact that "priests should not be expected to

celebrate more than four regular weekend Masses"; that the results of the 2001 process

was to provide "recommendations" that will be forwarded to the chancery; and that the

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[77] The process began with a letter addressed to pastors from the bishop dated in the fall of 2001 in which he requested pastors to invite two or three lay persons from each parish to attend deanery meetings to discuss future staffing of parishes. In the ensuing weeks, between three and four hundred parishioners from around the diocese participated in two deanery gatherings to discuss the bishop's proposal. Nowhere in the diocesan documents is the 1994 process mentioned. The central issue is described as meeting "staffing" needs, by which the bishop means priests, and "the need for to [sic] provide for the celebration of Sunday Mass." He emphasized that in the near future there will be a significant and "dramatic" disparity between new priests entering service and priests leaving active service. He explicitly excluded "related staffing issues" such as having lay parish administrators employed to staff parishes.

discussions are based around the restructuring proposal already on the table. Not to be

discussed: the priest shortage itself, vocations, lay administered parishes, or alternative

plans that include leaving viable parishes intact.

Fr. Charles invited comments on the proposal by group members, recording each

on an easel board. After both parish meetings he took the large sheets of paper and had

the parish secretary transcribe them with very little redaction. He then returned these to

group members prior to the first deanery meeting for feedback. The Response by the

members of the group from both All Saints and Calvary represents the primary text for

interpreting group complexity.[78] At the deanery meetings the group had several

opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings about the proposal and the content of

their written response. The gatherings were led by a trained diocesan facilitator whose

job was to mediate a conversation about the proposal. However, the poorly conceived

proposal had the unfortunate effect of pitting the interests of clergy against the interests

of parishioners; very often the facilitator lost his mediating role as many clergy and

parishioners took defensive stands on behalf of their own interests.

As the members of the group one by one advocated for parish interests, clergy

forcefully rejected their response as turf-protecting, short-sighted, and inconsiderate of

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[78] Appendix A includes study method, but it is worth repeating here that group texts are understood as epistemological artifacts that may contain arguments assembled from different orders of mental complexity. An important assumption is that the complexity of a given argument or assertion is not necessarily a reflection of the order of consciousness of the individual who made it. This assumption is grounded in Lonergan's assertion that differentiated knowers operate within different levels of complexity depending on the exigencies of the given cognitive contexts. Therefore, however likely it is that the complexity of the argument assembled reflects the complexity of the individual who assembled it, it also remains possible that a complex knower assembled a simple argument because the cognitive context was perceived to be common sense. This study looks at the different complexities of assembled arguments and compares these with group action – what the group *did* with what it came to know as revealed in the text. After an analysis of both is a group score determined. It is in the comparison of group scores across time that development can be observed.

the burdens pastors face. The group responded by proposing that priests from smaller, neighboring parishes, might want to assist priests with larger communities by agreeing to help with weekend liturgies, particularly if their help would forestall parish closure. This further provoked several among the clergy to flatly refuse to help other parishes by pointing out how much is already asked of them in their own communities. One study participant, Molly, left the meeting deeply troubled when she witnessed priests strongly defending against increasing their already overburdened workload. She made the following comments in a 2005 interview about the initiative.

> JD   In the 2001 deanery meetings, which in your words, in 'the running of the business,' something misfired.
> M   Big time.
> JD   What misfired?
> M   Well, first of all, I couldn't get over how selfish all those people were.
> JD   People as in?
> M   The priests. How selfish. I mean, they keep thinking that we as parishioners have to change or be willing to change. How about them? You know, hearing these grown men talk about, well, 'I get phone calls in the middle of the night.' Yeah, okay. You know, they signed up for this… This is what their calling was. And this is what comes with that calling. And if it means helping your fellow priests, that's what really startled me. My eyes were closed before I went into that. I thought that this group of guys, first of all, liked each other. I was very, very startled at the animosity between some of these men. I understand that you don't have to like everybody. But I guess, priests, jeepers, I was just awestruck at how they reacted to some of our suggestions as laypeople, you know, like helping out the priest in the next town over---
> JD   That does three Masses helping out the priest that does seven?
> M   Exactly. I was very, very troubled by that. You know, they want so much for us to change, and when I say 'us,' I mean parishioners. You know, that if we close a church, then, okay, we're closing a church. But what about you guys? You know, here I thought our parish priest being responsible for seven Masses, having a school, plus the funerals, the weddings, the day to day operations. And then I see another guy over there who's saying three Masses, just had a new rectory built, and was complaining about getting a call in the middle of the night from a drunk guy who was one of his parishioners. That really troubled me, you know?

> JD   It troubled you in the sense that ---
>
> M   It was like, do you even wanna be a priest?

The discovery that priests might not want to be priests, that they find their ministries overwhelming at times, that they might not be able or even interested in helping other priests, and might not welcome lay people offering suggestions about how to do their ministries, while very troubling to her, reveals a flawed dialogue process put to use in an institutional structure that is straining under the weight of inevitable, and in this case, irreconcilable conflict. She does not appear to take a perspective on her needs and interests, or hold them together with the needs of clergy simultaneously and internally and, further, relates the many variables, not to each other, but to herself.[79] The piece, however, underscores the fact that what the bishop proposed and how he structured the dialogue, directed the contentious attention of clergy and laity not to him, but onto each other. To use an overused metaphor, the relationship between sheep and shepherds was compromised by the ranch owner who kept demanding of his shepherds that they handle more and more flocks (more parishes) and demanding of the sheep that they be content with less nutritious pastures (fewer liturgies).

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[79] The interview protocol consisted of questions designed to get at participant's learning and was not structured as a subject-object interview. Therefore, the common sense, or second order structure that is apparent here remains a hypothesis, but it is not sufficient grounds for determining a score.

Group Complexity

The 2001 group's Response included three main themes: initial comments; a response to the bishop's proposal; and a counter proposal. In the initial comments, the group states "What really is the reason for even suggesting to sell All Saints? All Saints is a vibrant community with no debt, well-maintained facilities and an enthusiastic faith-filled people with 800 families."[80] The Response argues how damaging parish closure would be to the merged parishes and the broader community: All Saints houses all religious education for children and adults; it houses a rapidly growing Food Pantry that feeds three hundred families a month; and it houses the Children's Closet that offers free clothing, diapers, and furniture to families with infants and children. It then argues that since the merger "more ministries have emerged than previously existed" and that there "is a growing bond between the two parishes." Finally, the initial comments state, "A thorough and comprehensive educational program in the diocese should be undertaken for the purpose of exploring and understanding what it means to be 'church' and to be 'priest today.'"

The comment, "What really is the reason for even suggesting…" reflects the very un-redacted nature of this text. The comment may represent a second order externalizing of the conflict between the group and the diocese – not one between entities in relationship, but between two opposing points of view not able to be held together. At the same time it reflects the suspicion among some members of the group that the

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[80] The "800" family figure is the on-the-books figure. The actual figure was closer to 500 families in 2001.

bishop's proposal was a rebuke delivered to Fr. Charles who refused to reduce the number of Masses as requested by the bishop (from the seven All Saints and Calvary celebrated between them to four). This suggests third order taking responsibility for the pastor's experience; something he neither commented on nor corrected when it emerged. The group may also be holding the bishop responsible for their experience, also third order.

The catalogue of praise worthy things the parishes were doing does not demonstrate a recognition of the problem the diocese faced; while complaining that the bishop has not considered the parishes' needs and interests (to stay open) they do not seem to be holding together their own point of view and the point of view of the diocese. Are these assertions expressed on behalf of ongoing relationships within the parish or diocese (if so, then third order) or are they assertions embedded in needs themselves (if so, then second order)? However, the sense of connection between the two parishes, and the connection these have to the larger community – the relationship the parish has to the poor – suggest the presence of at least third order meaning making.

The final piece in the initial comment hints at fourth order – a vision forming program, but one that does not single out laity as worth exploring. If it is a call to re-examine parish restructuring out of a new vision of church and priest; one that subordinates authority (of bishops to simply close parishes) and relationships to its over-arching vision, then we see the presence of fourth order. In this case the pastor wanted a vision to guide the diocese in its conversation over parish restructuring, as he stated in the parish and deanery gatherings. However, his call for the construction of a new vision of

church and priest was framed as a direct confrontation of the hierarch who in his

understanding lacked such a vision. He picks this theme up again in the 2003 initiative.

The second part of the letter, the group's response to the bishop's proposal, is a

series of bullet points that, without the bullets, reads:

> The model of the proposal seems to indicate that there can be no parish without a priest. The model does not seem to recognize the empowerment of the faithful. The model doesn't recognize any other criteria, except that of hierarchical, for parish viability. Such as: Is it a stable community; is it a growing community; is it able to sustain itself financially; is it reaching out and meeting the needs of its own community members and those of the surrounding community? To the above we must give a resounding YES. There are many people and families depending upon the social outreach programs that are sustained and operated by the Roman Catholic Parishes of [city]. With the loss of All Saints there would be no place to offer these ministries.

The critique of the dioceses' "model" does not emerge out of a vision of church; there

are, however, clear relational values present. The response critiques the bishop for

considering only needs of priests and for not considering an empowered laity, and is

suggestive of a rupture in an implied relationship with the diocese (third order). At the

same time, while holding their own point of view (we're a viable parish), and

demonstrating an awareness of the diocese's point of view, they are not holding the two

points of view together. Rather they are speculating ("seems") about the possible model

the bishop must have used to shape his point of view (priest –centered, inconsiderate of

lay empowerment). They are inferring the bishop's "ideology" without apparent

awareness that they are not naming their own model; they name concrete actions a

"viable" community engages it but not the model it assumes. This includes both second

and third orders, but not likely fourth order consciousness.

The section also does not demonstrate an awareness of holding the interests of clergy (to not keep having more parishes assigned to them) and lay parishioners (to keep viable communities open) together at the same time. They do not see the diocese's proposal as an attempt to do this, even if inadequate; one which favored clergy needs over parishioner needs. The way this piece engages in conflict has the feel of second order: the hierarchy is wrong and we are viable – thus externalizing opposition. However, the criteria they list clearly demonstrate a capacity for mutuality; they see themselves in relationship with their own community and beyond. Again, second order is present, but third is as well.

In the final section of the group's Response is a counter proposal that defines what the group believes constitutes a viable parish, and comments on the 1996 merger. To the group, All Saints is a viable parish; it is "active, faith-filled," and "has no debts and its physical plants (Church building, Community Center, and Rectory) have been maintained in excellent condition," and it is meeting the needs of the parishes and the broader community. They ask, "Is this the kind of parish we should be thinking about closing?" Referencing the merger, the text reads:

> As requested by the diocese, we are successfully combining two parishes. Our combined commissions and one pastoral council work well together as well as one parish office. Not only have we managed to survive with one priest for two churches, if anything, we are more active than ever with Faith Formation, Adult Education, and Community Outreach. 1 + 1 = 3!

Given two communities that are working well together and given the viability of All Saints as a parish, they ask, "what is the problem? If the issue is long working hours and the number of weekend masses for one priest there may well be creative ways to resolve

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that." The group proposed making better use of retired priests, reducing the number of weekend liturgies, assigning a deacon or pastoral minister to assist the pastor.

The basic solution in the counter proposal "re-solutions" rather than reframes the problem. It does not demonstrate that the crafters understood their parish crisis as a local manifestation of a diocesan and national problem; nor does it recognize themselves as a part within a larger whole which is also struggling. It leaves out priest shortage as source of problem. It does not ask, "Why is there a shortage of priests; whose problem is it (the hierarchy's *and* lay parishioners who suffer community closure and bear the social and financial cost of reconfiguring parishes); and who is authorized to address it (the hierarchy *and* lay parishioners as they evolve self-authorizing capacities exercised together with ordained pastors similarly self-authored and on behalf of a more inclusive vision of church)?

The group's re-solutioning also leaves out re-posing the problem ("given the priest shortage, shouldn't we both continue the 1994 dialogue on parish restructuring and look at new ways to staff parishes including rethinking lay parish administrators and ordination policies"); and does not seriously acknowledge that there is, in fact, a real problem the diocese must face. They are self-focused, but also relationally wounded. There is little evidence of a strong fourth order presence in the group. For example, their counter proposal is not grounded in a vision of parish/church that understands parishioners as a part within a recognized whole, nor does their complaint seem to arise from a feeling that the bishop's proposal violated internally generated standards grounded in self-authorship. Overall, the document never challenges the right of the hierarchy to

lead, nor do the authors set themselves up as competing authorities. Rather, the document attempts to convince the hierarchy to lead differently so that its followers – the crafters of this document – would be less conflicted in their following.

What is the group unable to take a broader perspective on (subject)? While recognizing the unfairness to lay parishioners of closing viable parishes simply because there is a shortage of priests, it does not recognize the unfairness to priests of multiplying parishes they are asked to pastor, and that there is a problem the diocese must face. It bequeaths to the hierarchy the right to determine their leaders while at the same time demanding that a scarcity of ordained leaders not become an issue detrimental to the sustainability of their parish. What can some members of the group take a perspective on (object)? Some take a perspective on the needs and interests of their own parishes even as they have a limited perspective on the needs and interests of the clergy or diocese. Because the group takes a perspective on its needs and interests it suggests a base of third order. That is, this feature of the document is not subject to needs and interests, as the earlier section appears to be, but to relationships within the Church.

Fourth order is minimally present in this proposal except for one bullet at the top and the final paragraph (but only if it represents a vision of how to proceed with parish restructuring – in this case, it simply calls for deliberation on solutions, not problem posing and vision generating); there is strong evidence of second order, but alongside the increasing hegemony of a third order constituency. I score the group reflected in the document as 3/2(4): a three base, strong presence of two, but less than three; and a weak presence of four – too weak to move the group to challenge the way the diocese has

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framed the problem or to get behind a vision-generating project to redefine

parish/laity/hierarchy/clergy, etc. as a framework for evaluating diocesan proposals and

for re-posing the problem the diocese and parishes face.
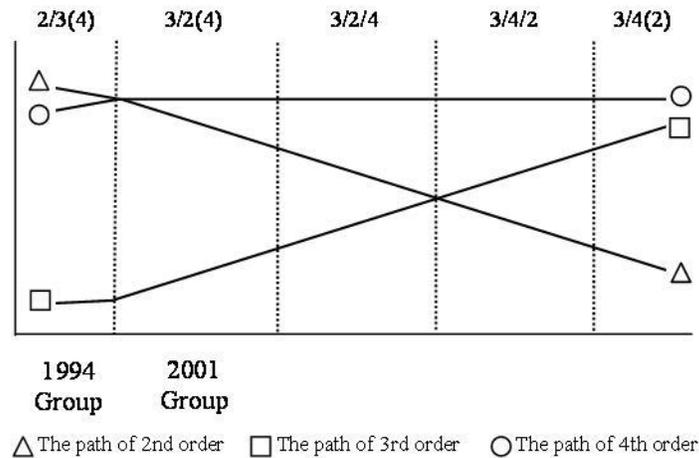
Figure 6.2: 2001 Parish Group Development

Dialectic: Curriculum and Group Complexity

Here, as with the 1994 process, the diocese created a purely descriptive context in

which to engage in a dialogue.   It required no greater complexity than second order

consciousness in order to fulfill its exigence. However, the 2001 group, much more than

the 1994 group, stepped out of this context by in its critique of what it saw as a solution

that took into consideration the interests of priests but not the interests of parishioners;

and at its hint that a vision of church and priest should guide the conversation. However,

the group lacked an organized set of values because it was not guided by a coherent and

rigorous vision.

There was no talk, as there was in 1994, of the fear of losing regular Eucharist; the issue was the baffling proposal to close or sell a healthy viable parish, contradicting the goals of the 1994 initiative, and in a felt violation of the goals of the 1996 merger. In responding to the diocesan rhetoric of the priority of universal church over the diocesan church, and the diocese over the local parish, one respondent, Clair, made the following comments in a 2004 interview about the 2001 initiative. In it, she powerfully articulates the value of community as a measure of health in contrast to availability of leaders.

> To be cavalier about that and say, we're all one church anyway, and it doesn't matter, that's not the point. The point is, this parish is working. And it doesn't necessarily work the same way as [a neighboring Catholic church] might work or even the same way Calvary might work, as close as these two communities have become, because they have their own identity. They have their own community. They're still welcoming to strangers who might be here visiting, and that's great. But they still do day to day stuff that's important to the church, that's important to the world that we live in, just as the members of the church have done for 2,000 years. Why would someone wanna screw that up? Simply having somebody to say Mass, is that important? Of course it is. Is that the only thing that's important? No, it's not. And it's not simply because the brick and mortar that's here is so vitally important. It's the community that's here is working. And if it stops working in any of those ways so that it then becomes more of a burden than a joy and a celebration and a witness to our faith, that's when you should look at closing it, not because you're short of staff.

The 2001 group came to the awareness that to allow the hierarchy to "call all the shots" could cost them one of their parishes. Rule following and role taking would not necessarily keep their parish open. The fact that All Saints was proposed for closure created a powerful disorienting dilemma (Mezirow 1991) for the members of the group. They were loyal Catholics who loved their Church, valued their pastor, and respected the hierarchy but faced, perhaps for the first time, the possibility that their loyalty and devotion had little or no correlation to how the hierarchy would treat them. While

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arguing that the hierarchy was not "playing by the rules," and voicing that at the deanery gatherings, the outrage many felt was more about the damage the proposal did to the diocese-parish relationship and would do, if implemented, to the parish community. Similarly, the concern of the group was less about what the hierarchy could do to them if they adopted a confrontational stance (which they did) than it was about what they perceived as a breech in an implied relationship between parish and diocese and between laity and bishop. They became confrontational, but in service to reestablishing the relationship damaged by the proposal.

To summarize and conclude, why the structure and behavior of the group is not grounded in ideology, or self-authorship, because the group had no internal standard of what makes a viable community, what governs the relationship between parish and diocese or laity and bishop, etc. Without a vision to guide them their confrontational efforts were not about raising consciousness within the Church about the vulnerability of parishes and the voicelessness of laity, but about reaffirming mutuality through the attempt to ground parish restructuring issues in the implied relationship that exists between parish and diocese, lay parishioners and bishop; and in reauthorizing the hierarchy with the trust and authority the group assumed it to have. That is, the group's confrontational stance was motivated by their disillusionment, which they assumed was temporary, about hierarchical authorities who had let them down. They stood up to representatives of the diocese and advocates for the diocesan proposal at both deanery gatherings (advocates among the clergy for parish restructuring – no lay person spoke as an advocate for parish consolidation or closure) not because that proposal violated their

own vision of how things ought to be (fourth order), but on behalf of reestablishing a felt breech in their relationship with the bishop and diocese.

The structural evidence from the 2001 documents for the dominance of third order logic is supported by the behavioral evidence; after the close of the process, the group did not protest its own suspension or insist on (or even ask for) follow up meetings to discuss their options or to turn their complaints into an ecclesial vision that could strategically guide future action. The motivation that under-girds this worked toward rebalancing a tottering relationship. Once they vented, and once the diocese dropped its proposal, the group returned to status quo. An important piece here is the fact that the group's re-solutioning did not challenge the legitimacy of a structure of governance that a) presumed to close parishes without prior consultation with parishes; and b) invited parishioners, as they did in 1994, to decide about closings and restructurings of their communities without offering any education about their canonical rights as parishioners (Coridan, 1997), about the history of Catholicism in the United States; and without providing a comprehensive vision of lay ministry in a context of priest shortages. Therefore, both the documents and actions of the group suggests the score of 3/2(4).

<u>*The 2002 Listening Sessions*</u>

Group Experience and Understanding

The 2002 listening sessions were gathered in response to the priest sexual abuse crisis. They had a hard time getting off the ground, primarily because Fr. Charles did not support the idea and initially resisted opening up a space for such an event. As the priest sexual abuse scandal continued to make headlines, many people petitioned the pastor to convene listening sessions so that people could at least talk about it and allow a forum for possible victims to come forward. Fr. Charles eventually asked Arthur, one of the research participants of this study, if he would facilitate listening sessions, to which he agreed, and a notice was put in the bulletin announcing the date, time, and location of the gathering. Approximately forty people attended the first session. The pastor attended the first two sessions; he wore civilian clothes and spoke very little. Thereafter, he had no direct leadership in the process.

The 2002 Listening Sessions were attended by a very diverse group of parishioners – perhaps the most diverse I had personally witnessed in a Catholic parish. Most participants vented frustration and outrage at the hierarchical response to the crisis; some expressed concern that all priests would be painted with the same "priest-abuser" brush. The sessions included speculation about the source of the problem ("clericalism," "secrecy among the hierarchy," "homosexuality among the clergy," and "lax seminaries"). A consensus emerged that priest sexual abuse was a real problem, but a

lack of hierarchical accountability was a bigger problem. At the second session, the

group decided to write a letter to the bishop and a drafting committee was formed made

up of nine members. Everyone who attended the listening sessions was invited to submit

their own letter to the drafting committee. The pastor also agreed to receive drafts of the

letter from the committee.[81] I attended the two large listening sessions, but was not a

participant in the drafting committee's work of constructing the letter to the bishop.

Group Complexity

Four Letter Submissions

Content from four participant letters were used to construct the final draft. The

first two represent a common sense, descriptive understanding of the crisis consistent

with instrumental, second order knowing; the bishop was the supplier of needs, but

because of gays and the media the bishop is under siege and the people's needs are not

being met. Rules have been broken. Roles have become confused. Therefore, the

bishop needs to fix the problem by removing gays from the ranks of the clergy and

communicating with the people so that things could go back to the way they were.

The third letter attempts to preserve an idea of church that affirms unity through

hierarchical authority. Its author is uncomfortable with the parts of the body in conflict

but recognizes that some church leaders have victimized many children creating

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[81] From the record of emails, the pastor was sent various drafts but never commented on them through email (he did respond in person when approached by a member of the drafting committee about a draft sent to him, but his comments were not reported in the emails).

confusion in the body and fodder for the media; a fact made worse by a failure of the

hierarchy to communicate with the laity. The letter's primary argument is restoration not

change. It sees the church as a complicated set of relations that includes victims who

need healing, perpetrators who need prayers, laity that need direction, and hierarchy that

needs to unambiguously lead. The letter specifically cues the bishop toward this end in a

possible attempt to reinvest him with authority on behalf restoring wholeness to the body;

it suggests a mutuality consistent with third order consciousness. The author uses

military metaphors to pledge the laity's faithful obedience and loyalty to the bishop, but

pleads that he teach the people what they are to do so that they can share in his sacred

work of defending the church against enemies.

The fourth letter begins not with an address to the bishop, but with an apology to

victims whose stories were discounted or dismissed by many lay persons. It states, "We

repent of our own willingness to collude with those who made excuses for the evil you

suffered. We are deeply saddened by our role in your victimization." Concerned about

priest predators, it expresses outrage at bishop who prolonged their careers.

> Bishops have proven by their actions that, in the hierarchy of values, their own
> personal image ranks above the most vulnerable members of our community.
> They have generated a far greater scandal, the scandal that our chief
> representatives of Christ are operating with a defective moral compass.

The letter identifies systemic sources for the crisis in a hierarchy that does not listen to

those beneath it "in the long chain of command"; in an insensitive, centralized

bureaucracy that ignores the experience of local communities; and in a church that has no

institutional structures that ensure that the voices of parishioners and parishes can be

heard. It seeks meaningful dialogue between the different parts of the body on behalf of

the health of the whole. It articulates an ideology of church that organizes values of

communal health and individual safety, lay voice, and communication through

representation. Unlike the previous letter, it does not embed itself in a relational ideation

of church. It is not defined by relationships, but takes a perspective on them. This letter

suggests a value generating mental structure that is neither embedded in external

authority nor in relationships; it is able to take a perspective on both and suggests fourth

order mental complexity. However, its highly critical tone suggests an anti-

authoritarianism that was as interested in righteous condemnation as in constructive

critique and reconstructive analysis.

2002 Group's Final Draft

The final draft was not the best of what everyone hoped, but the least offensive to

the drafting committee members. Theresa describes the final version as follows:

> What we went through, as I recall, crafting that letter, was everyone in the group
> wanted their own letter in the way they would like it, and that it was passed
> around to all of us to read what each of us had to say. And then from all the
> letters, we either selected or rejected certain format. As I recall, one letter was so
> wishy washy that you could hardly understand what the letter was stating or
> requesting. What we had to do then was to craft a letter that was very
> straightforward, almost businesslike, and that's what a lot of parishioners rejected
> was our business format that we presented. And the only reason we did that was
> that after taking everything out of all the contributions, eliminating everything
> that we didn't like as a group, and assuming everything that we did like as a
> group, it became a letter by a committee

The final listening session draft of the letter began:

> We are shamed and saddened by the many incidents of sexual abuse of our
> children and young people by priests and religious. We must absolutely know that
> you and your staff are doing everything possible to relieve the pain and suffering
> of the survivors of these terrible crimes. We must be certain that not one more
> child in our diocese shall be abused, nor one more perpetrator finds shelter. This
> is the result we expect and trust that you will provide.

We want to express our support for our pastor, Father Charles, and all the other priests and religious of our diocese who work daily to minister to the needs of the faithful during these troubling times

Characterizing their sentiments as "shamed" is possibly reflective of second or third orders consciousness.[82] The rest of the paragraph puts the onus on the bishop for attending to victims and protecting children. "This is the result we expect and trust you that you will provide." It does not put the burden on themselves. The scolding tone states that it "expects" the bishop to meet their needs and serve their interests, which suggests second order. The next paragraph, however, puts the priest sex abuse in a context bigger than the group's own needs and interest, which is beyond second order. It sees itself in a relationship with clergy and religious – at least third order. Further, the clergy and religious who exist to meet "the needs of the faithful," is likely not second order since it is able to take a perspective on their own needs as "the faithful." The paragraph begins with the announcement that the group supports its own clergy and acknowledges clergy who minister to the needs of the faithful, so there is a sense of complex, third order mutual reciprocity. It does not appear that the paragraph's expression of support for worthy authority figures comes from a recognition that the members of the group stand alongside of and in relationship with clergy and religious as equal partners; nor does it come from a standard or vision that subordinates and organizes

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[82] Does "shamed" mean that they feel embarrassed and exposed by the scandal? If so, then it is possibly second order. Does the presence of predators among clergy injure their theory of community, and bishops moving them into unsuspecting parishes injure their theory of relationships; do they feel guilt and this letter is an acknowledgement of their part in the scandal? If "injury" and "guilt," then possibly third order. Do they regret their own inactivity, silence and past disbelief of victims regarding sexual abuse by priests because such behaviors violated their own standards of care and protection of children? If "regret", then possibly fourth order.

these relationships. This suggests it is less than fourth order consciousness. This

paragraph is not second, is likely third, and not likely fourth.

The draft continues, and includes the following, fairly radical list of requests and

demands in three points, quoted in full:

> Most of the information we have received concerning your response to this crisis in our church has been through the media. We ask that you send us your written plan for dealing with the current crisis in the Diocese of [N]. We also ask that you regularly communicate with us on the progress being made.

> A group of elected lay representatives from each [diocesan] parish shall meet with you and other priests and religious on a regular and ongoing basis in regional and [diocesan] meetings to develop plans and recommendations for meeting the needs of the church in the 21st century.

> That you issue annual reports and financial statements for the Diocese of [N] showing details of all income and expenditures.

The most radical statement here is the movement from "we ask" discourse to "you shall"

discourse; from request to demand. What is requested is that the bishop articulates the

diocese's strategy for dealing with the priest sexual abuse crisis and a request for regular

and direct communication. What is demanded is a formal process that includes an

assembly of elected lay representatives from each parish that regularly meets with other

constituencies in the diocese.[83] Behind the request is a call for better management of the

diocese on the part of the bishop. Behind the demand is a call to change the governing

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[83] The group did not understand the diocesan Pastoral Council, which included lay and ordained Catholics, as fulfilling their demand. In the diocese of this study the members of the diocesan Pastoral Council, and the procedure for selecting membership, was unknown. Moreover, diocesan Pastoral Councils do not represent parishes, but the diocese as a whole. In this capacity, they represent the interests of the bishop. What the members of the 2002 group sought was, in Arthur's terms, a governing "mechanism" of elected representatives of parishes that met regularly in order to address the fact that the bishop currently had no formal way to hear face-to-face the insights, concerns, and feedback of parishioners. A demand such as this is hardly offensive to Canon Law since it frames lay parishioner assemblies as bodies that make plans and recommendations.

practices of the diocese in a way that would secure a voice for lay parishioners through an ecclesiastical mechanism through which that voice can be heard.[84] Had bishops had access to elected lay assemblies with which they had to meet on a regular basis, some drafters argued, the crisis might have been averted. This section suggests both third order and fourth order consciousness, the epistemological arguments of letters three and four – one restorationist (to restore what has been lost) and the other revisionist (to revise what is defective).

The letter was broadly circulated. This was a direct consequence of the group decision to seek input and signatures from other members of Calvary and All Saints.[85] The purpose was to invite comment into the letter and invite people who agreed with its content to sign any of the prepared sheets. This was done over a two week period at fourteen Masses. The outcome of the pulpit announcements and public reading of the letter was a favorable reception by the people, with 359 signatures.[86] Two parishioners at Calvary expressed strong objections to the letter to the pastor.[87] In the intervening two

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[84] One constituency in the group went beyond simply asking the bishop to be a better bishop by insisting on changes that would help the Church be a better Church. Without a formal process of lay representation in the running of the Church, they reasoned, simple requests for communication and accountability would not address the scope of the priests sexual abuse crisis, and would do little to prevent further abuse. This epistemological sentiment was influential enough to make it into the letter, but not strong enough to determine the group's response when the bishop rejected this notion by ignoring it (below).

[85] The group debated the issue at length and reviewed what other parishes had done. While other parishes in the deanery had written letters to the bishop, one the group reviewed contained the names of all Pastoral Council members but was signed only by the chair of the Council; none had received a response from the bishop. Theresa made the suggestion to invite parishioner signatures, made by others as well, and the group decided that it would take its final draft and put it in the bulletin as an insert and have members of the group make a prepared speech from the pulpit after Communion.

[86] The number might be higher, but I chose to count as one signature several that read: "Jane and John Doe", or "Mr and Mrs. Doe."

[87] Arthur met with one, an elderly woman and active participant in most adult faith events in the parish. He states his conversation with her in the following email sent to the 2002 group participants: "I met with V tonight to listen to her feedback about the letter to Bishop N. She was not happy with the tone of the letter. She also felt that it should not say 'We, the faithful' in the letter since she is part of the faithful but does not

weeks the local newspaper got a hold of the letter (which was inserted in over 1,000

bulletins), interviewed Arthur, and published a front page article entitled "Parishioners

ask for Bigger Post-Scandal Role: Hundreds concerned about the handling of the issue

sign a letter seeking financial data and meetings." The journalist queried the

spokesperson for the diocese as well as the Chancellor, and interviewed a moral

theologian in a regional Catholic college. The body of the unedited letter was published

along with the article.[88]

Dialectic: Curriculum and Group Complexity

Intra-group Dialectic

      Conflict within the group occurred during the drafting phase over the four letters.

The sources of conflict centered around the concerns over homosexual priests, and how

deferential or confrontational the letter should be. The author of the first letter kept up a

multiple email argument over the "problem" of gay priests, but what prevailed over other

members of the group were arguments that pedophilia and homosexuality are two

different and unrelated issues; that if the percentage of gays in the priesthood was as high

as asserted, purging gays would mean losing twelve to sixteen thousand priest in the

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agree with the letter and will not sign it. While I don't think we can make any major change to the letter at this late date I do think we can address her concern by changing the letter in two places to instead say 'We, the undersigned faithful.' I have attached the revised letter to this note for your review. What do you think? Should we make this small change?"

[88] This caused further difficulties for some parishioners. One, Mr. P., felt that the group members, in a grandstanding move, had sent the letter to the media and had intended to embarrass the bishop. He could not understand why the pastor did not prevent the letter from being drafted and sent out in the first place. Mr. P., whose brother and son are priests, wrote his feelings in a letter of protest to the pastor and decided to stop attending Mass at the parishes. As far as I know, he was the only parishioner to take this step. Fr. Charles shared Mr. P.'s letter with me as well, which contained a strong rebuke to Fr. Charles.

United States; and that the group should presume good faith on the part of gay priests who, together with heterosexuals, take a vow of celibacy. The group was also conflicted on how deferential their letter should be. It ultimately rejected the tone of both letters three and four as overly deferential and overly confrontational respectively, and decided on a business-like format that included arguments from each letter. While keeping both restorationist and revisionist arguments of letters three and four, the group letter was not framed within a vision of church; rather, it asserted a series of values and procedures that are necessary for restoring and changing the church.

Curriculum Complexity

In his letter of response, the bishop admitted that responding to parishioner letters was not something he generally entertained.[89] It is unclear how much the media story contributed to his decision to write. His rare willingness to entertain the 2002 group's concerns about protecting children, communication, and financial accountability indicates that he heard their requests. However, the bishop also communicated that the listening session participants had little if anything new to teach him in their letter; he implies that they might not have needed to write if they understood how a diocese operates.

The fact that the bishop did not address their demand that he meet with elected lay representatives as a strategy for future planning may indicate a discomfort with the idea of democracy in a hierarchical church; it may also indicate a rejection of the exercise of theoretical knowing or self authored on the part of the laity regarding the governing of the diocese. His refusal to acknowledge the group's demand may indicate a discomfort

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[89] See Appendix 2 for a more thorough description and analysis of the bishop's response.

with demonstrations of knowing that go beyond common sense problem solving and advice-giving. This hypothesis has further evidence in the bishop's reference to previous planning processes (unnamed). He stated that the "broader goal" in these were to "help people understand their proper roles," to "increase lay participation," and to encourage parishes to become "schools of prayer" and evangelization. His broader goals were not known to participants, something he implies were self-evident; but they likely governed *how* the diocese planned and structured the previous parish-diocese dialogues in 1994 and in 2001. The bishop's stated goal of increasing lay participation, based on the outcomes of the two previous initiatives, did not mean lay participation in decision making in the Church, but participation in the bishop's already formulated strategy. Because the planning processes in 1994 and 2001 which, as we saw above, were structured to anticipate a certain range of outcomes from the laity, and did not anticipate the generation of new knowledge, the bishop might have sought, not participation as understood by lay parishioners, but lay "collaborators."

Group Complexity

The 2002 group for the first time stepped out of the passive and reactive context of the two previous groups. Where earlier groups did not question the dialogical contexts created for them by the diocese, but simply reacted positively (1994) or negatively (2001) to them, this group acted with a greater degree of agency. This agency is reflected in their capacity first, to gather on their own, and second, to pose problems and ask questions. The 2002 group created a cognitive context that allowed them to pose two problems. First, children and parishes are vulnerable to abuse by bishops who shelter

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perpetrators from public scrutiny and then move them into parishes without disclosing past allegations of abuse. Second, parishioners have no sanctioned, non-deviant, way to make their voice heard by bishops. The guiding heuristic evolved from "what has happened?" (which led some to priest-blaming; i.e., homosexuals in the priesthood); to "how did this happen?" (which led others to bishop-blaming); and finally, to "why is this happening?" This latter heuristic moved some in the group to step out of a purely descriptive context by asking a question that sought the relations of things to each other. They experienced Lonergan's systematic exigence and looked, not for subject-centered answers that relate everything to the self (in this case, the needs and interests of their parish), but explanatory answers that relate all the known variables to each other and, moreover, seek the invariant in the variables. The variables – parishioner/pastor/bishop, victim/perpetrator/bishop, parish/diocese – were all governed by the actions of an absolute ecclesiastical monarch that *could not listen to parishioners* because there was no formal mechanism in which these voices could be expressed. The discovery was that calls for better communication, transparency, and accountability would amount to little without "elected lay representatives from each… parish [to] meet with [the bishop] and other priests and religious on a regular and ongoing basis." The invariant, then, is the mode of governing that grounds decision making. On the one hand is the monarchical episcopacy that is not used to multi-directional communication, is not familiar with multi-lateral decision making, and seemingly cannot tolerate jurisdiction for lay parishioners, even in strictly temporal affairs. Therefore decisions are made at the top without complete information because various orders in the church have not been heard

on their own terms. On the other hand is governance grounded in communication, full

participation, and genuine collaboration. The group was not exactly asking for

democratic governance since it saw lay assemblies as a way to plan and make

recommendations for the local church rather than as a decision making body. The group

saw no contradiction between a hierarchical church and the full participation of elected

lay representatives in the collaborative running of the diocese.

The group clearly articulated one set of values while assuming another set of

values that were not brought into conversation with each other. They espoused and

practiced values of care, communication, participation, and power sharing. All of these

values were explicitly articulated in their letter to the bishop – something they expected

him to practice – *and* were clearly practiced by the group as evidenced by their advocacy

for victims, by their use of multi-directional communication; by opening their work to the

critique and participation of the whole community; and by the exercise of mutual

power.[90] The assumed value was hierarchical governance; they assumed, without

arguing the point, that an assembly of elected representatives was compatible with a

hierarchically structured church. They also may have assumed that the bishop would

seriously entertain their demand. This is strong evidence that the group was not guided

by a vision capable, first of surfacing assumed values, and second, of organizing these

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[90] They advocated for victims by calling for transparent and accountable bishop aided by elected lay
assemblies. They communicated "up" to the pastor regarding various letter drafts; they cross-
communicated with each other as evidenced in the 208 pages of emails and in their gatherings; and the
communicated "outward" to the parish in publishing the letter and inviting signatures. The value of
participation was practiced in that the boundaries of the group never closed so that any parishioner who
wanted to could attend the listening sessions or the drafting sessions; and in the fact that they invited the
whole parish to participate in the letter signing. The value of power sharing is exhibited in the soft
leadership of Arthur and the leadership of the whole group which exercised mutual power (Torbert, 2004)
in constructing a conversation that allowed all voices to be heard, in the drafting of the letter, and by
remaining open to suggestion to change the letter.

conflicting values into a coherent case for democratic participation in a hierarchical church. Without such a vision of church, their value-grounded case was easy to dismiss because it allowed the bishop to pick which of the disparate values he would respond to.

The bishop's response ignored their request for a lay assembly but instead invited parishioners to meet with his "four member team with expertise in the various areas of your concern who would be available to sit with you, if you so desire, for an informational session." The group did not protest, or even discuss further, the refusal of the bishop to address their call for a lay assembly. Nor did the group notice that the dialogical listening they called for from the bishop was responded to by his proposal for an "information session." When the group agreed to meet with the four panel team, much of the meeting consisted of their listening to chancery officials repeat the lines of argument in the bishop's response: that they are already doing correctly what the group critiqued; that victims by and large appreciate they way the diocese has handled their cases; and that the laity are represented on the diocesan Pastoral Council, Finance Council and Public Policy Committee.

Within the 2002 group were second, third, and fourth order constituencies. It was more complex than the 2001 group in that it self-organized, raised new questions, and posed its own set of problems. Second order, present in both groups, was a less influential presence in 2002 as evidenced by the group's refusal to blame homosexuals; fourth order was clearly present and, unlike the 2001 group, was influential by persuading the group to retain at least a partially confrontational stance, and to call for lay assemblies. But fourth order was not determinative; its capacity to vision was

unsuccessful in drawing others into its orbit, perhaps because its ideology was perceived as coming at the price of adopting an anti-authoritarian stance. When the bishop ignored the call for lay assemblies the group as a whole did not object; when he offered to have the group meet with his four panel team, many in the group saw it as a concession and a victory.

I score this group as 3/2/4: third order is the base; second order is subdominant, but fourth order is also strong, only less so than second order. Thus, in terms of numerical presence, it is likely that between the two groups (2001 and 2002), third order is maintaining its hegemony, second order is strong, but on the decline, and fourth order is rising. That is, second order is evolving into third order which is also evolving into fourth; as third "loses" numbers to a fourth order constituency, it "gains" from an evolving second order constituency, thus maintaining its hegemonic balance. Agency and communion are held in balance but, because third is hegemonic, communion was the base out of which the group enacted its knowledge production and decisional responses. Since the bishop in a rare move responded to their letter, and since he agreed to have the group meet with his team, the bishop had done all that he needed to do in order to be reinvested with authority by a third order base eager to do so. The sense-making that third order does – what constitutes its understanding of being/reality/truth – made sense again. For second order, its notion of reality – what works – was also reestablished by the fact that its demand for a response from the bishop "worked" (he responded), as did the bishop's assertion that he is already doing what is necessary to protect children and

attend to victims – he who makes the rules is also, for this constituency, credibly

following them.
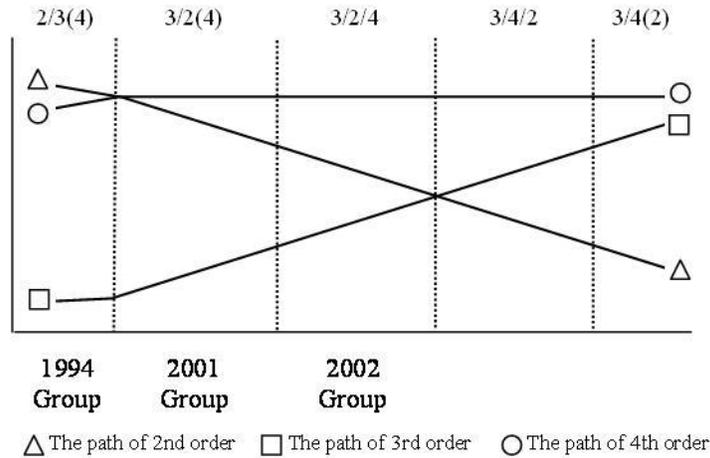
Figure 6.3: 2002 Parish Group Development

2003 Group: Visioning with the Pastor

Group Experience and Understanding

At a diocesan wide gathering of priests in a resort town in the late spring of 2003

the bishop gave a speech calling on priests to begin formulating a vision for the diocese

for the next five to ten years. The context, like the 2001 Deanery process and the 1994

Vision 2000, was the consequences of the priest shortage and the challenges this

presented to staffing parishes with priests. What was new was that for the first time the

diocese intended to engage in this conversation through the construction of a new vision.

It was a visioning process, however, that the bishop wanted only ordained members of

the church to participate in. Theresa commented on the fact that lay parishioners were

excluded.

> I thought it was rather shortsighted on the part of the diocese not to have asked
> that other parishes contribute to responding to the letter because I thought that if
> these huge changes are about to occur, if they want them to occur peacefully and
> cooperatively, the only way they're going to accomplish that is by having the laity
> educated and to feel as though they've participated in these decisions, and that
> they understand the need for the changes.

Trying to understand why the diocese would want a "comprehensive" vision

without getting input from lay parishioners, I ask Arthur:

> JD   Could it have been that the bishop was saying, 'okay, we've got input from
> the laypeople in the 1994 [process] and in the 2001 Deanery meetings. Now
> we want input just from the priests.' Do you think that that could have been
> the reasoning?
>
> A   Could have been, sure. Wrong way to do it, but could have been.
>
> JD   Why is it wrong?
>
> A   Because they make up one percent of the church, and we make up 99% of
> the church. And they are shrinking, and we are growing. Who the heck do
> they think they are to try to hold on to all the control? --- It doesn't make
> any [sense]. They're going to fail if they do that. The only way the Catholic
> Church will succeed at the local level and continue to be able to minister to
> its people is if they involve the laity much more than they do today.
>
> JD   Okay.
>
> A   And, and by involve, I mean the laity has to be involved in decision making
> and governance.

By decision making Arthur is not arguing for participation in an educative experience

initiated by the hierarchy to bring lay people up to speed about the priest shortage, a fact

that necessitates restructuring parishes. Rather, decision making means having lay

jurisdiction over particular competencies within the Church. The significance of this, according to Arthur, is the very success of the Church depends on a redistribution of "control" in a way that includes the 99%. Hierarchs are going to fail at the local level where the 99% gather unless they "involve the laity"; without such involvement, the 1% will "not be able to minister to its people." Arthur's logic might be: you cannot minister to people you are at the same time excluding from dialogue *and* governance.

Clair comments on the frustration many participants felt about whether their input would matter to the diocese:

> C   I remember that in 2003 when we were here, I remember Molly who probably [is] one of the most positive, a person who would give the benefit of the doubt to just about anybody ever. I mean, she's just such a sweet person. I remember her sitting here very frustrated saying, 'this feels like we're right back we started,' and 'here we go again.'
>
> JD   And she was involved also in the 2001 process.
>
> C   Yes. And that comment coming from a person who might tend to be negative, eh. But that coming from someone like Molly I think spoke volumes. I think she's someone that takes a lot to frustrate. It takes a lot to get angry, and by golly, they succeeded, you know. They worked at it, and they finally got it right. And, you know, when asked to participate, I try to do that. And I was willing to do it, but the whole time I was doing it, in the back of my mind was, 'we will do this, and it will go nowhere because nobody's really paying attention to what we're saying.'

In the 2003 initiative the group was re-gathered by Fr. Charles and given the task of formulating with him a vision for the diocese. His questions were the same ones raised in the 2001 initiative which he framed as, "What does it mean to be priest and what does it mean to be church?" Though frontloading the process with his own questions, he nevertheless insisted on participants providing their own responses. When one participant stated that she was simply happy to be invited at all and really wanted to hear

what Father Charles had to say, that she was putting on her "learner hat," Fr Charles

responded by saying that she and everyone was invited because he believed they were

visionary thinkers and that he expected her "teaching" input and feedback. The

conversation was limited however by the pastor's own view of the issues. The two

questions he framed the conversation around omitted "what it means to be laity" thus

culturing the group within a context heavily biased toward a priest-centered model of

church, his rhetoric of participation notwithstanding. By his two questions it appears that

he did not think the laity were a constituency alongside clergy and religious, but could be

subsumed under the question of what it means to be Church whereas priests could not be

so subsumed and needed special consideration. During the planning phase, and again

after the first session, I proposed several times asking the question, "what does it mean to

be laity?" While arguing that the laity is included in his initial questions, he soon agreed

to include them in the visioning project and added another week to the gatherings to

address the question.

Group Complexity

The fruit of these sessions was to revision three orders of the local Church;

bishop, priest, and lay parishioners. The priest is a "co-worker with the Bishop,

collaborator with the laity… he is gifted but does not have every gift and thus invites

others to share their gifts with the building up of the community of God." Catholics are

"baptized and confirmed Christians who have a duty and a right to gather, discuss and

discern issues that pertain to the church and their role in the church." The Church needs

to "move from a priest- centered parish to a community-centered parish" and can be

aided in this by calling "a diocesan synod preceded by parish, cluster or deanery

gatherings to help shape a possible agenda"; a process that acknowledges the

"hierarchical Church" but which has in place "formal structures" for sustained adult

conversation that is bishop-to-laity, priests-to-parishioner and parish-to-parish and parish

to diocese.

The 2003 Letter

The letter the group constructed consisted of three paragraphs detailing what it

meant to be church, priest, and laity. It was followed by a bulleted summary of what they

envisioned was the future of the church. The first question, what it means to be church,

reads:

> 'We' are church and it is important that we become aware that our baptismal call
> is both entitlement and empowerment to ministry. 'We' are a welcoming
> community of believers who celebrate the good news of Christ through prayer and
> liturgy and by caring and loving service to each other and all of God's creation.
> The center of authority is the Holy Spirit diffused through the people of God who
> are the preservers of the great truths of the Creed. 'We' are constantly renewed
> by the assembly gathered for the celebration of the Eucharist and seriously
> commit ourselves to be a people on a mission.

This paragraph clearly articulates values of agency and communion. The people are

situated in a relational context of mutuality that includes caring for others in the

community and for all of creation. The people are also situated in an empowered, agental

context where immersion in the community must be enacted in ministry (it faces inward)

and mission (it faces the world). The "center of authority" is not located in revered

leaders or in an institutional model of church, but in the power of the Holy Spirit whose

presence permeates the people of God on behalf of preserving Catholic faith, enlivening

communal celebrations, and sending forth its renewed members into the world. Its

communal ethic is primarily ethno-centric attending to a specifically Catholic

community; its agental ethic is primarily antro-centric. Its expression of care for creation

may indicate an eco-ethic that is both communal and agental, but it remained an

undeveloped aside.

> The next paragraph attends to what it means to be priest, and reads as follows:
>
> What does it mean to be Priest in today's Church? He is a co-worker with the Bishop, collaborator with the laity, liturgical and spiritual leader of the faith community and is presider at the Eucharist. He is a shepherd, general, servant, loves being a priest and invites and empowers the lay people to take rightful ownership of their own faith and of their faith community. He is one who breaks open the Word and tries to live the Gospel in his daily life. He realizes that he is gifted but does not have every gift and thus invites others to share their gifts with the building up of the community of God.

This paragraph describes the role and responsibility of a priest-pastor in terms radically

different from those articulated in the 1994 process. He is the clear leader of the

community in that he gathers the people and presides at liturgy. His leadership is

characterized as one of integrity, collaboration, care, and service on behalf of

empowering lay parishioners to take ownership of both their faith and their community.

"Building up the community" is accomplished not through rules and roles but through

"gifts" that are possessed by the pastor and by the whole community. His "role" is not

described in functional terms (1994) but in relational terms; the "rule" he is to follow is to

seek out and invite others to share their gifts for the life of the community. By their use

of the metaphors of shepherd, general, and servant, the group intended to define the

pastor's responsibilities of pastoral care (a shepherd who ministers to and guides the

people), staff management (a general who delegates and holds accountable), and service

to the whole parish, especially the poor and oppressed (servant).

Finally, the paragraph on the laity reads:

> What is the role of the laity in the Church today? A continuously converting
> people who are chosen to share in the priestly, prophetic and kingly mission of
> Christ in the church and in the world. They are baptized and confirmed Christians
> who have a duty and a right to gather, discuss and discern issues that pertain to
> the church and their role in the church. We are called to be a disciple and an
> apostle and to continue to grow as an adult in the church. We can "do" and "be"
> whatever is allowed and needed. As we live our Christian lives we cherish and
> foster the gifts of all while at the same time using our own gifts to serve the
> community of faith.

This third paragraph on what it means to be "laity" also expresses clear agental

and communal values. The value of adult growth, of expressing gifts, and the value of

the right of assembly are suggestive of agency. The expressing, "continuously converting

people" does not mean proselytizing, but individual and community growth; it is a value

of personal and social development occurring in the context of faith communities. The

laity are called (disciple) and sent (apostle);[91] they are called to be informed and formed

in community (communion) and, having experienced transformation, they are sent out

into the world (agency). The value of sharing in the ministry of the church, and its notion

that lay identity and mission, suggest possible embeddedness in authority (what is

allowed) and exigency (what is needed), and suggests further that for this group the laity

are not *self*-determined.

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[91] These were key themes in Fr. Charles' teaching throughout his tenure at All Saints and Calvary.

Dialectic: Vision Construction and Group Complexity

With the pastor, Fr. Charles, the 2003 group attempted the construction of a vision to inform the diocese in its own visioning process. However, the vision was not acted upon by the group itself which may indicate that it had no organizing power. Why this might be the case may have to do with the developmental level of the group; it may not have been able to generate a powerful vision. What the group did instead, was assemble a collection of values about church, priesthood, and laity through intragroup dialogue. The vision it constructed was therefore not transformative for the group and its members. There are practical and explanatory reasons for this. The pastor framed the work of the group as one of participation in *his* responsibility to submit a vision to the chancery. While *they* co-constructed the vision, it remained his vision. Second, the group assembled a considerable collection of values under the rubrics of church, priest, and laity, but did not organize these very different values into a coherent and rigorous visional narrative; therefore the epistemological ground suggested by the new vision was not stable and supportable. A third reason may have to do with the fact that there was no follow up by the pastor to these meetings except to send the group members copies of the letter by a chancery official acknowledging receipt of the group's letter. The group was not re-gathered to critique the diocese's response, to further engage the three questions, or plan for future action. Fourth, the work of the group was not shared with other governing or ministerial bodies, nor was the parish informed through bulletins or pulpit announcements. This prevented the members from taking a leadership role in the parish

through the many other groups they were members of and engaging the parish in this important conversation. It is further evidence that the pastor gathered these parishioners, many of whom were participants in previous groups studied here,[92] not to form and transform the consciousness of the parish, but to inform the debate among clergy and hierarchy. Finally, the group gatherings did not have a religious education component. Lacking this, the group was not able to put their own insights into conversation with scholarly sources to engage them and be engaged by them.

The chief reason why the group did not enact its own vision, however, may have less to do with practical reasons than with explanatory, epistemological reasons; it may have more to do with the fact that fourth order had yet to replace second order for sub-dominance. The *agental* quality of the group was still instrumentalist because it (agency) was dominated by the second order constituency. Third order was hegemonic; therefore communion provided a powerful source of energy for the group. However, because agency and communion are theoretically held in balance in complex groups, the agental energy would be expended either instrumentally or ideologically. As second order was subdominant, agency was expressed instrumentally in the group. Thus, when the visioning work was complete and it came time to *do* something with the vision, the group simply sent it off and that was that. The agental relationship between second and fourth was such that the weaker fourth order constituency was not convincing; it was not able to make itself felt in the *enactment* of the group's "proto-vision." Third order may have appreciated the fact that the pastor shared his visioning task with them; once the visioning

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[92] Seven members of the 2003 group were participants in the 2001 group.

task was complete, it was not their job to do anything more except wait on the pastor.

Their very participation might have been experienced as a powerful affirmation of who

they were as interpersonal knowers. I score this group the same as the 2002 group: 3/2/4.
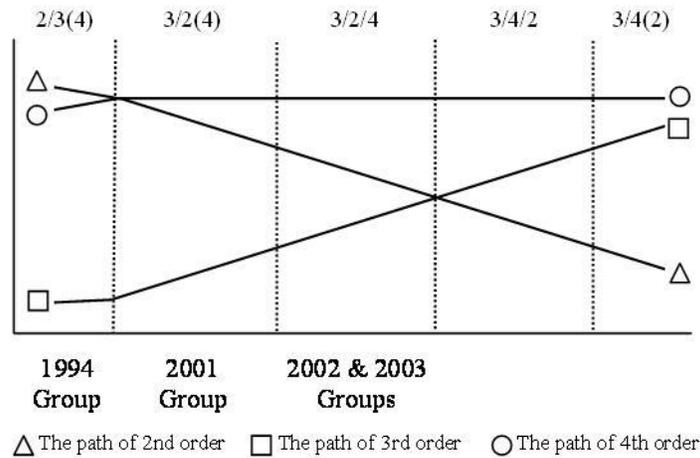

Figure 6.4: 2003 Parish Group Development

2004 Lay Collaborative Inquiry Group

The 2004 group more than previous groups acted out the learning it engaged in;

what it *did* was fairly consistent with what it claimed to know. That is, the structure of

knowing suggested by what it said was consistent with the structure of knowing

suggested by what it did. This suggests a more complex pattern of knowing than in

previous groups; one that may be connected to the strong emphasis placed on religious

education. Of the events that occurred in the parish or in the diocese from 1994-2003,

none offered education on a theology of the laity or parish, or on the canonical and

theological relationship between parish and diocese.[93] Whatever the reason, at the very

least it lessened participants' grasp of the issues and weakened any argument they would

put forth.

Group Experience and Understanding

Work began on the groups in early summer 2004 through several meetings

between myself and the pastor, the Faith Formation Commission chair, and the chair of

the Pastoral Council in order to discuss curriculum, group design, and the potential

usefulness of action research as a strategy for bringing the community into an intentional

conversation with the diocese.[94] The pastor and I worked out an initial reading list that

emphasized the contemporary experience of being a lay Catholic. We also looked at

sources from theology and official church documents that highlighted the roles and

responsibilities of the laity in carrying out the ministry and mission of the church.[95] We

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[93] For example, none of the events offered instruction on the canonical relationship between the parish and diocese, between the bishop and the people, between the priest/pastor and lay parishioner, etc. There was no short course on, "The History of the American Catholic Church," on "Lay Movements," "Lay Governance," or even on "Lay Ministry and Leadership." The parish and the diocese could both point to adult programs and even certificate programs for Lay Ministry (our parish, for example, was the only parish in the diocese whose own in-house leadership training program could issue Lay Ministry Certificates upon completion, signed by the bishop).

[94] The Lay Collaborative Inquiry group, though designed in light of my studies at Boston College, were carried out not as a researcher but as an employee of the parishes. The theoretical sources that informed the group design were William Torbert's *Action Inquiry* (2004; I had just finished a doctoral seminar with Torbert in which we read, among other Action Research sources, the manuscript version of his yet-to-be published book), and Kegan/Lahey's *How the Way We Talk can Change the Way We Work* (2001).

[95] Included were the key diocesan documents which proposed a rationale for working toward a restructuring plan, which included a commentary by the bishop. We also agreed to study chapters II and IV of *Lumen Gentium* (People of God and Laity), *Christifideles Laici*, and selections from numerous recent publications intended for a general audience: Thomas Groome, *What Makes Us Catholic* (2004); Paul Lakeland, *The Liberation of the Laity* (2003); Donald Cozzens, *Sacred Silence*; Peter Steinfels, *A People Adrift*; Francis Sullivan, "St. Cyprian on the Role of the Laity in Decision-Making in the Early Church"

put together a flyer for the bulletin and the pastor made pulpit announcements at all the

Masses advertising an "Information Social." With the heading reading, "What Does it

Mean to be a Lay Catholic in Today's Church?" the flyer held out the prospect for

participants that they might find their faith challenged, and their voice heard. In the

middle of summer, after the Independence Day celebrations, we held the social. The

pastor gave a key-note address about the future of the Church and laity's role in that

future. I followed with a presentation about what the Church teaches about the laity, past

and present. I then gave a brief history of our community's past participation in diocese-

parish dialogues and the outcomes. Finally, I proposed "lay collaborative inquiry

groups" in which participants could study, discuss, reflect, argue, judge, and take

appropriate action. This would not be a "soup can" learning experience where parish and

diocesan educators often teach survey courses that detail the can's label, the history of

canning, and the can's nutritional content, but never hand over the can opener. People

leave these learning experiences feeling conflicted; they were made aware of their

hunger, but often leave feeling un-satiated. I emphasized that these were not "courses" or

"lectures" but participatory groups that would move from education, to knowledge

creation, and to action deemed appropriate by the group. We would become

knowledgeable of the "can" and its content, but we would also prepare the meal and eat;

(2004); Jane Regan, *Toward and Adult Church* (2002); Thomas Reese, "Impact of the Sexual Abuse Crisis" (2004). Finally, we read from a collection of statements made about the laity that I had put together from Vatican II and papal documents, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and Code of Canon Law.

acknowledging the gifts of God, fruit of the Earth and the work of human hands. Of

approximately forty participants, thirty two agreed to become part of the lay groups.[96]

During the course of the summer the 2004 group decided to write a letter to the

bishop and the Central Committee that was currently crafting a plan to implement a

restructuring scheme for the diocese. Through study and reflection the group members

came to the decision that it would ask the hierarchy questions that mattered to the group.

The question of the appropriateness of lay people to preemptively asking questions of the

bishop was difficult for some participants; reading the documents was perhaps as

persuasive and instructive as group dialogue.[97] The diocese, it was also pointed out, had

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[96] After the planning stage and initial social, two groups began (two different groups met on different nights for the convenience of the participants). In the first session we established group rules and format. Two of the more important rules turned out to be the two minute rule (no one speaks for more than two minutes), and the rule of advocacy over persuasion (that one can strongly advocate for their beliefs and positions, but not try to persuade others to those same beliefs and positions). The rules, I pointed out, could be revisited as needed. The general pattern of the group process consisted of five segments: initial gathering, presentation, small group reflection on the readings, re-gathering for general feedback, and close with "prayer partners." Opening prayer was assigned to a new person each week, after which the gathering consisted of checking in and offering feedback on the previous session. In the presentation portion I asked how the reading resonated with members' experience and invited general comments. Then I gave brief overviews of the text prior to small groups discussion.

[97] Especially instructive were: a. (CCC 900) "Since, like all the faithful, lay Christians are entrusted by God with the apostolate by virtue of their Baptism and Confirmation, they have the right and duty, individually or grouped in associations, to work so that the divine message of salvation may be known and accepted by all men throughout the earth. This duty is the more pressing when it is only through them that men can hear the Gospel and know Christ. Their activity in ecclesial communities is so necessary that, for the most part, the apostolate of the pastors cannot be fully effective without it."
b. (CCC 911) In the Church, "lay members of the Christian faithful can cooperate in the exercise of this power [of governance] in accord with the norm of law" (CIC 129.2). And so the Church provides for their presence at particular councils, diocesan synods, pastoral councils; the exercise of the pastoral care of a parish, collaboration in finance committees, and participation in ecclesiastical tribunals, etc.
c. Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 73: "Hence the active presence of the laity in the temporal realities takes on all its importance. One cannot, however, neglect or forget the other dimension: the laity can also feel themselves called, or be called, to work with their pastors in the service of the ecclesial community for its growth and life, by exercising a great variety of ministries according to the grace and charisms which the Lord is pleased to give them."
d. (*Lumen Gentium,* 37) "Let the spiritual shepherds recognize and promote the dignity as well as the responsibility of the laity in the Church. Let them willingly employ their prudent advice. Let them confidently assign duties to them in the service of the Church, allowing them freedom and room for action. Further, let them encourage lay people so that they may undertake tasks on their own initiative. Attentively in Christ, let them consider with fatherly love the projects, suggestions and desires proposed by the laity.

publicly stated that anyone with questions about the reconfiguration process should ask. The critical question that mattered to the participants was what constitutes a viable parish community in the criteria of the diocese? The groups spent a session on their own ideas (honoring its mission of evangelization and social ministry, stable parish population, serviceable debt, facilities in good repair) but came to the conclusion that what they did not know was whether the diocese had a different criteria of parish viability. Other concerns were questions of consultation – whether it would be two way, or one way, top down – and plans for training pastors, staff and parish communities for restructuring. A drafting committee was selected to put together a letter based on submissions they received as well as their own insights, stating the desire of the group to be part of the conversation of the diocese in matters of parish restructuring, giving a brief description and history of the groups, and crafting the three questions on viability, consultation and training.

Besides the event of the group itself, a major event occurred one month after the start of the sessions when Fr. Charles was placed on administrative leave pending an investigation by the diocese about his relationship with and support of a recently arrested sexual predator. A temporary administrator, the Vicar General of the diocese, was appointed to the parishes and made pulpit announcements at the Masses in the week the pastor was put on leave. He stated several times in his remarks that he would not be very visible in the parish because of his many responsibilities, and that "this is not my

_____

However, let the shepherds respectfully acknowledge that just freedom which belongs to everyone in this earthly city."

problem, this is your problem."[98] Five retired priests agreed to preside at the weekday

and weekend liturgies for the duration of the investigation. The bishop published a letter

that was inserted in the bulletin listing the allegations against the pastor, outlining the

investigation process, and appealing to persons who may have been victimized by the

sexual offender to come forward and report to law enforcement.

The group, as most parishioners, was deeply troubled by the circumstances of the

pastor's removal. Attendance at the gatherings increased. Since the perpetrator was

arrested and confessed to the sexual abuse of four minors, and since Fr. Charles knew of

his past abuse and, it was disclosed, had been approached by one of the perpetrator's

victims but did not help him or report the incident as required by the diocese, it was

difficult to condone his (Fr. Charles') decision to allow this man to live in the rectory.

Yet some did, noting that the pastor was only taking in a jobless, homeless sinner, as

would Jesus. Some also expressed anger at the bishop for including in his letter to the

parish that Fr. Charles had one allegation of inappropriate touch that occurred in 1985; an

allegation the diocese dismissed. Why, except to smear Fr. Charles, would the bishop

include an allegation he did not find credible, these group members asked? Others

expressed anger at the pastor for not letting at least the Pastoral Council and members of

the staff know that his new guest should be watched and should not be allowed in the

school or near children and youth. Finally, some strongly condemned the pastor, not

because his guest was unsupervised or because others did not know of his past, but for his

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[98] While he may have intended to praise the parishes for their capable leadership and their capacity to
handle a crisis such as this, many participants felt it was insensitive because, to them, it represented his
refusal to share in their struggles. Others heard in his comments permission to work within whatever
formal community-based channels remained in place.

allowing a known predator onto church property in the first place. These noted that their

pastor had engaged in the same behavior as had bishops in sheltering and supporting

priest-abusers and that the attention of the parish should now focus on whether there were

any victims at All Saints or Calvary.

After a lengthy period of discussion the group proposed crafting a second letter,

this time to the parish at large. Their intention was to repeat the facts as they understood

them about the case, and to reassure the parish that every ministry that was in place

before his removal would continue to function; and that there were persons and groups in

place ready to answer specific questions and refer potential abuse victims. The same

drafting committee was charged with putting together a letter to the parish based on

versions members of the group submitted as well as their own ideas.

Group Complexity

In addition to structural evidence in the two letters produced by the group, there

are important behavioral data prior to and after their drafting, more so than in previous

groups. Both of these allow one to make a strong case for group complexity and

dynamism and, when compared to the 2003 group, noticeable development as well.

When the two letters were crafted, a final summer session was scheduled in which all

groups gathered to edit and approve final drafts. A conversation ensued over whether or

not the group needed approval for the letters. The letter to the parish, it was quickly

decided, needed approval;[99] the group therefore decided to bring it to the Pastoral

Council, which had recently been scheduled for an emergency session because of the

current crisis, and accept whatever decision they came to. Seeking approval for the letter

to the bishop was another matter. The group decided that since the spokesperson for the

diocese had publicly stated that it was open to questions about the reconfiguration, that

that was all the permission they needed. The final, approved letter was therefore sent out

to the bishop and the diocesan Central Committee, signed by over thirty participants who

attended that session. The responsibility-taking by the group represents a significant

development from previous groups.

The Parish Letter

This letter cannot be analyzed in the same way the previous letters and documents

were because of its heavily redacted nature. Rather than construct a letter from many

drafts (as in the 2002 group), or piece together a document from collage of comments

taken from easel board sheets (as in the 2001 and 2003 groups) the 2004 drafting

committee took its cues from the conversations that occurred in the group in the wake of

the pastor's removal. However, the letter they produced to the parish community

includes fairly clear instrumental, ideational, and ideological patterns of knowing. That

is, it reveals the complexity of knowing likely present in the group in its articulation of

rules and roles, values of communion and agency, and in its institutional vision of a

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[99] The reasons for this were two fold. First, the group did not represent the parishes in an official capacity, and a letter signed by them might be confusing to parishioners; it might also create a worsening of the power confusion left in the wake of an absent pastor and absentee temporary administrator. Second, the groups decided that without some official sanction they had no right to access the parish database and use parish resources to carry out an action plan they came to on their own.

church functioning well in a crisis; *and* it appeals to the knowing of each of the constituencies.

The letter's instrumental knowing can be seen in how it describes the ecclesiastical rules and procedures involved in the pastor's removal and investigation:

> The intent of this letter is to be sure you are informed as to the current status of our Pastor… Father [Charles'] removal is an administrative action in order to facilitate further investigation by the diocese. This procedure is guided by the Church's Code of Canon Law and not by the civil law and is consistent with child protection safeguards established by the Diocese. It is important therefore not to equate 'temporary administrative leave' with 'guilt.' The investigation, which is being conducted by the diocese, is expected to last at least 60 days. Our parishes will temporarily be administered by [the Vicar General].

This makes clear the rules of the juridical process and situates them not only within Canon Law, but also within the new diocesan rules regarding priest misconduct mandated by the Dallas Charter. But it also reaffirms existing roles in the church: Fr. Charles is still the canonical pastor; his removal is for his own and the parish's protection which does not alter his role; the new temporary administrator is just that – his role is temporary and administrative (he is not the pastor). Moreover, the letter makes clear that the functioning of the parish would continue uninterrupted by this crisis (below): regular Eucharist, weddings, funerals, faith formation, and ongoing administration of its temporal affairs. Instrumental, descriptive knowers would be able to quickly recognize that their spiritual needs and interests would continue to be met.

The letter also includes ideational knowing in that it situates its purpose in an explanatory context of relating the variables to each other rather than to the self. The variables are the status of the pastor, the functioning of the parish, the nature of the diocesan juridical procedure, and the care of potential victims. All of these are related to

each other in service to a well functioning parish community able to weather this particular storm. The group in its letter wanted to convey to parishioners that the pastor's removal would not disrupt the liturgical and administrative functions of the parish. It states, "Be assured that [All Saints' and Calvary's] church operations, activities and events will continue as usual." Its opening paragraph states:

> The intent of this letter is to be sure you are informed as to the current status of our Pastor Fr. [Charles] and what impact his absence will have on our parishes. It is with a heavy heart we inform you [he] has been placed on a temporary administrative leave by [the] Bishop [who] conveyed his reasons in a letter, which you will find enclosed, to our church community.

The letter expresses an obvious, but restrained, affection for Fr. Charles who has not himself been accused of sexual misconduct, and whose removal "is an administrative action in order to facilitate further investigation by the diocese… It is important therefore not to equate 'temporary administrative leave' with 'guilt.'" Further, the letter's authors state, "We invite you to join us in prayer for swift and appropriate resolution of Father [Charles'] situation. We encourage any who want to express their personal sentiments to [him] to do so by sending cards and letters to the rectory."

Unlike previous letters and documents this letter takes a perspective not only on the parish's own challenges, but also on those faced by the diocese. It recognizes the painful reality for parishioners of having a pastor removed, but acknowledges the perceived diligence of the diocese in fulfilling the Dallas Charter. It states, "While the process at hand is unsettling, it speaks to the commitment of our Diocese to ensure the safety of our children and our entire church community." This represents a significant development from previous groups where much of the attention was parish/parishioner-

directed. The letter assembles values that are both agental and communal (how the investigation will arrive at a resolution that is presumably fair to the pastor, the parish, and to potential victims; how the *functioning* of the parish will continue because of its many *connections* within and without the parish).

Finally, in its address to the community the group that edited and approved this letter refused to take responsibility *for* Fr. Charles' actions preferring to let the investigation run its course rather than defend him or offer preemptive excuses for his choices; and it refused to take responsibility *from* the bishop in the exercise of his duty to investigate priest misconduct. Instead, the group was responsible *to* itself in that it took responsibility *for* a felt authority that derived from the experience of the group in its own learning about what it means to be a Catholic parishioner. Their decision to address the parish represents a benign claim to power made by the group in a context of power confusion. It also suggests an intuition that the stability of the community and its ability to maintain its many ministries might be called into question by other members of the community; an intuition that they themselves could address by presenting and disseminating valid knowledge of the current situation. While the group assumed a degree of power, they did not act on that power to the exclusion of other official bodies within the parishes (the group's decision to hand over their parish letter to the Pastoral Council to edit and make their own). This is suggestive of post-ideational knowing. But it is not self-consciously ideological because it assumes a group vision that has organized its many values.

The Letter to the Bishop: Intragroup Conflict

With regard to the second letter addressed to the bishop and the new diocesan committee for parish restructuring, the group decided that once they framed their questions and crafted and edited the letter, they had only themselves to consult on whether and when to send it. What they did not do was reason along the lines that their communication with the bishop had to be mediated by clergy (a message the hierarchy made clear by its past relations). This is a fairly clear example of a group fully owning what belonged to it (the right and duty to address their concerns about parish restructuring to the bishop) and not owning what belonged to others (how others might respond to their decision). Moreover, they kept separate the issues of parish restructuring and the removal of their pastor. That is, they did not let their concerns about the circumstances of the removal of their pastor intrude into their letter to the bishop about their parish restructuring questions.

Prior to the final summer session the only draft of the second letter the committee had was my own; no one else had sent in a draft. I included the three questions that were written on an easel board during the last group session. I also included a brief introduction about why the group was gathered taken from the informational flyer announcing the formation of the group, and from other bulletin advertisements used to promote parish adult educational events. The drafting committee submitted the letter as-is to the group along with the parish letter for editing. Members of the group reacted to what they perceived was a potentially offensive statement in a sentence that framed parish-based learning within the larger diocesan restructuring initiative then underway. I

wrote: "Members of our parishes are determined to be part of that conversation [the diocesan initiative] from the start rather than taking a wait-and-see approach. It is more responsible to pursue this rather than to react negatively to a plan whose formulation we did not participate in that could profoundly affect our faith community and our faith lives."[100] It is the second sentence that people reacted to; many argued that it should be struck from the draft. I pressed the group on why, explaining why I thought it expressed the desire to "hold our own feet to the fire" while at the same time reminding the bishop that doing so was an act of lay responsibility-taking, something the group had arrived at on its own. The group insisted that it be struck, naming the sentence's presumption that there would, in fact, be a negative reaction to the diocesan Central Committee's restructuring plan.

What is significant is how the group reconfigured its relation to me, its facilitator. It did not want to be over-determined by its leader. The group looked beyond its relationship with its immediate leader to its relationship with the diocese. It had begun to integrate authority rather than assume the authority of the leader. One might object to this analysis by pointing out (correctly) that as a lay person I did not wield the kind of authority the group would feel subject to or feel a compelling expectation from. However, the events that followed this exchange with the Vicar General (below) confirm the new meaning making ground the group stood upon.

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[100] The edited paragraph reads: "What does it mean to be a lay Catholic in today's Church? We Catholics of [city] have gathered over the summer in Lay Inquiry Groups to ask this question. These groups have gathered to prepare for the significant changes that will occur within the diocese during the next five years. We are meeting concurrently with the diocesan Central Committee that is constructing a plan to implement the rationale identified in 'A New Evangelization for the Diocese of [N].' Members of our parishes are determined to be part of that conversation from the start rather than taking a wait-and-see approach.

Dialectic: Vision and Group Complexity

Intergroup Conflict

      An emergency meeting of the Pastoral Council was called at the end of August.

In attendance were fifteen members of the Council, about twenty parishioners who

voluntarily showed up, and the temporary administrator. Eight members of the 2004

group were present, four on the Council itself. After a lengthy discussion of the crisis the

letters came up on the agenda. The letter to the parish was reviewed and the Council

decided that it would be good to get it into the hands of every member of the community.

They also decided that it would be better if it was signed by the Pastoral Council with a

post-script thanking the group for drafting it. The temporary administrator felt it would

be important to state at the beginning of the letter that it was approved by the Pastoral

Council and himself.

      When the letter to the bishop came up it was apparent that the temporary

administrator had not read it before hand.[101] After a summary read, he vehemently

rejected the letter, stating that it had not been run through the appropriate channels before

being sent off. He angrily argued that the letter created an "us and them" atmosphere,

and assumed that the bishop and his committee were not already asking the questions the

group raised. He asserted that it was insulting and offensive to both the committee and

the bishop. In a dramatic gesture, he crumpled the letter up and tossed it, striking a

member of the council, saying, "That's what I'd do if that letter was addressed to me."

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[101] The agenda was emailed by Arthur to each council member and the temporary administrator with the two letters attached

After venting in this disturbing manner, the council was momentarily silent. Then, one by one each group member including those not on the Pastoral Council calmly rebutted his charges: It is the opposite of "us and them" since it explicitly states that the groups want to be part of the diocesan conversation; it did not need approval since the diocese formally invited questions; the questions were sincere and emerged over the course of weeks of research, discussion, and deliberation; and whatever tone he heard in the letter, it was the response from a group that had a long and remembered history with the diocese that, in 2001, had proposed closing and selling All Saints after it had been successfully merged with Calvary. He dismissed the last point by stating that the community's response in 2001 was, "blown way out of proportion." He then repeated his charges.

It was a significant moment to witness group members listening to strong objections to their action, holding their ground in the presence of a figure of power not only in the parish, but also in the diocese, and publicly reaffirming the validity of their knowledge and the appropriateness of their actions. Here was a small community that moved from, "can we do anything about the vulnerability of our parish?" to, "is it okay to engage the bishops through inquiry?" to, "these are good questions and they are our questions" and to, "we expect the bishop to take our questions seriously by responding to them." They not only generated new knowledge, they also claimed that knowledge as their own. The fact that the group members present at the parish Pastoral Council did not retreat into a deferential attitude of docility when the temporary administrator violently rejected the tone and content of the letter to the bishop and the Central Committee is convincing evidence of ownership-taking. They did not take responsibility for how he

experienced their letter. Further, there was never a time at the council meeting or in the many sessions that gathered in the fall, that members of the group held me, the letter's original drafter, responsible for the administrator's outburst. The letter they edited and sent was *their* letter; its content was the product of their own learning. Standing on the knowledge that they had a responsibility to themselves to make their voice heard as lay parishioners, and that their decision to send the letter was right and timely, the group members present further demonstrated their unwillingness to relinquish that knowledge when an attempt was made by a most powerful figure to take it away from them. The group members did not accept his characterization of their communication; nor did they accept that perceived weaknesses in the letter somehow disqualified it from getting a sincere reading.

Three weeks from the sending of the letter the bishop sent a response directly to the group, a rare deviation from protocol since it did not go through the temporary administrator. He opened the letter the letter with, "Thank you for your reflections and questions that were transmitted to me on August 23rd… You are asking some very good questions." He went on to affirm that it was his intention to promote two-way consultation; that it was not his intention to close any parish or worship site, and that local communities would decide within clusters how they would continue to carry out their mission of evangelization. On the viability question, the bishop repeated that local communities within clusters would determine their own facilities' needs and make their own determinations about worship sites. The letter did not address the specific nature of

consultation.[102] The bishop stated that training was essential, but that there were no

finished proposals at this time. On the viability question, the bishop did not give the kind

of response the group was hoping for. This proved crucial for the next three meetings of

the 2004 group.

Intragroup Conflict

Because this group continued after the completion of its original mandate, there is

additional structural and behavioral evidence, unlike previous groups. Several group

members expressed relief that the bishop had responded positively to their letter, unlike

the temporary administrator. Many in the group, however, were bothered by the bishop's

letter, noting that he did not really answer their chief question; he did not tell them what a

viable community consisted of. But two members of the group, Arthur and Theresa saw

his response as a positive development, arguing that the bishop had, in effect, put their

own question back on them, and that it was their job to come up with a "plan of

viability." It was further proposed that doing this required that the community begin to

inquire into and tell its own story, its own history of faith.

Members who, after critiquing the bishop's letter, succeeded in persuading other

group members that the bishop's response was an opportunity to achieve what they

ultimately wanted is a dramatic example of a group evolving sufficiently to be able to

attend to and respond favorably to a fourth order evaluation. Arthur and Theresa were

able to prevail upon the group to move away from seeing the bishop's response as a

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[102] This raises many questions: What would lay input look like vis-à-vis the pastor? How would
disagreements between pastors and lay parishioners be worked through? If a "parish" with multiple
worship sites needs to close one of its sites, who decides, and according to what criteria?

vindication (relief that he did not share the temporary administrator's characterization), as a victory (they got a positive response from the bishop), or as a disappointment (he did not answer their key question). It was not a vindication, a victory, or necessarily disappointing; it was an important opportunity for the group and the parishes.

Their capacity to see the bishop's response as a chance to take greater charge of their own inquiry process proved decisive in advancing the project of the group. The group had initially asked an authority-bound question (expecting the bishop, the authority of the diocese, to tell them what makes them "real") and received a response that at least some took to be self-empowering. In other words, many in the group made a complaint, suggesting an expectation that the bishop was supposed to tell them who they were (that they were not *really* viable unless he shared their criteria of parish viability), but were challenged by two individuals to take a more independent, self-authoring stance. With this new way of understanding their context, the group decided it was necessary to begin the work of crafting their own parish narrative; they embarked on a project of defining themselves according to their own "criteria of viability," beyond what the bishop says. They called the new project, "Our Parish Story" which continued for two more months. The new pastor, however, who was appointed after the investigation of Fr. Charles resulted in his permanent removal, unilaterally and without attending the sessions disbanded the group.

Group Complexity, Dynamism, and Development

As stated above, the group not only generated new knowledge, it also claimed ownership of that knowledge. Knowledge production occurred in two essential ways.

First, simply reading Church documents gave more than an expanded awareness of the role of the laity in matters of Church governance. The documents communicated a sense of power within the group that overcame the inertia of being passive learners. The knowledge created was the fact that it was not only okay to gather as a community for the purpose of engaging the hierarchy, but that it was that community's *responsibility* to do so. This educational piece did more than provide content – it helped to change the structure of the group's knowing.

Second, the knowledge production that occurred in the wake of the pastor's removal is at least as significant as that gained from the documents since it provided an "exigency" through which the group changed its own mandate (its added decision to address the parish), and in doing so responsibly enacted its new learning. The dissonance caused by the serious fall of a once respected pastor meant that the group's decision making could no longer be based on simple delegation from the pastor who in so delegating merely loaned for a time the capacity to be decisive, but gave up none of his governing power. Lay parishioners in the group were in effect taking matters into their own hands, in the absence of a pastor and in the presence of an absentee administrator. The unusualness of this self-governing behavior is heightened in a Church that coaches a confusing curriculum of lay participation (see Appendix 2).

It is the argument here that the group achieved this because of an agental shift in subdominance between second and fourth order constituencies. While third order remained hegemonic, fourth order began to dominate the agental energy of the group, but not the group itself. Fourth order moved from present but not influential (2001), to

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influential but not determinative (2002 and 2003), to determinative but not dominant in

2004. What this may mean is that one or two late third order members made the move

into fourth order to join others already there, and one or two late second order members

made the move into third order; a small change in the cognitive complexity of the group

that *fundamentally altered* its knowing and choosing. The third order constituency

remained hegemonic, but fourth order became for the first time *convincing* to earlier

orders of mental complexity. Second order was present but no longer determinative of

the group's sense of agency. Third order mutuality remained dominant which meant that

its emerging vision of who they were and what they were about was still hinged to

whether or not the new pastor supported its work.[103] The group score, 3/4/2, indicates a

group dominated by third order, but with a change in the agental quality of the group

from second to fourth order consciousness.
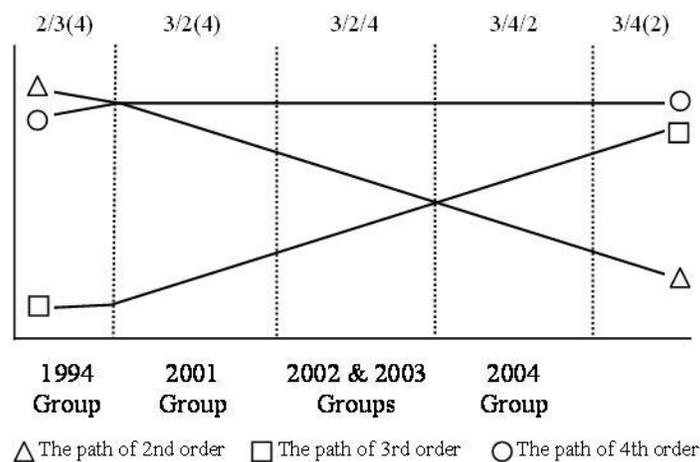
Figure 6.5: 2004 Parish Group Development

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[103] Several members of the group questioned the new pastor in order to affirm the importance of the Lay Collaborative Inquiry Groups and to ask why he disbanded them without inquiring about what their goals were. He responded by stating that the parish group was unnecessary and that the diocese had its own lay group already functioning; further, he stated the diocese would be instituting new parish cluster groups in the near future.

The previous 2003 group was not able to organize its diverse set of values into a rigorous vision whereas the 2004 group, which had not embarked on a "vision quest," nevertheless succeeded in assembling and organizing a coherent set of values toward a self-consciously chosen process of vision creation. This necessitates further clarification of what a vision is. Visions, when dialectically constructed out of the history of a group's knowing and choosing, are potentially transforming for both the members of the group and the group itself. Using Lonergan's transcendental method, a group's attentiveness to researching its own experience over time, its intelligence in interpreting that experience, and its reasonableness in correctly affirming the validity of its interpretation, moves a group into the kind of conflict (dialectic) that exposes different patterns of knowing. Out of the experience of intra-group dialectic a vision can emerge that is rigorous, coherent, and clear; it is grounded in the patterns of knowing of different cognitive constituencies each of which inhabit, within different levels of complexity, the meta-story it tells.

Kegan's constructive developmental theory is helpful in understanding how different cognitive constituencies experience the notion of vision or how they experience the process of vision construction. All group members can know rules and choose roles, but second order is at home in these when the vision is clearly articulated; when rules and roles are translatable from the terms and relations of its ideology (its overarching, value organizing story), second order is able to enact the vision and therefore fully participate in the group. Most members can know and choose values, but third order is at home in these when the vision assembles them in a coherent way; when relational values become

the means by which it shares in the vitality of the story it tells. Finally, some members of the group can know and choose the epistemology of the vision itself because they are embedded in its ideological, metaphysical structure; they therefore know and support the vision's inferences, deductions, and assumptions, not through content knowledge alone, but also through a correct cognitive theory – they know what they are doing when they are knowing. A vision can be understood as a meta-story that goes beyond an assemblage of community anecdotes. A vision articulates the totality of the reality or truth the community inhabits (which is why it is ideological); it provides a social-historical-temporal narrative within which a diverse set of values are organized and made intelligible (which is why it is ideational); and it creates a "rule of life" generative of rules and roles that, when acted on, enacts the vision (which is why it is instrumental).

But a vision by itself merely points to the need for transformation (conversion in Lonergan's parlance). A vision by itself is not transformational unless the people experiencing it are drawn into, and inhabit, the story it tells – and the story it tells is the group's own history, identity, and mission; where they have come from, who they are, and what they are about. It is the argument here that the process of constructing a vision out of intragroup and intergroup dialectic can simultaneously "deconstruct" the group's "cognition" by exposing its different patterns of knowing. Group cognitive deconstruction can occur also with an existing vision when it is clear, coherent, and rigorous; the very attempt to articulate or enact it can expose the presence of different horizons of knowing. A vision can be transforming for a group when it includes every cognitive constituency – when it is practical (it works), ideational (it makes sense, it is

intelligible), and ideological (it is true/real/actual/complete). A powerful vision is able to organize the lives of individuals and groups around itself because it is *their* story; it is converting.[104] But groups are not cognitive monoliths; therefore transforming, converting visions are experienced differently by different orders of mental complexity. The possibility that transformation can occur for individuals in intentional corporate settings may have something to do with the believability of what the vision has to say, its meta-story, and how that story proves capable of drawing different people into its narrative. Can the vision fit within its ideology the different worlds of the group members; does it organize a diverse but coherent set of values; does it attend to communal (mutuality) and agental (independence and autonomy) yearnings; are its values generative of a clear set of rules and roles; and is it actionable, are there implications for meaningful decisions that enact the real, actual vision?

In the educational experience of the 2004 group, and in its intergroup and intragroup conflict, the group began to live within an emerging, but as yet unarticulated, vision. It was generating its own story, even before it attempted to tell the story of All Saints and Calvary; a story that held together diverse values of industry, mutuality, and personal authority. It was a story that had power not because a fourth order constituency dominated the group, but because forth order became determinative of its agental culture

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[104] The inadequacy of a complete vision, one that articulates "the totality of the reality" a group inhabits, will not likely become apparent to a group dominated by third order, however much fourth order holds the agental energy of the group. It is likely that only a group dominated by fourth order, with third in decline and fifth on the rise would move toward recognizing the incompleteness of all visions. When fifth order overtakes third order for subdominance of a group, its communal energy would shift from group mutuality to a more radical inter-communion. At this point the group would begin to self consciously ground its metaphysical vision in ethics; in a notion of the good that organizes all ideologies on behalf of the inter-penetrability and inter-dependence of all planetary communities, situating the human community as one part in the whole that is the living volatility of Earth.

of mind. Its power enabled the group to begin enacting the nascent vision it inhabited. This fact put it considerably beyond the curriculum coached by the hierarchy as articulated at the beginning of this chapter.

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The bishop in the diocese of this study stated to ordained Catholics in 2003 that very little would change with regard to what it means to be priest; change was in store for what he termed "infrastructure," by which he meant the parish life of lay Catholics and how they would be led. As we saw, the following year the bishop proposed in his Rationale to reduce the number of canonical parishes by about hundred by reducing their canonical status to "worship site" and calling clusters of worship sites "parishes." Parishioners were not informed about the implications for changing the canonical status of "parish" to essentially "mission" – from a legal, protected, juridic Person to an ephemeral, unprotected, and indistinct gathering;[105] nor were parishes informed that by keeping their own Finance Councils the one "cluster parish" with many worship sites would be a parish in name only – that worship sites would not lose their canonical status as juridic persons.[106]

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[105] Parishes as juridic Persons, once established, are not easy to suppress (Coriden 1997); only a bishop can close, or suppress, a parish and only for very compelling reasons – a shortage of priests is not a compelling reasons, argues Coriden (1997). A worship site stripped of its parish status does not enjoy the canonical protections a parish does, and is therefore more vulnerable to closure.

[106] By keeping separate Finance Councils the "worship sites" would remain canonical parishes. All Saints and Calvary discovered this during 1998 when, after having already merged into "one" parish, they spent six months coming up with a new name (by having parishioners propose names and vote on them), which they then submitted to the bishop for approval. The two communities had merged their Pastoral Councils into one, but because of the significantly different financial needs between them, All Saints and Calvary decided to keep their own, separate Finance Councils. When the bishop responded in a letter to their request he informed Fr. Charles that, because they had not merged their Finance Councils, they were in fact *two distinct parishes*, despite the merged Pastoral Council, shared staff, and shared pastor. Therefore he rejected their proposed name, noting that when they merged the Finance Councils into one, the subject of

The 2004 initiative radically changed what it meant to be both parish and priest. The changes quantitatively increased the administrative workload of pastors and qualitatively changed how they would lead. That is, the responsibilities now required of the pastor not only increased numerically, they grew in complexity. He no longer leads a single or merged community, but a network of communities whose organizational exigencies require a new mode of being pastor. Without a vision to guide him, without "re-tooling" him to intelligently, truthfully, and pastorally lead in this new context, he may simply become further submerged by administrative concerns and less able to attend to the care of souls in a way that is fulfilling to the people and meaningful to himself.

With even a little forethought one can reasonable predict the long term outcome of this change. An overwhelmed pastor, with one or two assistant priests in a "parish" cluster of six or seven worship sites, may decide to close and sell what amounts to a few "out buildings" on behalf of achieving a more meaningful ministry. How well this is received by the members of that community, or even how inclusive and collaborative the pastor was in making this decision, is beside the point. By changing and reducing the status of definite gatherings of the faithful to mere worship sites, the bishop may be simply handing over to pastors the painful task of foreclosing on whole communities. In so doing, he distances himself from the immediate turmoil that surrounds parish closure, but only by making overburdened priests, rather than himself, the likely target of parishioner anger and protest. The normally good relations pastors have with parishioners (see chapter one), and the normally good relations local Catholic

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naming the parish could be taken up again. Fr. Charles presented this to the councils, who decided once again to keep the councils separate.

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communities have with neighboring Catholic communities will likely experience a radical challenge.

Some Findings: Evolving Communities and Leadership

The groups of this study clearly grew in cognitive complexity over a ten year period, a fact all the more noteworthy considering the static, descriptive, answer-providing curriculum coached by the hierarchy. The curriculum was static in that it did not change, and it did not change perhaps because the changing complexity of lay parishioners was not recognized. It was descriptive in that it consistently placed dialogue with parishioners in a common sense, problem solving context that required no greater complexity than second order consciousness. It did not allow dialogue to occur on a theoretical, third order level where problems could be sourced and critiqued rather than simply solved; or on a self authoring level where disparate theories could be assembled toward the construction of an organized meta-theory.

Several findings of this case study deserve attention. One is that leaders of communities are simultaneously indispensable and oversold. Groups often function well despite defective leaders; but because leaders exercise institutional power, their authority can disrupt the group's functioning, and sometimes destroy it. The indispensability of a leader is not so much in her capacity to fashion a group in her own image and likeness, or in her ability to make a group or its individuals perform according to institutional theories and ideologies. Rather, a leader is indispensable for evolving groups when she is able to

recognize how a group is evolving, what the group needs for ongoing support and challenge, and what she needs to do in terms of her own growth in order to adapt to the changing mental complexity of those whom she leads. This is particularly the case when a fourth order constituency becomes determinative in the group, a fact that allows the group to begin to relativize the authority of leaders, subordinating them to a self conscious visioning capacity.

What I have shown in this study is that a lot more is going on in growing groups than can be accounted for by its leadership structures, and that group growth may be a factor of groups rejecting the manner in which they are held by leaders in favor of a looser hold that allows them a more direct role in creating and enacting a group vision. It turns out that leaders who are in the business of growing groups are also in the business of growing themselves, and that without such growth, they are ill-equipped to understand what is happening when a group evolves to a horizon where it is looking past or through its leaders; where leaders have been drawn into the group's expanding horizon in its achievement of relativizing their role to its own vision generating capacity. This is, I argue, an astonishing achievement for a group, and a potentially startling experience for the one leading it; and moreover calls for that leader to change into something else, into something that can continue to challenge and support the group in its ongoing development. But it also and perhaps most importantly calls for that leader to stay put, to stay in place, while the group relativizes his role as leader, and subordinates his vision-setting responsibility to the group's own newly emerging capacity to do the same. Staying put and figuring out a new kind of embracing, rather than reacting to,

misinterpreting or rejecting group pushback, is perhaps the greatest challenge an evolving

laity can put to church leaders.   Bishops and pastors could benefit from better

understanding the complexity and dynamism of the Catholic parishioners they are

charged to lead, and together with the laity construct a new, transforming vision of who

they are as American Catholics.

Another finding is that communities are already cognitively diverse and dynamic

even without authoritative leaders. A community can be understood as a complex

organic system that organizes meaning toward the enactment of what it knows itself to be

(its history and identity) and what is knows it is called to do (the "inward" doing of its

ministry and the "outward" doing of its mission). But what it knows itself to be is a

reality, or being, that is in motion. It takes in information and either assimilates it into its

existing structures, or it is changed by that information, accommodating itself to it. The

organized gathering of Catholics in particular places and times constitutes such

gatherings as organic communities – as organic parishes. These gatherings have

historically preceded the presence of ordained Catholics. This historical anomaly may be

unique to the United States where, except for proselytizing non-Christian Native

Americans, missionaries usually traveled to the territories not to find "heathens," but to

find and gather Catholics who were already there for the purpose of baptizing their

children, marrying "frontier" relations, and providing Christian burial for the dead.

Communities were already in place as organized, unofficial gatherings of the faithful;

they simply lacked the presence of regular religious leadership. As dioceses became

organized and diversified, diocesan priests were sent by bishops to provide more than

irregular missionary services to the people; they were sent in increasing numbers to be an organizing presence among them.

A third finding is that leaders are more helpful to a group when they facilitate the construction over time of a clear, coherent, and rigorous vision that is capable of organizing a people around itself – an event made possible because the vision is the story and stories of the community itself. Pastors can be understood as spiritual leaders called to gather and organize a particular community as an event of Christ. The *whole* community in all its "order" *is* that Christ-event; a community governed by the Holy Spirit to celebrate, evangelize, and serve, in its ministry and mission, the great mystery it inhabits. It looks inward in its ministry and outward in its mission; as Fr. Charles would say, it calls people to listen to Jesus – to be disciples – and it sends people to evangelize and serve – to be apostles. Community as Christ-event is, for its members, internally volatile and, for human culture, externally destabilizing. This volatility has been observed in the groups of this study which became highly reactive habitats for development in mental complexity. When communities grow they are in a better position to act as leaven in the world; to intelligently, reasonably, and responsibly introduce to an over-balanced world the destabilizing *presence* of justice, mercy, peace, and humility. The 2004 group had not evolved to the point where it could effectively engage the world in this manner, but it had evolved the capacity to engage itself and the diocese on the question of who gets to decide who and what they are as a Catholic community.

What is evident in this study is that parishioners desire passionate spiritual leaders who do more than confect sacraments, administer parish operations, and manage staff.

They want doctors of the soul with "degrees" in love, story telling, inclusiveness, and collaboration; a love that is safe because it is supportive, but unsafe because it is challenging; leaders who lead by serving and who serve by guiding the flock on the path toward becoming "self-shepherding" – to not *be* a flock, but an in-spirited people. But the parish restructuring and priest sexual abuse crises have been hard on both clergy and parishioners. The Catholics in this diocese experienced a cumulative undermining of what little control they had over the temporal affairs of their parishes while simultaneously experiencing a shrinking availability of pastors – *not* simply because of the priest shortage, but because the bishop continued to increase the administrative duties of pastors. This practice fundamentally undermines the capacity of pastors to be the spiritual leaders people want – something they went to Seminary for and are, presumably, experts in – because they are given more and more temporal responsibilities – something they did *not* go to Seminary for and are not likely experts in. But hierarchs are choosing this path because they believe it is their job to exercise ownership and control over both the spiritual and temporal fruit of the People of God. Because of this, both are withering on the vine.

A final finding concerns conflict in the area of vision formation and enactment. Conflict cannot be avoided; it is inevitable, this study argues, because of the complexity of groups. Understanding conflict as something to resolve by differentiating "positions" from "interests" (Cowen and Lee) may not be very helpful if the different positions and interests derive from different orders of mental complexity. Moreover, conflict within the same order of mental complexity may derive from the fact that the parties are arguing

from different cognitive contexts (Lonergan, 1972). That is, one may be arguing from a context of values while another is arguing from the level of vision. What this means for leaders of cognitively complex groups is that they need to move from conflict resolvers to conflict facilitators, and they are in a better position to do this when they recognize the different orders of magnitude rules, values, and visions represent, and *how* different orders of mental complexity inhabit each. What leaders may need to recognize is that what gets transcended by one order of mental complexity must be explicitly included in the group so that an earlier order of mental complexity can be included in vision enactment. When a third order constituency *values*, it may de-emphasize the rules and roles it has transcended and relativized on behalf of mutuality. This can become a source of conflict with second order, as I have argued; a conflict that is less about positions and interests than about different horizons of knowing. While conflict is not something to be created, groups understood as cognitively complex make conflict a dynamic inevitability that not only exposes different horizons of knowing but also helps leaders correlate and coordinate the relationship between mental complexity and vision enactment in evolving groups. It is the leader's job to make certain that rules, values, and visions, are included so that each cognitive constituency find its place in the evolving group.

Chapter 7: Dynamic Complexity Theory of Group Development

Dynamic Complexity of Group Development

This study has argued that the parish groups engaged in dialogue with the hierarchy evolved beyond the descriptive, instrumentalist curriculum coached by diocesan leaders. It is proposed here that this achievement was the result of the gradual evolution of second, third and fourth order constituencies within the groups; each of which were related, correlated, and coordinated to each other in an object-subject dialectic and communion-agency dialectic. The emergence and growth of a fourth order constituency was particularly significant in that it became over time more convincing to the groups because of changes in how it organized conflict within an emerging vision of what it means to be a parish community.

Communities inhabit, tell, and retell the story of where they have come from, who they are, and what they are about. A vision is the articulation of a community's history, identity, and mission in a powerful, overarching narrative. Many communities, however, articulate their own story in ways that are unclear and confusing. Pieces of their story are on the plaques that indicate families who paid for this or that piece of art that adorns the church; their story is told in the architecture of the church; it is told in the kind of liturgy they construct and celebrate; it is told in the way the people treat each other and treat strangers; it is told in how the community organizes itself in order to fulfill its ministerial and missionary mandates. But it is perhaps a rare community that

articulates a clear, coherent, and rigorous vision that its people are aware of, believe, celebrate, and live. The groups of this study had after ten years of engagement with the diocese become self-conscious of the need to work out their own evolving vision; to tell the story of who they are and who they are becoming. Because it was in the early stage, visioning remained inward looking; the groups therefore lacked the capacity to recognize and judge the implications of that vision for how the community engages the world. Developing a transformational vision occurs in a transforming community. The experience of "conversion" among different orders of mental complexity is a consequence of evolving groups. Below is an attempt to make some generalizations about the evolving dynamic complexity of each of the four different group developmental stages identified in chapter six.

2/3(4) Group

The group that gathered in 1994 was likely dominated by second order, instrumental knowers using common sense to solve a problem posed by the hierarchy. In a 2/3(4) group, the dominant knowing is exercised on behalf of "what works"; and what works is that which serves individual needs and interests. For the 1994 group this meant ensuring the availability of priests and regular Eucharistic celebrations. As a group, "what are we?" is a question asked within a limited descriptive horizon; the answer can only come from outside the group, from experts who tell you who you are by telling you what to do. The group inhabits someone else's vision and therefore becomes an organized collective gathered to solve a pre-defined problem whose resolution is oriented toward securing individual needs and interests. Achieving this ego-centric, "what

works," ethic calls for correct rule following and appropriate role taking; it represents a good that was experienced by this constituency as fulfilling their half of a bargain with church leaders whose task was to supply their ongoing needs.

Third order, theoretical knowers were present and ensured that the vitality of the community needs and interest were served by insisting on a set of organizational values on behalf of preserving the relationship between pastor and parish. These interpersonal knowers were able to subordinate their own immediate needs and interests to a notion of faith community where priests were not just available as suppliers of sacraments, but available as authoritative spiritual leaders who presided over the whole community. Priests could accomplish this by sharing their many temporal responsibilities with competent, educated lay professionals in order to preserve their relationship with the community as a whole. Third order, theoretical knowers, however, were a minor constituency in the group; unlike other groups in the diocese they were not able to initiate or sustain a conversation about how the parish model they chose raised important questions about the power relations between lay administrators and parish Pastoral Councils. A group dominated by a second order constituency meant that overall, the group was not able to take a perspective on its own rule following, role taking capacity; it assumed that its compliance with the process would secure their needs and interests. The presence of third order values and commitments, for example the value of pastors as spiritual rather than temporal leaders, would be generally understood as the achievement of correctly following procedures. In a 2/3(4) group, rules and roles are not yet constitutive of values; they are the means to achieve practical ends which the group

confuses with values. When second order is dominant, when authoritative leaders are not in conflict with other authoritative leaders, and when few peers take a defiant stance to the process – all of which was the case in 1994 – then third order goes along even if members of this constituency are more cognitively complex. The descriptive, common sense context is supported by third order members on behalf of the relationships within the group and between themselves and church leaders.

A group with this cognitive pattern is simultaneously amenable and vulnerable to the ideology of its leaders. It neither understands the ideology nor the many values it organizes; but it does "get" the story that ideology tells, and translates it into rules and roles. The leadership ideology for this group, as for all the groups, was monarchical episcopacy. The story the 1994 group inhabited was a hierarchical narrative in which ordained leaders, configured to Jesus Christ, shepherded a lay flock whose best interests they know, protect, and serve. It proved to be a dangerous lay assumption many Catholics surfaced and addressed in the wake of the priest sexual abuse crisis. A group dominated by a second order constituency, however, because it is embedded in the story, is a group that may be easy to press into the service of a clear leadership ideology. In this diocese, the ideology of monarchical episcopacy was never clearly articulated and was therefore little understood. Had it been clearly articulated, however, it is not likely that it would find many agreeable adherents among participants beyond second and third order. Articulating its ideology would likely arouse the indignation of a fourth order constituency whose personal authority was already expressed in 1994 by some parishioners who felt "led like sheep." The vision of monarchical episcopacy was slowly

discovered over a ten year period in the experience of parish-diocese dialogue. A second

order constituency could only be confused by a hierarchy that solicited their decision

making, and then did the opposite. The 1996 merger and the 2001 initiative both

represent actions by the hierarchy that vacated the decisions group members believed

they were making and set a cognitive stage for some common sense, instrumental

knowers to become aware of a new horizon beyond their own – the discovery of a known

unknown; a horizon toward which they could move by asking new questions or by

recognizing that they had been asking the wrong questions.

3/2(4) Group

The 2001 group, as indicated by the 3/2(4) score, witnessed a change in the

dominant cognitive constituency from second order to third order, and represented a

significant development in group complexity. A group dominated by a constituency no

longer embedded in needs and interests began to place both in a higher, more complex

explanatory context; it moved beyond a descriptive context where rules and roles were

exercised on behalf of subject-centered needs and interests. Accordingly, it was able to

notice that its own rule following behavior (in the 1994 initiative and in the 1996 merger)

did not guarantee a world where "fairness" governed the interaction between parish and

diocese. The change in the group can clearly be termed a crisis in which an earlier way

of knowing had to give way to a more complex way of knowing in order to address the

exigency of the new situation. The crisis it experienced upon discovering that All Saints,

a healthy, viable parish that its people had worked hard to make so, was proposed to be

closed or sold, led to the powerful emergence of a now dominant third order

constituency. Their former contractual world of fairness moved to a relational world of values that relativized fairness (simple reciprocity) to mutuality (complex reciprocity) expressed on behalf of their parish's viability and sustainability. The group was able to interpret the diocese's proposal as serving only the interests of pastors and the bishop and did not consider the interests and values of parish communities.

Instead of third order going along with a dominant second order constituency (1994), this group witnessed second order going along with a dominant third order constituency. The group acted to preserve their parish by arguing on behalf of its many connections within the Catholic community (the successful merger between All Saints and Calvary; the fact that total intra-church ministries increased after the merger than was the case before the merger) and outside the community (the new Food Pantry; the Children's Closet). These connections were understood instrumentally by a still strong, but now subdominant second order (the community's status is enhanced by them) and relationally by dominant third order (the community is other-oriented; it cares for itself and for others).

One essential difference between a 3/2(4) group and a 2/3(4) group is that agency, for it to find acceptance, had to be articulated in communal terms. Needs and interest are now in service to interpersonal mutualism. What the group could not take a perspective on was the larger problem they faced, who got to frame the problem, and how that frame determined the boundaries of parish-diocese dialogue. They did not question the hierarchy's posing of the problem (priest numbers are shrinking). While they did question the hierarchy's solution (parishes must consolidate and close), they concerned

themselves only with the solution as it related to their own parishes; they did not reflect on the hierarchy's strategy for solving the priest shortage by parish restructuring as a diocese-wide concern. Assuming both the problem and the question, the group saw its task as coming up with a new answer by presenting a defense of its own community's viability, and then *re-solutioning* the solution in a way that kept All Saints open. This was a strategy that was bound to offend already overworked priests who, as treated above, rejected their solution during the deanery gatherings. The small fourth order constituency was not influential. The pastor's call for a vision of priest and church to inform and direct parish restructuring initiatives was framed as a confrontation of the hierarchy's capacity to lead. As such, it represented an anti-authoritarian expression of fourth order agency in that it called into question the bishop's capacity to properly lead the diocese through the priest shortage and its consequent parish restructuring crisis.

3/2/4 Group

The achievement of the 3/2/4 groups was an increased capacity to pose problems and ask questions. As a result they were able to take greater responsibility for their knowing and choosing as they attempted, in 2002, to address the priest sexual abuse crisis. The primary reasons for this was the increasing influence of a growing fourth order constituency that moved the group beyond venting about a tragedy and finding a population to blame; beyond simply asking why it happened and constructing theories to explain it; to addressing the organizational realities that had to be addressed to reduce the likelihood that it could happen again. But beyond showing a group the path and getting it to start walking on it, fourth order could do little to keep the group *on the path* long

enough to achieve its (fourth order) goals. There were two reasons for this. First, second order, not fourth order, dominated the agental energy of the group. The group's sense of mission was tied to practical, instrumental ends that interpreted the fact that the bishop responded to their letter, addressed most of their questions, with little cost to themselves, as "mission accomplished." Second, fourth order agency was expressed in confrontational, anti-authoritarian terms. This was likely disconcerting for a dominant third order constituency that sought to reinvest the hierarchy with some of the authority it had shed in the priest sexual abuse crisis. Had fourth order told a better story, one that did not paint bishops as bad guys, one that gathered the many relational and organizational values into a coherent and rigorous vision, it may have been more influential during this critical parish-diocese dialogue.

3/4/2 Group

The 2004 group experienced a major change in its expression of agental energy. While the group was dominated by relational third order, both fourth order and second order constituencies now expressed agental energy on behalf of communal interests. Prior to 2004, the groups' sense of agency tended to be both procedurally bound (second order) and anti-authoritarian (fourth order). Here, agency is neither; self interest and personal authority have changed how they interact with the dominant third order constituency.

In less developed groups, anti authoritarian expression of agency is not simply a critique of structures of power that govern by appeals to authority grounded in juridical precedent or in tradition. It is also expressed against a third order constituency that is

itself embedded in authority. Early fourth order individuals may be anti-authoritarian because of the threatening proximity of what they have recently differentiated from, but its expression may be enacted against *both* leaders in authoritarian structures *and* those whom they perceive to be followers within such structures. Early second order individuals who have neither integrated (fourth order) nor internalized (third order) authority express agency on behalf of self interest. They may experience values as muddying the clear waters of correct procedure. What this may mean for groups dominated by a third order constituency is that agency will likely work against this constituency's communal interests which it articulates theoretically. Value as a "theory of rules and roles" is experienced as "mumbo-jumbo" to early second order, and as a simplistic and inadequate framework to fourth order for moving a group to engage in intergroup dialogue.

It was noted earlier that the agental energy in a 3/4/2 group shifted from instrumental to ideological as fourth order overtook second order for subdominance. But this does not explain why each cognitive constituency appeared to cooperate much more than in earlier groups. What may explain this cooperation is a fundamental change in the *quality* of agency because both second and fourth orders were evolving into *late* second and fourth orders of consciousness. That is, the constituency made up of instrumental knowers may have entirely "lost" its early second order members who evolved into late second order (from 2/3, 2(3) to 3/2, 3(2)). At the same time, ideological knowers may have "gained" late fourth order members (5/4, 5(4)). Figure 7.1 below provides an illustration of hypothetical group evolution and shows how, as second and fourth order

constituencies evolve, communion as a fundamental yearning increases its expression within these agental orders of mental complexity. Second order is the retreating outer ring; fourth order is the advancing outer ring; and third order is the central circle.
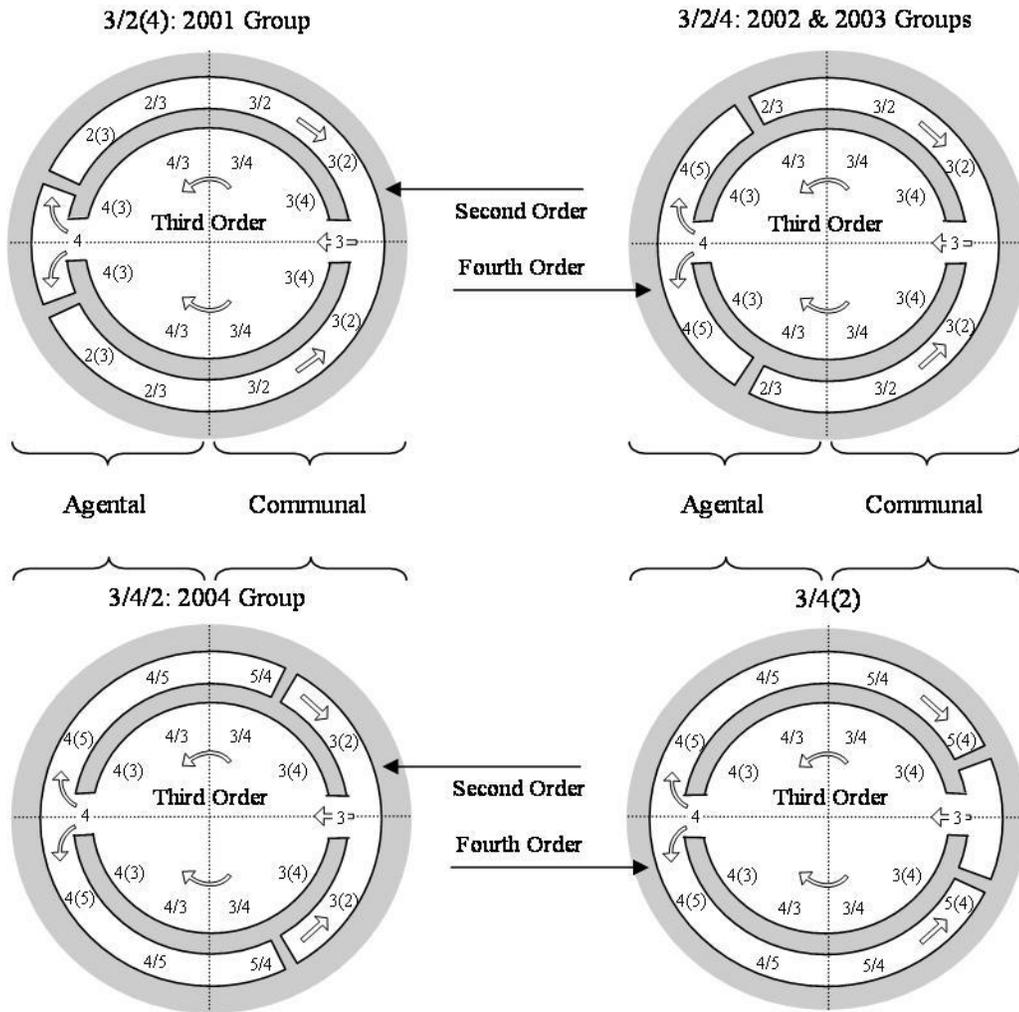

Figure 7.1: Group Evolution

What this means for the 3/4/2 group is that for the first time agental constituencies are either dominated by or have members who are dominated by *communal* yearnings. To recall from chapter two, Kegan's orders of consciousness generally include two epistemologies, one waxing and the other waning. The order of consciousness *is* this

waxing and waning. In a 3/4/2 group, agency, perhaps for the first time, can be expressed

in terms amenable to communion because agental orders of consciousness have members

with dominant, waxing communal epistemologies: fourth order has some fifth order

capacities, and second order as some third order capacities. This may explain why the

ideological, fourth order constituency did not appear anti-authoritarian but expressed

personal authority on behalf of the interests, ideas and vision of the *group*. This may also

explain why the instrumental, second order constituency did not appear antagonistic to

third order theoretical, interpersonal knowing.

The 3/4/2 group was also able to act on its own holding environment as more of

its own "identity" became held by its members. Clearly I, as the group facilitator, was

part of that holding environment, as was the pastor and the temporary administrator.

When the pastor was put on administrative leave, the group did not seek to find a new

"culture" to embed itself in; rather it began to do some of its own holding. It became

better able to organize itself and reconstitute how it needed to be led. This was observed

in how the 2004 group differentiated itself from its leader (me) and took greater charge of

its own identity and mission. It did not want an expert, but recognized its right to

competent leaders who shared expertise on behalf of group-determined actions. It

became a group better able to look inward at its own intragroup functioning and critically

reflect on how that functioning can be deployed in service to intergroup connection – in

this case, between the parish and the diocese. What this group did not reflect on is the

implications for its slowly emerging vision on the relationship between church and world;

on gospel and culture. Its newly emerging vision was still inwardly focused.

If this group had continued, one might observe the further rise of fourth order and decline of second order (in a 3/4(2) group) and an increasing capacity of the group to judge how much of the world can fit into its evolving ideology. When fourth order overtakes third order and becomes dominant in the group (in a 4/3(2) or 4/3(5) group), theoretically, second order would have declined to the point that few remain to evolve into third order. The third order constituency would then mature as early third order members evolve but are not "replaced" by late second order members in proportion to those evolving into fourth order. That is, as a third order constituency evolves, its "bottom" will drop out because it is not "replenished" by an evolving second order constituency; and its "top" will rise into a now hegemonic fourth order. It will shrink numerically as it feeds a stable fourth order constituency; but third order's shrinkage is linked to, and perhaps proportional to, the growth of a newly emerging fifth order constituency. Hypothetically, the leveling off of the rise of fourth order will coincide with the rise of fifth order (formerly present but statistically insignificant).

What this study also asserts is, 1) that the curriculum coached by the hierarchy in this diocese was one that required no greater complexity than second order, instrumental consciousness; 2) that it was not designed as a pedagogy of inquiry for the purpose of making new discovery; 3) that when parishioners demonstrated a complexity beyond the curriculum by generating new, unanticipated knowledge, the hierarchy disparaged or dismissed it; 4) and finally, the hierarchy misunderstood lay parishioner feedback because it does not know who lay Catholic parishioners are and, more importantly, it *cannot know* because there are no stable institutional structures for bishops and chancery

officials to actually hear and discover who they are.[107] Also significant in the hierarchy's

curriculum is that inviting lay collaboration and decision making (for example, deciding

on a parish model in 1994) had no meaningful correlation to what diocesan leaders

ultimately decided to do. This effectively undermined commitment of every cognitive

constituency represented in the groups. The groups of this study became more aware of

this fact, and of the fact of their voiceless status, and grew more insistent in their calls for

assemblies of elected lay parishioners to meet with the bishop, or in their calls for a

diocesan synod that included lay parishioner representation.

Self Shepherding Sheep among Sheep in Shepherd's Clothing

Metaphors are powerful linguistic devices that shape human experience through

the imagination. Metaphors are simultaneously helpful and dangerous in that they

establish, not likeness as in a simile, but identity. One such is the sheep/shepherd

metaphor which is used in Church documents to describe and explain the relationship

between ordained and lay Catholics. It is a *pastoral* relationship in which shepherds

nourish, guide, and protect the flock under their care. However, because these are

metaphors and not similes, pastors are not *like* shepherds, they *are* shepherds. Similarly,

lay parishioners are not *like* sheep, they *are* sheep. An important question to ask is

whether the sheep/shepherd metaphor has become a dangerous use of language that, on

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[107] Again, the issue here is lay parishioners. Diocesan Pastoral Councils do not represent parishioners.
Their lay members, when they are known, represent a Catholic elite of highly advantaged, often wealthy,
well placed individuals who advise the bishop in important matters of finance and management. They are
rarely, if ever, selected because of their attachment to and affection for the parishes they are members of
and to the unique challenges of local communities of faith.

the one hand, perpetuates the misunderstanding, undervaluing, and occasional but devastating exploitation of lay parishioners by clergy and diocesan leaders; and on the other hand, represents a use of language to enact a particular organizational ideology without articulating the ideology. Before exploring this one might ask, what is the metaphor and how has it been used in the Bible and in Church documents?

The sheep-shepherd metaphor has its origins in the Bible, most notably Psalm 23 which poetically describes the experience of the believer in right relationship before God. God, the caring shepherd, provides for every need of the sheep; they are well fed in verdant pastures; they are safe from predators lurking at the watering holes; they are at peace and restful. God leads the sheep along the paths of health and abundance. Even if that journey takes them through threatening places, God is their guide and they have no reason to fear. In fact, predators harmlessly look on as God's sheep graze in bountiful meadows of peace and prosperity. The psalmist beautifully describes the members of the flock renewed in vitality through God's intimate care; a vitality that produces in the sheep an almost strident confidence in the world, so certain are they of God's loving presence. Peace, rest, goodness, mercy, and abundance accrue to the flock because they have placed their trust in God and walk choice-fully, on God-directed paths.

The use of the shepherd/sheep metaphor by biblical authors is multivalent. It includes right choice-making sheep that are able to discern true from false shepherds, together with lost and scattered sheep. It includes references to wicked shepherds who milk, fleece and eat the sheep and then pasture themselves (Ezekiel 34:2) along with

divine shepherds (Psalm 23).[108] Catholic Church documents, however, tolerate no such

opacity. Bishops and priests are cast in the mold of the Good Shepherd of John 10 who

lay down their lives for the flock; lay Catholics are always sheep.[109] Church documents

heavily redact the sheep/shepherd metaphor as it appears in the Bible, scrubbing it of

reference to defective and exploitative shepherds, or liberated, choice making sheep. The

people are only helpless, dependent, and wandering, while priests are always caring and

protective. The priest sexual abuse scandal has shed blinding light on the fact that

shepherds do occasionally exploit the flock – not its hardy and robust members, but the

most vulnerable and defenseless – and many bishops as chief shepherds have been unable

to demonstrate believable sympathy for the lambs that have been fleeced and consumed.

Never a pastor of people, I have twice been a shepherd of sheep. I find in Psalm

23 insights about sheep and shepherds that are both valuable and troubling. I grew up in

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[108] See also Pss 28:9, 49:15, 78:70-72, 80:1; Isa 40:1; Jer 23:3-4; Zec 13:7. In the NT, Lk 1:48-52; Mk 6:34, 14:27 (Jesus quotes Zec 13 above, also in Mt 26:31); Mt 9:36, 15:24, 18:12 25:31-45; and, famously, Jn 10:1-30, 21:15-19.

[109] In *Christifideles Laici* (21-23, 32), a document that carefully avoids putting the terms "lay" and "ministry" together in the same sentence, the Good Shepherd is the ordained minister who holds the "primary position in the Church" (22). Priests in "their exalted office to be shepherds of the lay faithful" must recognize the "services and charisms" of the "lay faithful" (32), but never in a way that would confuse shepherd and sheep. In fact lay persons share in the ministry of the pastor when "necessity and expediency in the Church warrant it." But it is a sharing that does not "make Pastors of the lay faithful" (23) for "a person is not a minister simply in performing a task, but through sacramental ordination." Priests have ministries, laity have tasks. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (22) refers only to the negative use of the sheep metaphor, even though it quotes passages where the positive metaphor is used by Christ. Sheep are harassed and helpless without a shepherd, they stray, they are scattered, they require the shepherd's protection. John 10:3 is referenced, but only to highlight the qualities of the shepherd. It leaves out the part where the sheep know the voice of the shepherd and follow him, and are discerning enough to avoid false shepherds. It also references Psalm 23, but only to accentuate the care and feeding provided by the shepherd. The Psalm's emphasis on a confident, discerning choice-making flock is silenced. Ezekiel 34 with its withering critique of abusive shepherds is also referenced, but only as a prophetic announcement of the coming good shepherd, Jesus Christ. Its condemnation of leaders who exploit their vulnerable charges *because* they are vulnerable is entirely absent from this document on priest shepherds. Instead, it argues that "priests are configured to Jesus the good shepherd" (22) and are therefore unambiguously beyond critique. Lay Catholics are configured to sheep dependent on, and in constant need of ("habitual and daily care" LG 27) the priest's pastoral ministrations. See also, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 61; *Go and Make Disciples*, 133; *Lumen Gentium* I.6, III.20, III.27.

what might be called a "sheep culture" and worked for a time in the wool business. "Draper" means "worker in woolens or textiles." My family celebrated its one hundred and fiftieth anniversary in the United States in the summer of 2006, commemorating not only our presence in this country but also continuous and uninterrupted work in the wool business. My father was a wool buyer in Montana, Wyoming, Idaho and Canada and would take my brother and me with him during shearing season as he examined and bid on "clips" from the western ranches and Hutterite colonies, some of which produced flocks numbering in the thousands.

Raising sheep is of course very different from wool buying. Drapers are rarely shepherds, but I could not resist the challenge and the romance. With that experience in hand, I have concluded that shepherding is hardly romantic and sheep are nothing like the common stereotype. There are certain pastoral responsibilities that inevitably come with domesticating sheep; responsibilities that can make one feel that there is a sort of covenant-relationship between sheep and shepherd. It is "sort of" because it is unilateral in its origins – sheep do not choose the relationship. In exchange for their annual fleece and spring lambs, shepherds care for, feed and protect the animals they have domesticated. The Psalmist notes that predators look harmlessly on as God protects the flock; so, too, do human shepherds keep the wolves, coyotes and dogs at bay. Romance aside, only one predator is allowed in the flock: the shepherd who tolerates no competition for his prey, a fact both canines and sheep know well.

Sheep, however, do not always cooperate with the strictures of their domestication. It is their occasional refusal to cooperate that makes of sheep a handy

metaphor for describing a right relationship gone awry, thus necessitating swift intervention by the shepherd. The sheep/shepherd metaphor has developed in other ways as well; ways far less flattering to sheep than to shepherds. The "conventional wisdom" holds that sheep are stupid, hapless, wandering creatures that would be unable to survive without the constant care and monitoring of the shepherd. The best hope for sheep is submissive yielding before powerful and wise shepherds. This prevailing notion of sheep is not held by many shepherds. It is a notion that is more likely to be held by sheep producers (who in larger operations traditionally do little hands-on shepherding), by frustrated shearers, by wool merchants and manufacturers; and through these, the general population. Sheep do not fit or deserve the unflattering tags that have been attached to their species. Sheep as stupid and hapless, heading blindly toward destruction represents a metaphor in need of rehabilitation.

Observant shepherds know better what sheep are like, their native preferences and peculiar characteristics. That knowledge in turn becomes helpful in maintaining the unequal relationship between shepherd and sheep. It is pretty simple. Sheep move naturally from low ground to high ground, from dark places to lighted places, and from confined spaces to open spaces. In a safe pasture they spread out; when they sense danger, they flock together. When confined in a barn or shed, they stay clear of dark corners. Sheep can be disturbed by metallic, clanking sounds, unless they associate the noise with food; sheep always move toward food. Ewes tolerate the adult shepherd but are made nervous by, and avoid, children; in the early Spring after they produce lambs, they will stand between a child and their own young, and may even butt the child if it

gets too close (not a running butt like a ram who is less predictable, dangerous, and often indiscriminate in who or what he might challenge). Unless the shepherd introduces some kind of stress to the flock, for example unusual or loud noises, or poor land management, sheep will usually choose these preferences. With this awareness, a shepherd can handle her flock with gentle skill and enjoy the fruit of this relationship in the form of happy contented sheep that are more likely to produce beautiful fleeces and healthy spring lambs.

Rehabilitating the sheep metaphor is not done here to make better use of it in official Church teaching and preaching, but on behalf of dropping the metaphor altogether. Sheep are not stupid and hapless; but they *are* sheep; they are a different species than the shepherd who exploits them for his own ends. The shepherd metaphor also stands in need of critique. However caring and "pastoral" he may be, a shepherd is the most efficient and dangerous predator sheep will ever encounter – and, being intelligent, sheep never forget their prey status. Shepherds exploit sheep for wool, lanolin, leather, milk, manure, and meat. A domestic lamb has a nearly one hundred percent chance of early death if it is a male; the percentage is less for female lambs depending on how many replacement ewes are needed to maintain the flock. Ewes are annually exploited for their fleece and, when they become unhealthy, or "gummers" (with few or no teeth) they are sold and slaughtered for low grade meat. The only difference between an observant shepherd and an ignorant shepherd is the quality of the cruelty he will visit upon his flock – the former, through care and diligence, will reserve all cruelty

until the end while the latter, through carelessness and neglect, will torment and abuse his flock throughout its days.

Sheep and humans are different species. Shepherds *relate* to sheep instrumentally for the purpose of agri-culturally legitimized exploitation. Short of a catastrophic failure to thrive for the human species, domestic sheep will not likely escape captivity or their status as a sentient crop producing primarily wool and meat for human use and consumption. For this reason, the sheep/shepherd metaphor, after rehabilitation and modification, is in need of a well deserved retirement. The metaphor cannot be re-habituated into the new context most Americans currently inhabit. In a postmodern world of globalization, few people understand it, many people have not been disabused of romantic notions of shepherds, and most adopt erroneous conventional notions of the nature of sheep. Its continued use in Church documents is highly problematic whether used to describe the divine-human relationship or the relationship between ordained and lay Catholics. The shepherd's care is always and intentionally exploitative, making mighty wolves appear as sickly lambs by comparison.

Lay parishioners are not sheep; they are human beings slowly evolving toward self authored, or if you will, "self-shepherding" knowing. In the diocese of this study, the hierarchy led in ways that did not reflect even the shepherd *metaphor*. Their shepherding is much more in line with literal shepherds who "relate" to the flock instrumentally for their own purposes. This diocese has shepherded parishioners as would an actual shepherd of sheep, which suggests that its ordained leaders believe that parishioners are actual sheep; beings one cannot dialogue with as equals, as adults. The hierarchy never

constructed pedagogical events in ways that challenged parishioners to move beyond instrumental knowing. Rather than thinking *with* Catholics, the hierarchy thought *for* them, and became confused when Catholics demonstrated complex theoretical and self authored knowing. If bishops and chancery officials are get to know the "flock" they "shepherd," they may need to become "observant shepherds" who take notice, who pay attention to those whom they lead. Because Catholics are not sheep, this can only occur in conversation; in dialogue structured to make new discoveries that are enacted on behalf of the whole community in all its order.

<div align="center">***</div>

The Catholic Church is in crisis, not simply because of the clergy sexual abuse scandal or the priest shortage, but because the hierarchy does not appear to know how to dialogue with a laity whose cognitive capacities have evolved beyond the current ecclesiastical structures within which dialogue often occurs. It is precisely these capacities that make of lay parishioners valuable dialogue partners with the hierarchy to address both concerns. The whole People of God in its current American, Catholic, Christian incarnation is changing; it is growing in cognitive complexity. This fact constitutes the generation of new wine that requires new wineskins in order to culture and preserve the vitality of the potent mixture that is the American Catholic Church. By far the largest segment of the Catholic People of God is represented by lay parishioners who make up over 99% of the church. This study claims that that "part" of the Body of Christ is witnessing the emergence of fourth order capacity; an emergence no longer located within an elite population, but rising within the general population of Catholic laity. This

is a gift of the church to itself and calls for a reinvigorated vision of dialogue and governance that welcomes, nourishes and challenges it.

The presence of self authored individuals in any culture presents a challenge to that culture's institutions because their sense of agency is not grounded in external authority. This disembedding from the authority of sacred texts, traditions, and leadership structures may be experienced by official representatives of those texts, traditions, and structures as rejection of their authority. In fact, however, fourth order self authored agency may provide the context for a *more* intimate connection because these same external sources of authority are allowed to be fully and authentically what they are rather than sources that fill up one's own sense of self. A whole and complete self is relating to a whole and complete tradition; because it is not embedded in the tradition, it has a relationship with the tradition and is better able to see that tradition in all its plural, spiritual, and historical complexity. It is ideological because it gathers a network of "wholes" into a new and more comprehensive meta-whole.

The third order self, because it is embedded in authority, relates to what it considers to be a whole tradition, when in fact it is only a part; it organizes all the parts of that assumed whole into a coherent idea and names it "truth." It represents sense making without critical validation that assumes the reality of what it believes is real, and the truth of what it holds as true. Because a third order self assumes its idea of Catholicism is the fullness of the truth, it labels other Catholics who inhabit different ideations of Catholicism as "smorgasbord" Catholics who pick and choose what to believe and practice, while remaining happily unaware that its own ideation represents the same

buffet-style religiosity. Further, third order selves seek out communities that reflect their ideational view of religious tradition, and authorizes leaders to embody that authority in their teaching and care. This may seem attractive to religious leaders who share the same ideation; however, failure to properly support and challenge this constituency may result in loss of members when what it "trues" is confronted with a different, equally convincing, and authoritative truth. The loss of millions of Catholics from the 1970's, through the 1990's to Evangelical and Fundamentalists churches may be an example of third order Catholics, confronted with Evangelical proselytizing, finding new authoritative communities to embed themselves in. Loyalty is never absolute. A community that does not recognize fourth order complexity, that under-challenges third order and over-supports second order, is a community that misunderstands the necessity of cognitive volatility in community development. It sacrifices change on behalf of stability and inevitably purges members whose complexity is beneath or beyond its favored curriculum. A community in which object-subject reactivity and communal-agental reactivity have run down is a dying community.

Fourth order takes disparate and even conflicting truths and organizes them into a rigorous ideology. Since the Reformation the Catholic Church has likely experienced the voluntary purging of self authored individuals who lost hope that leaders would initiate meaningful change in their lifetimes. But it has come at a significant cost to the whole People of God when those who are eager to collaborate, competent to enter critical dialogue, and who are complex visionary knowers leave the Church or sit anonymously at the fringes because they despair of finding dialogue partners among the hierarchy. If

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the current priest sexual abuse and parish restructuring crises are not to presage a new wave of self purging, the hierarchy must find new ways to become engaged in dialogue with educated and complex members of the Church.

A new story needs to be constructed and told; one that organizes a diversity of values that include voice, participation, consultation, and deliberation for the members of every order in the Church. Without such dialectical/dialogical values, voices become echoless noise uttered into the void, and the Church loses its vitality. As stated in chapter five, God uttered into the void and made the material universe; Divine Love organized matter into life, and life into consciousness; God uttered Godself into the material world by becoming Word made flesh and the universe returned a twelve billion year echo to God. The human voice is the echo of divinity; once uttered, it does not return empty. The hierarchy of the Catholic Church is the keeper of what is handed on; the laity are the voice of what is going forward. The still, small voice of a billion lay parishioners does not fall empty into the void for it, too, is the voice of God. If the Church is to remain one reverberation of the sacred noise of the universe – and it must remain so – the hierarchy must learn to hear the quiet thunder of the evolving multitudes.

Appendix 1: Methods

This appendix does not repeat what is stated in chapter one but adds further important methodological considerations not included there.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis

Site and participant selection

The sites are two Catholic parishes whose members over a ten year period were engaged in five major events over the issues of priest sexual abuse and parish restructuring. Clergy abuse and parish consolidation and closings constituted for lay participants significant disorienting dilemmas (Mezirow, 1991) that surfaced assumptions they held about their leaders and the nature of their own participation in the community. I selected six participants who were lay, non-staff parishioners who participated in two or three of the five events for multiple interviews in which I probed for participant learning (below).

Data collection

Rather than casting myself as a "social scientist," with Piantanida, Tananis and Grubs (2004) I understand myself as a dissertation researcher within a "practitioner field" – in this case, adult education in the Catholic community – attempting to generate substantive grounded theory that emerges from this particular context. Consistent with the requirements of qualitative research to gather extensive amounts of data together with

thick description (Charmaz, 2003; Geertz, 1973), I have assembled a rich collage of data

sources including, (1) ten years of archival material for each of the five events studied,

including: nineteen institutional documents by educators and leaders (clergy, hierarchy

and lay educators) who initiated gatherings, framed the discussion, summarized findings

and responded to participants' inquiries; fourteen documents produced by lay participants

at each event; and approximately two hundred pages of emails from participants to each

other and to leaders; (2) interviews from the six lay participants who participated in most

of the five events from 1994-2004; (3) and my own observations as a participant in three

groups, and the facilitator of the final group. I personally interviewed all participants in

two sets of 90 minute sessions using a semi-structured interview protocol which included

probing questions about what participants learned about themselves; changes in their

understanding of their roles and relationships within the community; their experience of

being educated in diocesan and parish contexts; and what they perceived their leaders

were learning about their evolving participation as they, over time, turned knowledge

production into creative action on behalf of their communities.

Data analysis

Data analysis includes separately coding, (1) digitally recorded and transcribed

interviews using HyperResearch software, (2) group-produced documents from each of

the five events, and (3) documents, speeches and event summaries from diocesan

officials. After coding for significant patterns and themes, I created broader thematic

domains (Miles & Huberman, 1994); engaged in extensive memo writing for the purpose

of building conceptual analyses and aiding theory building (Charmaz, 2000); and

engaged in writing narrative summaries (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). This enabled the making of tentative claims about the nature of the curriculum coached by leaders (Kegan, 1994) as well as the general receptivity/non receptivity to this curriculum by participants.

Next, adapting guidelines for interpreting subject-object data (Lahey et al., 1988) from individuals to groups, I scored the groups of participants from each of the five events using the threefold procedure of analysis consisting of, (1) *structural analysis* which included scoring each lay produced document for developmental orientation or epistemological structure; (2) *behavioral analysis* which included examining the group's response/reaction to its suspension after each event, asking, a) to what did participants return, or b) into what did they transform?; and (3) *developmental analysis* which included examining the evolution of the groups over time looking for development in five areas: a) movement from solution proposing to problem posing (Freire, 1970); b) changes in what the group could or could not take a perspective on; c) changes in responsibility taking – who or what they were/were not responsible to/for; d) changes in the group's response to authority; e) and changes in the way the group engaged leaders on parish and diocesan level.

Structural analysis: Group produced texts were analyzed for cognitive complexity understood as a diversity of orders of consciousness. The other forms of analysis did not occur until this phase was well under way. The documents consist of letters to bishops as well as written responses to specific diocesan initiatives to restructure parishes that served both as talking points for the group in off-parish gatherings, and as documents the group submitted to leaders in off-parish events. Why most of the documents are

particularly rich sources of structural data is because of the way they were produced (see *Reliability* below). There are two primary ways the documents were crafted: 1) Facilitators wrote participant responses on easel boards which were then transcribed into working papers with little or no redacting. These were returned to the group for feedback and editing. 2) Documents were also created through drafting committees made up of members of the groups. Group members were invited to submit their own papers to the drafting committee which in turn used these as starting points for producing documents. Drafts were returned to the groups for feedback, editing and final approval.

The documents as epistemological artifacts were copied into Word documents and were analyzed line-by-line for meaning making structures by creating text boxes to serve as space for analysis. Following Lahey (1988), I made structural assessments of each section of the documents. "After generating a hypothesis or range of hypotheses about the underlying structure, you should address these 3 questions: 1) What structural evidence do you see for the score(s) you are assigning? 2) On what basis are you ruling out other plausible hypotheses? 3) If you are assigning more than one possible score, what additional information would you need to narrow this range of possible hypotheses?" (Lahey et al., 1988, 192). Toward that end, when forming a hypothesis I sought disconfirming hypotheses before settling on one. What the method proposed here adds is the comparative analysis between text and behavior, as well as a developmental analysis between one event and the next.

Behavioral analysis is another important piece in the overall process of generating a group score. When the texts generated by a group were given tentative scores, the

behavior of the group was then analyzed. Only then was the *group* scored. Behavior

analysis allows one to address two critical questions that arise once texts are scored. 1) Is

this score possibly beneath the group mind; or 2) is this score possibly beyond the group

mind? In the first case, it is possible that the score given a particular text may be beneath

the mind of the group. This may be the result of a process that rigidly determines the

kind of feedback given. For example, in the 1994 experience the feedback the group was

allowed to engage in precluded many important issues the group may have discussed in

the weeks it gathered, but also the allowable feedback was framed in a way that made a

certain kind of reportage likely. In this case, the feedback may be beneath the group

mind, with the caveat already mentioned, that were the group beyond the score its texts

received, what did the group do to protest the inherent contradiction between the broad

range of topics allowed to be discussed in group and the narrow range of feedback

allowed to be reported. If it did little or nothing to protest, then I tended to score the

group the same score its texts received – that its lack of protest is likely an indication of

an embeddedness in the structures and processes created for the group by the diocese, an

embeddedness the group *does not* reflect on because it *cannot* reflect on it.

In the second case, it is possible to imagine a leader operating with a late order of

consciousness (fourth or fifth order) who is over-determining the group's thinking as is

articulated in its texts, or a group process that demands self-directed participation. In

both cases, the products of the group (texts) may receive scores that are beyond the actual

group mind. In this case, examining group behaviors at the suspension of the group

provides a helpful corrective and enables one to more precisely determine how a group

actually knows. For example, in 2003 the group gathered to craft a vision for the diocese

that was sophisticated enough to organize numerous strategies which in turn could direct

certain actions toward the vision of broad, inclusive participation of every constituency in

the Church, including and especially the laity, while at the same time preserving the

hierarchical nature of the various orders in the church (bishop, priest, deacon, religious,

laity). And yet, when the group was suspended, it had not put in place any follow up

gatherings in order to discover what the diocese did with its vision, nor did it press their

call for diocesan synods or other mechanisms whereby bishop and lay parishioners could

communicate in a two-way dialogue. In this case, the process and the pastor may have

over determined the kind of text the group would produce, even as it was a group

production, and is therefore not an accurate measurement of group cognitive complexity.

   Analysis of Hierarchy-Produced Documents. Finally, the study examines

hierarchy-produced documents in order to probe for educational ideologies as well as

analyze the pedagogical processes and structures for assumptions they imply about the

kind of lay participant officials believed they were coaching. Critical Discourse Analysis

(CDA) is a helpful frame through which to examine power relations at work in this kind

of dialogue, and how language is used to enact and naturalize ideology (Bernstein, 2000;

Fairclough, 1992, 1995; Gee, 1990; Rogers, 2004). Since CDA looks at how discourse

both points to and constructs the social context, it is a helpful theory and method for

surfacing taken for granted ideologies in diocesan leaders' use of language. A limitation,

however, is that it does not explicitly analyze the *cognitive complexity* of that language

and how it was used to construct dialogical events. The question of the cognitive

complexity of a structured event, as well as the cognitive development of a community over time, is an epistemological question that is perhaps more fundamental than the question of power or power-relations. The lay participants in the various parish-diocese dialogues not only held perspectives on the issues at hand, took responsibility and engaged leaders, but these also *changed* – very slowly – but always in the direction of greater complexity. This phase of the study, while not looking for developmental orientations among leaders, is looking for clues as to the developmental orientations the curriculum assumes (i.e., what developmental orientation does the curriculum coach toward?) for the purpose of comparing these assumptions with the actual group scores (above). Any agreement or mismatches between coaching and learner capacity is noted.

Reliability

The five groups of this study differed in the number and range of members, and in the way they joined. For example, the 1994, 2002, and 2004 groups had all volunteer members who joined in response to bulletin or pulpit announcements whereas the 2001 and 2003 groups had members who joined at the invitation of the pastor. Regarding membership, every group had a range of new members that joined; at the same time, every post-1994 group had members who participated in previous groups and through discussion made that earlier history part of the new group. The six interview participants of this study were selected in part on the basis of their involvement in two or three of the five groups. Arthur was the only participant who participated in all four groups. This raises questions about the continuity between groups and whether their semi-discontinuous nature make claims of group cognitive growth across time less reliable.

There are, however, several points that make this study reliable. First, the groups of lay parishioners that gathered between 1994 and 2004 were all gathered from the same two parish communities. While semi-discontinuous, they were not separate, discrete groups that were detached from each other; nor were later groups unaware of the previous history of earlier groups. There was *continuity* between and among all the groups that was recognized and valued by participants, one that shaped how they approached each new initiative. Glenna in the study reported that the group became "braver" as a result of this continuity and the willingness of members to share their own past experience; she notes that the group made a "transition" over time in what I refer to in this study as agency.

> You know, we're looking at 2001, 2002, 2003, of course 2004, but that also shows the transition that we've made that we no longer fear perhaps the things we did in 2002, or we've become stronger as a group. If there's just one or two of us that stay over into each committee time after time… There is a continuity that's gonna run through. And maybe we do get a wee braver.

Thus, the fact that there was genuine continuity from one event to the next, a continuity preserved by the presence of my six participants (with their memories, personal notes, other archival material, critical reflections, etc., and their willingness to share that learning and knowledge production at each new gathering – whether it was part of an official agenda or not), as well as other members not interviewed, should provide at least some firm footing for making tentative claims that *this group* evolved in *these ways* which makes its dynamic complexity different from, but continuous with, groups that preceded and followed.

Another argument for the reliability of the study is the way the documents were produced (see chapter six). As Theresa states of the key 2002 letter written to the bishop:

> What we had to do then was to craft a letter that was very straightforward, almost businesslike, and that's what a lot of parishioners rejected was our business format that we presented. And the only reason we did that was that after eliminating everything that we didn't like as a group, and assuming everything that we did like, as a group, it became a letter by a committee.

Of the 2003 process, this same participant notes the fact that the document was a group product:

> When pulled together, it looked to me as though the Spirit was really working in that group because when you read the letter, it's phenomenal. It's a great letter. It's a great statement pulled together by a lay group working with their priest.

Though the final document in 2003 went through a redaction process[110] lay participants recognized it as a group document that, however committee-like, reflected the ideas and concerns of the whole group:

> When Father Charles pulled together all of our comments in the response and let us all see how our individual observations and comments had been pulled into part of the definition, and I think I said once before that I could read his letter and recall almost who had said each one of the comments.

Finally, it is a feasible study because, though the documents are "committee" documents, some reflecting a "businesslike" tone, I have early drafts of most of the documents, two hundred pages of emails created when they were drafted (for 2002, 2003 and 2004), my own observations about their development, as well as interview transcriptions.

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[110] The pastor took the comments he had written down on an easel to the parish secretary to include in the document – which included having me review the letter for accuracy before presenting to the group for their review and editing.

Strengths and Limits of the Study

One key limitation is possible researcher bias in light of my history with the parishes of this study. It was in the mid point of my doctoral studies that I shifted from a full time religious education director within the community to full time researcher a (no longer employed in the parishes) in the process of data analysis and theory building. Though my formal, IRB approved research began in 2005, the research in a sense began in 1997 when I began working as a director of religious education (DRE) for the two parishes recently merged the year previous to my employment. My own role as participant in all but one of the diocese-parish initiatives included in this study presents research challenges such as the degree to which my known biases toward lay constituencies will obscure my ability to remain sufficiently detached when analyzing hierarchical documents and behavior. It was at the time I was preparing my dissertation proposal that I realized I had to check my overt advocacy for lay parishioners, particularly the participants of this study, on behalf of developing a clear, coherent, and rigorous theory of group development. This had three happy results. Somewhat liberated from the role of the partisan, I became an admirer of lay parishioners whose knowing and choosing were bounded by the cognitive complexity and dynamism of the groups they inhabited. Second, I became the admirer of the priests who are similarly caught up in the crises of parish restructuring and priest sexual abuse. Finally, I began to better understand the canonical limits to governance bishops and chancery officials must operate within as well as what I consider unnecessary, and certainly unhelpful, limits they

place on themselves that affect how they structure dialogue with lay parishioners and interpret lay feedback. As an insider, participant, observer, and retro-researcher, I may be better able to see subtleties and shades of meaning that might not otherwise be apparent in the observations and reflections of study participants, as well as the hierarchy's self reflection on the various initiatives it embarked on.

One limit that other researchers familiar with constructive developmental theory may immediately point out is my decision not to invite the research participants to take subject-object interviews. As a result of this, we do not know the orders of consciousness of the six participants and, accordingly, do not know how their participation in the groups correlates to their developmental orientations. Had each been given subject-object interviews we would know much more. This is certainly true; and in fact calls for further research to confirm or disconfirm the claims of this study. However, since the study was conceived in 2004-2005, no interviews were conducted prior to that point which makes judging group complexity based in part on individual scores obviously impossible. A consequence of this study, however, is the development of a social-cognitive framework for describing and analyzing group dynamic complexity and development – something that would need to be done in any case. Measuring an individual only tells us how that individual makes sense of the world. Measuring two, three or more only tells us where each, as individuals, is at in terms of meaning making structures at one point in time. It tells us little about the group other than that there are different orders of consciousness present, a fact that can be determined by other means of measurement as this study proposes. If one is attempting to construct a theory of *group* cognitive development, the

meaning making structures of individuals represents only one starting point. A

researcher still must account for the relationship, interaction and movement over time of

different orders of consciousness. What this study claims is that different meaning

making structures within groups can be discerned when groups produce texts that reflect

their knowledge production, and when these texts are compared with group behavior. It

further claims that these different meaning making structures (complexity) represent

constituencies within groups that interact and conflict (dynamism) in ways that can

indicate group cognitive development.

Appendix 2: Complexity of Hierarchy Curriculum

This appendix is a supplement to chapter six. It provides a description and analysis of key diocesan documents. For an explanation of the complexity of the diocesan curriculum see chapter six.

1994 Parish Restructuring Initiative

Lay Leadership

In the diocesan documents for the 1994 initiative a general presumption of fearfulness and anxiety on the part of lay Catholics permeates the questions prepared for group facilitators. This is especially the case as it regards the priest shortage and the possibility of future lay parish leaders. After convincingly reporting the statistics of an aging priest population that is also declining in numbers, group facilitators were instructed to ask participants: "Are you convinced that lay Catholics can and should take a greater role in parish life? Are the lay people in our parishes ready to accept the leadership of other lay people in our parishes?" These close-ended questions seek only a yes/no judgment without an inquiry into parishioner experience and understanding, in this case of lay leaders, who for decades had been providing professional leadership in parishes and at the chancery (diocesan office) as chief financial officers, chancellors, business managers, pastoral associates, directors of religious education, and youth ministers. Rather than inquiring into how a lay parish administrator would constitute a

different kind of lay leadership, or inquiring into the relationship between a lay administrator and parish Pastoral Councils; or the relationship between an absentee pastor and both administrators and councils, the process limits the inquiry to whether or not there "should" be such leaders, and whether or not lay people are "ready" for them.

Further, as reviewed in chapter six, on the survey question about the priest shortage and lay leadership, except for a final "other," feedback was structured to give entirely negative responses (in order, "a) fear… b) concern…c) worried… d) fear… e) concern… f) fear… g) worried… h) other"). The questions presume that one's Catholic identity is directly tied to priestly orders rather than baptism (for example, "Worried about losing uniquely Catholic identity" in the absence of a resident priest); that lay persons might lack the training and competence to carry out the responsibilities of administering a parish ("b" and "e") and, in any case, parishioners might not be "ready" to accept such a development; and finally, that parishioners might be frightened that lay administered parishes would somehow make them like the Protestants with their congregational models of governance ("d" and "g"). This suggests that it may be the elite leaders within a hierarchical structure who may be anxious, fearful, and concerned, and who therefore reassert that structure as the critical pieces of it are aging and declining in numbers.

Significantly, the group leader's survey questions solicit different feedback when inquiring about group attitudes toward the hierarchy. For example, in discussing the bishop's video introducing the 1994 process, instead of prompting "fear, concern, fear, worried…" as it does when seeking input about lay leadership and priest shortage, it

prompts, "Impressed, concerned, frustrated, surprised, interested, motivated, other" when inquiring about the bishop's video. Beginning with "Fear" when seeking feedback on lay leadership and priest shortage, but beginning with "Impressed" when seeking feedback on the bishop's role reinforces the image of a fearful, possibly overwhelmed "flock," but one led by a competent shepherd, and has the effect of framing lay participants in the process as passive objects in the hands of active agent-subjects.

Catholic Identity

This claim is supported by the next phase of the process: defining Catholic identity. If the above suggests that Catholics are dependent on priestly orders, this phase splits the notion of community into "Christian" and "Catholic," which further divides clergy and laity by affirming a pre-Vatican II theology of the laity. That is, the laity's apostolate is directed exclusively outward toward the world; when it is directed inward, it is limited to a feeling, or "sense," of belonging to an assembly of the people of God. On the question of the marks of a Catholic community, the process overwhelmingly listed those identity markers that come *only* from priests and bishops. A lay Catholic identity is defined almost exclusively in terms of the priesthood. Absent is an identity constituted by baptism and participation in a local parish community; there is no hint of a *Catholic* identity grounded in responsibility-empowering Christian initiation within family and community.

The Pastor's Responsibilities

It should be assumed that by listing the pastor's myriad responsibilities the intention of the diocese was to initiate a discussion about how these might be shared by

the laity; and yet it is remarkable that no questions in either the facilitator's survey are directed toward how these might in fact be shared. The process simply wants parishioners to reflect on the many duties of its pastor and discuss how to inform other parishioners about their number and variety. That lay parishioners can and do share in most of these responsibilities remains unsaid. As noted in chapter six, it is clear that All Saints reflected on the necessity to "relieve" the pastor of his administrative responsibilities by handing them over to a trained lay parish administrator whose authority was clearly defined. The description of pastoral responsibility is functional, rule-oriented, and role-based, rather than relationship-oriented grounded in the values of mutuality and community where such responsibilities are bourn by the whole People of God. "Responsibilities" do not flow from the ministries and missions of an ecclesial body organized in a complex community, but from the role of its singular leader, the pastor.

From a theological perspective, listing every major pastoral responsibility a parish has to its people and to the broader community, and putting them all under the heading, "The Pastor," underscores an ecclesiology from above. That is, ministries, or rather, tasks "fall" to the laity by way of delegation, rather than evolving out of one's baptism. This runs counter to the Second Vatican II's insistence that lay participation is grounded in baptism, not episcopal delegation; moreover, it represents only an institutional model of the Church. However, from a constructive developmental perspective the process defines the pastor instrumentally – he is his role, a role that is rule-defined. This describes the priest more as a patron (chapter three) than as a pastor; one who sits at the

head of a club, or *collegia*, because of the honor of his exalted status. He is defined by

what he has (priestly honor) and by what he does, but not by who he is or who he is

becoming. This amounts to a second order depiction of the pastor.

The Bishop's "Summary Report"

On August 2, 1994 the bishop sent a Summary Report to every pastor in the

diocese of parishioner feedback on "A Parish Dialogue on Ministry." He states in a cover

letter attached to the document: "approximately 8,500 persons have participated in

meetings in every section of the [diocese] to discuss together the fact of the declining

numbers of priests and to examine possible ways of addressing the ministerial needs of

their parishes in years to come." He emphasized the fact that the report is only

"*preliminary*… a kind of *first step* in our continuing discussion of this problem… This

report is in no way the final word on the subject" (emphasis original). In general, most of

the 8,500 parishioners considered the 1994 initiative a success, as reported by the bishop

in, but had certain reservations. "Where will all the decisions be made? Will we be let

down? Can we ever be challenged as a people to find some course of action without

having to wait for the Chancery?" The bishop states further, "Many felt that they were

being led, like sheep, to look at new models for parish staffing, when in fact it is the

priesthood that needs a new model." Finally, he states:

> There was a consensus throughout the parishes that indeed the parish of the future
> will need to operate out of a *collaborative mode of ministry*. More and more the
> laity will be invited to share in the *decision-making process* on the administrative
> and pastoral levels. Therefore the Diocese will need to prepare priests to accept
> lay leadership. Those in authority will be called upon to be more aware, sensitive
> and respectful of the different gender, cultural and age groups representing the
> Church. In its attempt to be inclusive, the Church will need to listen to all voices,
> seeking to be heard, that make up the Body of Christ (emphasis original).

The Summary Report on the feedback by lay parishioners said several things. First, the bishop underscored the fact that he heard lay critique of the problems presented by the priest shortage and monarchical hierarchy: collaboration, listening, and shared decision making must become the norm between parishioners and pastors, parish and diocese, and laity and bishops. Second, despite the dialogue process that presumed lay resistance to lay leaders replacing priests as parish administrators, the respondents were *more* concerned with how parish *priests and the bishop* would accept lay leaders.

In light of the immediate aftermath of the diocesan initiative, however, the willingness of the bishop to openly report lay concerns did not coincide with a willingness to change governing practices toward increasing collaboration with a laity empowered with decision making capacity. Only one parish in the diocese was assigned a lay parish administrator; when she stepped down a few years later, she was replaced by a priest, thus ending any further movement in the direction of lay led parishes. Further, in 1996, just two years after the dialogue process, the bishop, without consulting the parishes, unilaterally assigned one priest to All Saints and Calvary, ordered them to be merged; and contrary to All Saints' feedback, did not put in place a business manager or administrator to support the pastor in carrying out administrative responsibilities. Finally, in the 2001 initiative that we discuss next, the bishop embarked on an entirely new process of parish consolidation and closures that left out any talk of lay parish administrators. One can conclude from this that what parishioners experienced as a success, the diocese might have experienced as a failure. The *consensus throughout the parishes* – "the parish of the future will need to operate out of a *collaborative mode of*

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ministry. More and more the laity will be invited to share in the *decision-making process* on the administrative and pastoral levels" – was one the bishop ultimately rejected. Why this might be the case may have to do with a misunderstanding of the lay constituency the diocese was dialoguing with, which includes a mismatch between the curriculum they were coaching and the complexity of mind of lay learners.[111]

A Hierarchy in Deep Waters

The Bishop wrote in his Report the following interpretation of lay feedback that he received from parishes in the 1994 process:

> One of the alarming fears expressed was the difficulty with the *transition from priestly to lay leadership.* Several felt that if the laity is to be empowered, everyone (including and especially the Bishop and priests) must learn to accept and to affirm their calling, their gifts and their mandate to minister. The laity are willing and eager to serve. They feel however that they need to be trusted. This may mean that the Bishop and the priests be more receptive to relinquishing some of their power and authority. On the other hand, some stated that priests may have a problem letting go and so should be encouraged and given permission to let go of some of their present duties that could very well be performed by the laity. There was a certain lack of consistency here, however. For while many parishes spoke theoretically of the need for laity to assume roles of greater responsibility, when asked to choose structures for their own parish, they often then chose structures which gave laity the least responsibility and maintained as much of a role for priests as possible.

The bishop goes on to list participants' concrete recommendations to the bishop and diocese "to move in the direction [they had] envisioned." Of the 34 recommendations, the following address leadership and governing concerns of lay participants generated in the 1994 experience:

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[111] It may also have to do with the fact that parishioner demands looked too much like the demands of parishioners in the Lay Trustee movement of the nineteenth century where boards of trustees administered the temporal goods of the church (Appleby 2004; Carey 1987; Dolan 1897; Hennesey, 1981).

o Parish councils should function as a board of directors.
o Parish administrator could become accountable to the parish council.
o Educate the Catholic laity about the opportunities for deacons including educational preparation and their role in the church.
o Hold regional meetings with the Bishop to dialogue with parishioners.
o Need to rethink our structures.
o Strengthen parish council and its commissions.
o Parishes setting goals for their own deanery.

In the first paragraph above, the bishop shows a remarkable willingness to entertain the concerns and issues raised by the participants in the process as it relates to ministry, power and authority. There are many assumptions here, however, not least of which is the assumption that there would, in fact, be a transition from priestly to lay leadership. The bishop's openness to entertain a wide range of lay leadership, however, is over-open since the five models paint ether-or scenarios for parish leadership: either priest run or lay run, thus confusing the roles and relationships of priest-pastor, lay administrators, and parishioners. Two critical questions were raised by participants: Would parishioners continue to have access to a priest; and what would be the relationship between new lay leaders and parish Pastoral Councils?

"This may mean that the Bishop and the priests be more receptive to relinquishing some of their power and authority." This ambivalent sentence is carefully worded by the bishop to avoid committing himself on the issue of governance in the Church. A quick read suggests that there is a glimmer of hope that some kind of power sharing option between the laity and ordained leaders is possible. However, it only "may mean," not that power sharing is an option, but that the bishop and priests are potentially "receptive" to entertaining such an idea; and not even this: the bishop is reporting on what *lay*

parishioners want the bishop and priests to consider, not what they would, in fact, consider. History bears out this interpretation since no changes were introduced in the diocese that would afford a governing role for lay parishioners as participants understood it, the idea of lay administrators was scrapped, and in fact, lay participation became more limited and controlled as each new initiative was introduced.

What emerges in a close analysis of the process and the bishop's Summary Report are critical differences between the bishop and lay parishioners on the question of lay empowerment. By "empowering the laity" the bishop was not thinking of the great mass of lay parishioners, parishes or parish councils or of investing these with some of the "power and authority" bishops and priests possess and might presumably "relinquish." Instead, he was thinking of empowering "the laity" by putting one lay person in charge of parishes, while leaving undeveloped how they would be appointed, trained and supported, and leaving unsaid the extent of their authority and to whom they would be accountable. Whatever alarm he created in his video about the chronic priest shortage and its likely consequences he exacerbated by suggesting a simplistic strategy of a possible transition from priestly to lay leadership without adverting to the power relations inherent in such a move. This demonstrates probable confusion on the part of the diocese about what lay parishioners were concerned about: clarifying the role and authority of new lay leaders vis-à-vis parish Pastoral Councils, indicating the level of education and expertise that would be required of new lay leaders, and securing for parishioners a meaningful voice within their own parishes and within the diocese through stronger, more representative Pastoral Councils.

Astonishingly, the bishop frames parishioner response as containing "a certain lack of consistency" because "while many parishes spoke theoretically of the need for laity to assume roles of greater responsibility, when asked to choose structures for their own parish, they often then chose structures which gave the laity the least responsibility and maintained as much of a role for priests as possible." The bishop seems to believe that his appointing a lay administrator to run the temporal affairs of the local community, answerable only to the bishop or more troubling, an absentee pastor, is an example of increasing lay participation and is what the parishioners mean when they express hopes to achieve a greater voice in the governing of the church. But having a lay person in charge of a parish in a hierarchical church no more increases the voice and power of the laity than having a priest. Said differently, lay parishioners understood that their role in governing would not qualitatively change by a model which placed over them a "lay hierarch" answerable only to a pastor or bishop, and not to a council of parishioners. This is a critical piece in understanding why the hierarchy misunderstood the lay participants in future initiatives, most of which called for various forms of lay councils, assemblies, or gatherings to consult with the bishop. It is also a critical piece that developed over time in the mind of the groups in the next ten years. What began in the backdrop of their thinking, governing their concerns, complaints and critiques, slowly moved into the foreground and into their hands, governing they way they framed the problem and engaged the hierarchy. This movement represented the gradual reconciliation in the mind of the group of the two conflicting motivations of affirming

and preserving a hierarchical structure while insisting on democratic participation. It also

represents a significant cognitive growth in the group, one we discuss below.

2001 Parish Restructuring Initiative

The bishop anticipated challenges to the proposal to consolidate, close, and sell

parishes, and calls for discretion on the part of pastors:

> Once again I repeat, these proposals are very preliminary, a starting point. It
> would be wise to avoid any unnecessary alarm for parishioners until a plan has
> been recommended by the deanery and I have had the opportunity to discuss it
> with the various consultative bodies. However, it is always helpful to continue to
> educate the faithful about the declining number of priests, the need for more lay
> involvement and planning for such changes.

As pointed out above, the same bishop seven years earlier in his write up of the 1994

event made a similar statement in his Summary Report, that it is a "preliminary" report

and is a "kind of first-step in our continuing discussion of this problem [priest shortage]."

It was merely intended to help parishes see how other communities responded and to be a

catalyst for further reflection. The bishop anticipates the possibility that lay parishioners

will find the proposal alarming but prefers that the moment of alarm be deferred until a

concrete plan emerges. I.e., only after the plan has been formulated and discussed among

various diocesan bodies (consultative) will the bishop feel comfortable dealing with the

expected negative reaction.

Instead of educating parishioners about the proposed deanery process, the

canonical relationship between parish and diocese, or the evolution of these relationships

in American Catholic history, the bishop instructs priests to educate parishioners about

the numerical priest shortages, and about their need to participate in planning for inevitable changes. Thus, rhetorically, lay participation is promoted and encouraged. But in reality, participation by lay parishioners is more limited and constrained than the 1994 process. It suggests participation and inclusion through a process of ideology adoption rather than inquiry, research and collaborative dialogue. Significantly, lay participation was not mandated by the bishop. Priests did not have to invite parishioners to the deanery meetings and, in fact, many priests came with no lay parishioners from the parishes they led.

Whatever was produced by the deaneries also had the status of recommendations. Lay participation was reduced to preparing to accept changes that will come. The bishop decided to let priests see the proposal for the entire diocese, not just for their deaneries, stating, "I thought it would be most helpful for you and others to see something of *the changes that the diocese must face* in the next few years" (my emphasis). This naturalizing discourse assumes the inevitability of parish restructuring. As such, the 2001 initiative is a "hegemonic process" (Fairclough 2004, 202) in which a particular outcome was anticipated, and discourses which could hinder that outcome (lay administered parishes; no restructuring) were excluded. Norman Fairclough (1992, 2004, p. 202) refers to this as a socially constitutive mode of action in the interplay of *text* (written or spoken language – the bishop's 2001 letter), *discourse practice* (text production and interpretation, including distribution and consumption) and *social practice* (discourse as enacting ideology and power) (Fairclough 1995, p. 133-135). The bishop framed the discussion: he wanted lay parishioners to participate in a process that guaranteed the

results he hoped to achieve – results which, if there was any confusion, he included in the proposal attached to his letter which suggested options for restructuring parishes throughout the diocese.

The 2001 process was pivotal in bringing the study participants to act out against their status of powerlessness in the Church. This was not so much a dawning awareness of their lack of power, for that is nothing new to most lay Catholics who, knowing their low status relative to bishops, rarely if ever saw fit to act out. It was in the experience that their participation did not appear to matter to the hierarchy that was the source for their confrontational behavior in the 2001 process and again in the 2002 Listening Sessions and 2004 Lay Collaborative Inquiry Groups. Before, they might have been willing to suspend their values of democratic participation in a church led by God's appointees who had their best interests at heart as representatives of Jesus the Good Shepherd. Now, it was no longer the case. With the discovery that the parish's work in 1994 was abandoned by the hierarchy, with the awareness that their cooperation in the 1996 merger with perceived exemplary outcomes was ignored, and with the knowledge that the bishop seriously proposed closing and selling a parish that was viable according to any reasonable standard, lay participants suddenly became energized to take action against their powerless status.

When the group's letter was sent to the bishop the pastor decided to include a brief cover letter stating that it represents the sentiments of a fairly broad constituency within the parishes. The lengthy three page response from the bishop came a little over a month later with the following opening comments:

> It has not been my practice to respond to parishes relative to petitions since it has been my experience that petitions do not necessarily represent the view of the majority of parishioners. However, since I received a letter from your pastor, Father [Charles], 'that the petition represents' a group of parishioners who wanted to share with others their areas of concerns, I will now attempt to respond, at the same time, realizing any response in writing is not always as satisfying as one would like.

The bishop points out how rare such letters from him are since, in his judgment, they do not represent a majority of parishioners. As Arthur argued to the 2002 group, the bishop's stated reason for responding is not because of the merits of the parish letter and the signatures of over 350 parishioners, but because Fr. Charles attached a cover letter. The bishop implies that the majority view of a parish would secure a response from him, thus offering a nod toward democracy. However, since there is no juridical process for measuring parishioners' concerns and interests, it is impossible for this bishop, or any bishop, to know majority *or* minority views. Therefore, since it "has not been my practice to respond to parishes relative to petitions" because "petitions do not necessarily represent the view of the majority of parishioners," the bishop uses the notion of democracy not to understand parishioner views but, curiously, to rule the articulation of their views out of court because "it has been [his] experience" that they represent

minority views. It is an unfair policy, based on the experience of one man, when petitions by parishioners are judged as unrepresentative in parishes that have no representation. This paragraph anticipates the rest of the letter in which the bishop reminds the parishioners who signed the letter that they have nothing to teach him, that he is already correctly doing everything they critique him on; thus dismissing or disparaging the new knowledge the 2002 group produced.

He suggested further that the group from the two parishes could have benefited from better leadership who would have been able to answer their questions right off. He stated,

> First, many parishes throughout the diocese have had gatherings to discuss the current crisis in the Church… For many people this has been very helpful. It gave them an opportunity to express their views and feelings, and in those places where the pastor or some other knowledgeable person on the way a diocese functions was present, they find that they received many insights as to their questions."

If the group had such a "knowledgeable person" on how the diocese operates, they might not have needed to write down their questions in a letter. The bishop stated that the diocese is implementing a new program to screen and educate all employees of the diocese about sexual abuse of children, and he is planning to release financial information about the diocese soon. He stated, "I mentioned the deanery structure, the Diocesan Pastoral Council, the Finance Council and I would also add the Public Policy Committee made up mostly of lay people. It seems that these structures are in place and should be seen as moving in the direction you suggest."

The assembly of elected lay parishioners the 2002 group called for in order to have direct dialogue with the bishop and other diocesan bodies is not taken up by the

bishop. He implies that the laity already have representation by lay membership in the

various diocesan bodies he refers to. However, as it has been argued in this study, the lay

persons in these councils and committees represent the diocese and the bishop, not the

interests of parishes and lay parishioners. Moreover, they represent an elite of well

placed, highly advantaged individuals who hardly represent the voice of the average

Catholic parishioner. If the work of these diocesan bodies is made public, it moves

downward and unidirectionally, communicating in the form of ready-made programs and

processes. The parish restructuring initiatives are all examples of this, which meant that

lay parishioners did not participate in the kind of theoretical knowing that framed the

problems, posed questions, and proposed a range of answers. Instead, parishioners were

consistently invited to "participate" by "deciding" among a range of prepared answers;

decisions that may or may not be acknowledged by the bishop. Chapter six argued that

the diocese thought for parishioners, not with them.

In his letter, the bishop further argued that victims of priest sexual abuse in

general appreciate the way they have been treated by the diocese. "For every case of

discontent the media has printed, there are more cases in which the victims feel that the

diocese has believed them, taken appropriate action, and treated them with respect." This

is a surprising and unverifiable assertion. The victims that were "not believed" felt

compelled to file charges with the Human Rights Commission or to file lawsuits in court;

those that settled with the diocese signed confidentiality agreements that both silenced

victims and avoided admission of wrongdoing on the part of accused clergy and the

bishop. It is difficult therefore to understand how victims could feel as satisfied and

appreciative as the bishop suggests. Again, this is the confident view from above, from a bishop who shows little evidence that he has heard and understood the suffering and "discontent" of victims of clergy sexual misconduct, even those reported in the media.

The bishop touched on previous parish and deanery meetings whose goals had been to help guide the diocese in planning and direction.

> Since the early nineties, I have repeatedly asked the deaneries and the parishes in the diocese to participate in a planning process to set goals and direction for the diocese. While the focus of these discussions have tended to be on the leadership of the parish and how to function with fewer priests, the broader goal has always been to help people understand their proper role in the Church, to increase lay participation, to identify the needs of the Church in the twenty-first century, and to find ways of responding to these needs. It seems to me that evangelization and helping each parish to become a school of prayer are two foundational priorities, but I don't think others necessarily see this or realize the long range fruit of such priorities.

An immediate question arises over the assumption by the bishop that his own priorities had in fact been communicated. There is no evidence that participants understood the two previous initiatives as anything other than two separate programs designed to address the question of how to continue being church in an era of declining priests; i.e., "leadership of the parish." The bishop's broader, long range priorities, such as his monastic notion of the parish as a school of prayer, and his notion of what constitutes "proper roles," never made it into the hands of the participants of this study. What was communicated, but only in 1994, was the proper role of the pastor which, as reviewed above, was a rule-defined role that dislocates pastors from the communities out of which they come and on behalf of whom they serve.

A second question is why the bishop included this paragraph in his response to lay parishioners who have asked him to render an account of what he is doing to protect victims, to improve communications, and to be transparent with regard to finances? "Since the early nineties" he as "repeatedly" asked both parishes and deaneries to "participate in a planning process." What the bishop understood as a broad range, long term, series of initiatives (1994? 2001? – he again does not mention them by name) intended to increase lay participation, to educate people about their proper roles, plan, and set goals for the diocese, the participants instead went in another direction. These "others" who may not have seen the long range fruit of his priorities had apparently prevented their coming to fruition. It again suggests that the bishop misunderstood lay parishioners concerns. This paragraph about the role of deaneries and parishes who have *repeatedly* been asked to plan and participate but who instead seem to have thwarted his priorities, said to this group of parishioners, is very curious. Was the bishop suggesting that the parishioners themselves, who obstructed the 2001 process by their negative critique of the restructuring proposal then on the table, and who now had sent him the 2002 letter, were themselves somehow responsible for many of the problems they complain about in their letter? If so, he does this without acknowledging the possibility that any perceived failure on the part of deanery/parish planning process could simply indicate that the diocese's initiatives had anticipated outcomes that did not match the outcomes parishioners arrived at; that parishioner goals turned out to be different from the diocese's goals. As argued below, the diocese did not demonstrate that it was

learning from its experiences with parishioners, something the CPPDC study also found (Rexhausen 2004, 45).

Identity and Roles in Episcopal Discourse

"[T]he broader goal has always been to help people understand their proper role in the Church." An important question is what role in the Church the bishop had in mind for "people" in the context of his response to a letter written by lay persons critiquing his performance? What is assumed is that it is the bishop's and diocese's responsibility to inform people of their proper role, and not lay parishioners to determine these for themselves. He "naturalizes" this ideology by framing it as common sense knowledge that readers should recognize as such. He also implies that "people" must not "understand their proper role." It is perhaps significant that the bishop mentions his desire to "increase lay participation" only after "helping people understand" their correct roles. But if the proper role of lay persons as witnessed in the previous initiatives is to listen (be educated about priest numbers), dialogue (over pre-existing proposals), and make recommendations (to the bishop who may or may not heed them), then his notion of participation and roles is clearly different from lay parishioners.

2003Visioning Process

The bishop began his speech in 2003 by assuring his ordained audience that little would change for priests of the diocese even as the impact of such a vision would likely affect every Catholic in the diocese. "Though my remarks are addressed to the priests, it

will become evident that what I have to say involves the whole church, deacons, religious and laity." The role of pastors as authoritative leaders of parishes will remain essentially unchanged, assures the bishop, even as the way they lead will change. What this means is that parishes will not be led by lay administrators. What the bishop must have learned from previous initiatives is that models with lay leaders managing parishes are unacceptable. His 1994 misunderstanding of lay ambivalence about the authority of lay administrators vis-à-vis parish Pastoral Councils, regional meetings of parishes, and their concerns about their relationship with, and access to, pastors, suggests a governing value or a tacit rule he is following: priests, and only priests, exercise the spiritual *and* temporal affairs of the parish.

The specific things that will not change, he asserts, are the basic lives, powers and prerogatives of priests. First, the priest-centered "mission of evangelization" (through preaching, teaching, sacraments and by attending to the needs of the poor) will remain the same. Second, the "leadership role of the presbyterate [priesthood] will not change," called "from among the baptized" and "set us aside within the Church community to be sacramental representatives of Christ for them." Though priests and bishops are equal to laity in terms of their "need of God's grace" and "remain within the People of God, believers with them, not above them," they are nevertheless "ordained ministers" and their "leadership in the Church is hierarchical." Third, the purpose of their mission as leaders will remain the same – building up the body and "linking up the local community with the Diocese and with the universal Church." He quotes John's Gospel: "I do not pray for them (the disciples) alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through

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their word, that all may be one as you, Father, are in me and I in you; I pray that they may be one in us…" As treated in the next section on the 2004 initiative, the bishop called for a massive consolidation of parishes throughout the diocese, a fact that, contrary to his assurances, would greatly change the way priests carry out their ministries. The bishop cloaked the radical change in how parish priests would likely experience their ministries in a discourse that affirms the unchanging theological and ecclesiological identity, function, and powers of the priesthood.

What does the bishop suggest will change? Without naming them as such, it is the community life of lay Catholics and the way they, as communities, are led.

> The change I am referring to pertains to the infrastructure, if you will, of our mission of evangelization, namely, our parishes and the way we pastor them. The configuration of our parishes in the very near future, in light of the number of priests available to be pastors of these parishes, along with the way we pastor them are, it seems to me, the most pressing issues we face. And I add, and I cannot stress this too strongly, facing them together as a presbyterate can become a most life-giving experience for us and the diocese at large.

In this unequal encounter between the bishop and priests of the diocese, the bishop lays out the ideology according to which he and his priests will in the future maintain an unequal relationship with Catholic parishioners, his rhetoric of equality notwithstanding. In this tight paragraph the bishop oversimplifies a complex problem. He represents as common sense the hierarchy's own ideological interests by taking for granted the reconfiguration of parishes without actually arguing the point. In this way he "naturalizes" ideology as non-ideological common sense (Fairclough 1995). The bishop does not argue: "Because of a number of policies, disciplines, and teachings, we are experiencing an extended period of a shortage of priest candidates in proportion to the

number of parishes needing pastors, and therefore we have a serious staffing shortage for parishes; a fact which requires not only rethinking how parishes are administered, but how our ordination policies might be contributing to the problem." The bishop instead argues: "because of the priest shortage, we need to change the way we configure parishes." By oversimplifying, the bishop narrows the debate, perhaps to avoid unanticipated outcomes.

By framing the problem as one of "infrastructure," not only is the action – parish restructuring – presented as a common sense inevitability, but those acted upon – lay parishioners – become an invisible constituency. The issue is not presented as people of faith losing familiar sacred spaces, but as "structures" that need to be restructured by hierarchs in order to address a problem whose source cannot be investigated.[112] "Infrastructure," the network of parishes and tens of thousands of Catholics in the diocese will potentially undergo massive change so that one bishop and one hundred priests will, in the bishop's own words, have to change very little. Naming and naturalizing the "most pressing issue" as parish restructuring and placing lay parishioners behind a linguistic veil, the bishop brackets out both the source of the problem (too few males entering seminaries) and its true cost. The 99.9% who are the lay parishioners will bear the weight of most if not all of the major changes which include the financial cost of

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[112] This does not concern only the issues of celibacy and women's ordination, but the manner in which bishops handled priest abusers and the priest sexual abuse crisis itself. Men who today consider the priesthood have to overcome not only the issues of celibacy, loneliness, long hours, and a job that is undergoing rapid change – that that to which he is drawn will likely change and may end up becoming something he would not have been drawn to had he known – but also the stigma attached to the name "Priest" by its association with "priest abuser" and "priest pedophile." One example of this latter challenge is a professor friend who volunteered at his parish to teach the Middle School religious education class his sons were in. He reported that two boys during the social began to wrestle when suddenly, the one who ended up on the bottom yelled, "get off me you *priest*!"

reconfiguration (building new churches, remodeling old churches, etc.), changing times

of worship, closing or consolidating parish schools, reconfiguring and re-staffing councils

and commissions, and the downsizing and restructuring of parish staff.

In the bishop's rhetoric, the costly and significant disruption of congregational life

for parishioners whose gathering constitutes the very fact of a parish is located in a

decontextualized, ahistorical and faceless "infrastructure." The bishop thus minimizes

the real cost of such a change by turning the countless lay parishioners into a nameless

infrastructure whom he explicitly excludes from his proposed visioning. The success of

the hierarchical ideology depended on the ability of the bishop to rally fellow priests to

close ranks around the "most pressing issues." He promised that "facing them together as

a presbyterate can become a most life-giving experience for us and the diocese at large."

His speech leaves unsaid that fact that except for the priest shortage, parishes in general

are not otherwise vulnerable to restructuring – to suppression, twinning or clustering

(because, for example, of poor conditions of finances or facilities, or a significant decline

in parish membership). What he hoped would be life-giving for priests and the diocese,

could be experienced heart wrenching betrayal by many lay parishioners.

The bishop, however, adverted to the fact that priests doubt the intentions of the

hierarchy.

> You would not believe the number of times people have implied that we have
> already developed such a diocesan vision and that we are going to impose it on
> everyone. The conclusion they draw is that since that is the case they therefore
> see no point in cluster planning… Now we see [cluster planning] is imperative, if
> the work already done is not to lead to frustration…

The statement suggests evidence of doubts and suspicion about the diocese's intentions and processes; it suggests strong suspicion among clergy about hierarchical intentions for restructuring parishes. It also suggests naiveté on the part of the bishop about the impact of diocesan initiatives and proposals upon priests and lay parishioners. By stating, "[y]ou would not believe the number of times people have implied," but without taking up their argument, the bishop suggest that he does not take seriously those who imply a *fait acompli* on the part of the chancery. A potentially sizeable group of "people" – priests – have *many times* implied that the bishop is going to do whatever he wants to do regardless of the input and feedback of clergy and laity, and have further implied that their participation would therefore be pointless. This is *precisely* what lay study participants reported: their own investment of time was wasted by a hierarchy that neither took seriously their input, nor did any discernable follow up; a fact which dampened their enthusiasm to participate. According to the bishop, clergy who imply a *fait acompli* are simply wrongheaded and their argument is not worth taking up. He dismisses them by asserting as fact "what we have learned" from past initiatives, a learning that "has enabled all of us to realize that we can't operate under the banner of things as usual." This represents a pedagogy that unwittingly steers people away from participation because it does not involve them in problem posing and inquiry.

The bishop assumes everyone knows the whatness of "what we have learned" when in fact the very calling of the new vision for the diocese without reference in his speech the 1994 initiative and the 2001 deanery gatherings, and without naming precisely what was in fact learned, suggests that what the hierarchy learned may not be what others

learned, or that what the hierarchy learned was not how to better address the

consequences of the priest shortage, but how accomplish a vision with minimal resistance

(Woodside-Jiron 2004). Molly, one of the study participants, she made the following

observation in an interview about what the diocese might be learning from its experience

with lay parishioners:

> M So the Catholic Church, as much as it, you know, and here's this 78 year old guy who's now the Pope [Benedict XVI], he won't change anything. Women aren't gonna get to be priests. Priests aren't gonna get to be married. As I think we're changing and evolving and understanding, we're not.

> J So, the listening, and this is purportedly a session [2001] where the Diocese was gonna get to learn something about lay feedback. Do you think listening happened there?

> M No.

> J Do you think any learning happened on the part of the Diocese?

> M On, on part of the Diocese?

> J Yeah.

> M Probably not to send out letters like that again [the 2001 proposal]… It learned what not to do. Not what to do. I think it was more of a, how can I say this? I think it was sort of a fake, you know, a fake play. Like, well, we got all these people up in arms. Let's just have a meeting, make it look like we're gonna listen, make it look like it's official. Have them sign up. Have them bring their people.

The bishop's words also suggest a shared agreement among clergy about what was

learned (without naming it) which is obvious and which is derived from the work and

outcomes previous initiatives, also unnamed.

A Bishop's View of Lay Participation

In his 2003 address to priests, the bishop appears to call for broad based lay decision making and participation.

> What can we do to allow for the greatest participation by those who will be affected by the decisions that will need to be made? How do we tap into the wisdom of the entire People of God of [the diocese]: our deacons, the religious, and the lay leaders in our Church, and at the same time respect the leadership role of the presbyterate?
>
> From the simple facts of numbers it seems that a realignment of our parishes is necessary. To do this we need a broad-based, decision-making process to advise the Bishop on the future shape of those parishes.

The bishop in fact offered *no provisions* for lay decision-making nor did he propose introducing processes or mechanisms for hearing lay parishioners' concerns and interests as they define them. The bishop confusingly asked how to allow for *the greatest participation by those who will be affected by the decisions that will need to be made*. But it raises the question, who is making the decisions, and for whom? Use of passive infinitive for the act of making big decisions implies 1) the inevitability of the decisions; 2) ones that are made at the top; 3) and in advance of any initiative involving lay persons. If this assessment is accurate, what does the bishop mean by participation when it regards already-made, from-above decisions? *Participation by the greatest number*, i.e., laity, is a non-decisive, passive activity for them. Participation therefore means being involved in a passive process of assenting to prior decision-making by active agent-hierarchs. Participation is assenting to and learning to live with what is construed as inevitable, and that that constitutes participation.

It is possible that by the statement, "the decisions that will need to be made," the bishop meant that laity will participate in decision making, but wanted to emphasize the

point that such decisions are inevitable and will affect all of the laity. I.e., it is inevitable that we will need to reconfigure parishes in light of the priest shortage, so we might as well get to the task of inviting and involving lay parishioners to participate in deciding what shape the process will take. The fact, however, that the bishop is addressing *only priests*, and commissions the Office of Parish Planning to issue a follow up letter to all priests of the diocese calling for the development of a common *presbyteral* vision, a follow up letter that never once uses the word "laity" or "lay" or "parishioner" suggests that the two previous points are on target. Moreover, there is not a concomitant call for a common *lay Catholic vision* for the diocese, and no follow up on the "synodal like" gathering which would presumably include lay persons (below). This further suggests that the participation he wanted from the laity is one of agreeing to or coming to terms with previous, inevitable and unilateral decisions from the hierarchy.

Tapping into the wisdom of the whole church, including laity, *and at the same time respecting the leadership role of the presbyterate* begs several questions. Is allowing a place at the table for the expression of lay wisdom potentially disturbing for priestly leadership? Is the bishop concerned that giving voice to lay wisdom might in some way threaten priests? Or are there known priests who would chafe at "tapping into the wisdom of…laity" who need to be reassured and comforted by the bishop's qualifier? Tapping into lay wisdom seems to be a potentially dangerous activity for either the hierarchy, or the clergy, or both.

Because of the priest shortage, *we need a broad-based, decision-making process to advise the Bishop on the future shape of those parishes*. Decision making with respect

to the laity is a euphemism for giving advice to the bishop. The bishop here refers to himself in the third person. What does this mean? Does he want to emphasize his status and power? Or does he want to avoid drawing attention to the power relations operating in the diocese? To say, *we need a broad-based, decision-making process to advise me* makes obvious the point that he is the decision maker, however "broad based" the process is, and highlights the contradiction between calling *advice-giving* a process of *decision making*. Moreover, to say, "to advise me" would make it awkward when he says "we need."   Saying, "we need a decision making process to advise the Bishop" allows him to include himself in the company of "we" priests, religious and laity and share in their need for "a process" thus reaffirming the inevitability of his proposals and downplaying his true power. It smooths-over the dual awkwardness of equating advice-giving with decision making, and the broad base with one hierarch who will decide. At the same time, it suggests a role reversal between himself and the laity – they, in their lower level processes, will be making important decisions, while he will simply be receiving advice – when in fact they will not be making decisions, the bishop will; decisions which may or may not be based on the content of their advice-giving. Finally, the audience he is downplaying his power to is an audience of priests who, as we saw above, already may be suspecting a *fait accompli*. It is their doubts about his use of power that the bishop is possibly concerned with and addressing. That the laity might also doubt his use of power might not be a serious concern for him since it will be the pastors that will have to face whatever consequences lay ahead when a vision is constructed and implemented.

The bishop continues:

It is not my intention to imply that there has been no planning process operative until now. But I will state that my own preference has been to give broad principles and then to encourage the local communities, especially the deaneries and clusters, to make concrete recommendations as to how they can be best implemented… I felt that in approaching the situation in this way the local community would have a sense of ownership and embrace the decisions, rather than seeing them as something coming from the outside.

[Quoting The Basic Plan for the Ongoing Formation of Priests, he states] The dynamics are simple but extraordinary: to come together, to listen to God, to listen to the needs of the people, to listen to the inner promptings of the Holy Spirit, to be in dialogue with one another and with Christ's faithful people, to be in spiritual conversation, and to make decisions that take into account how the word will be proclaimed, the mysteries of Christ will be celebrated, and the mission of the Church furthered.

The bishop hoped to encourage local communities to take *ownership and embrace the decisions* by front loading the process with his own broad principles, by stating his preference that deliberation occur in *clusters* of parishes and *deaneries* (bigger clusters), not individual parishes, and by naming the outcome as making recommendations. Ownership by lay people means embracing the decision of hierarchs. Ownership is equivalent to an act of assent or obedience. The assumption here is that one can have ownership even without having a direct and immediate voice in making and taking the decision to restructure a parish – one can take ownership of that which one does not own. The bishop who makes a decision from without, hopes parishioners can embrace it as their own decision and not "see" it as "coming from the outside." This masks his use of unilateral power by a rhetoric of community ownership and participation. Also worth noting is the tendency of the hierarchy to include lay involvement in macro settings – clusters and deaneries. This suggests new learning by the bishop from the 1994 initiative

which took place in parishes throughout the diocese, and is perhaps based on the 2001 experience in which the focus, energy and power of local communities critiqued a poorly conceived hierarchical initiative. The result of this learning seems to be that lay *parishioners* need to be replaced by lay "representatives" of non-parish constituencies.

The bishop in his gloss does not clarify the quote he makes from *The Basic Plan*, thus leaving open the question of what the hierarchy listens to vis-à-vis the laity. Is it a listening to lay parishioners themselves in a context in which they lay out before the hierarchy their needs, or is it a listening to the "*needs*" of the laity as determined by clergy and hierarchy, rather than listening the laity? By not clarifying this ambiguity, the bishop gives the impression that discerning the needs of the people is something the hierarchy can do all on its own, that the needs of "the faithful people" are decided *for* them, not *with* them or *by* them. That is why it is now crucial for priests to "seriously address the needs" not of the 99% who make up the laity, but "the needs of this local Church," and to do so as a college of presbyters apart from the laity; all the more ironic since what he quotes calls for "dialogue…with Christ's faithful people" who have been entirely excluded from the process. Or does he mean by "faithful" only those who are ordained? This implies that the further removed you are from the face of the people, the more authentic is the visioning, a fact not lost on the participants. Discerning the needs of the people is through an undefined spiritual process that involves "promptings of the Holy Spirit" but not stronger pastoral councils or lay assemblies, or diocesan synods.

> As we begin the process together what we've learned from our cluster planning and what needs to be done, it will be to the Priests' Council that we will first turn. I could easily imagine this leading not to a synod, strictly speaking, but to a synodal like gathering so that all in the diocese will have a chance for in-put and

ownership. But the first stage will be working together as a presbyterate in developing a diocesan vision, a vision that will affect the lives of all of us. Such a vision will enable a priest or parish coordinator to transfer into another cluster knowing how it fits into the diocesan vision thus helping that cluster maintain its sense of direction.

It is curious why the bishop wished to avoid calling for a diocesan synod, but instead a strange, "synodal like" gathering except that canon law requires the presence of lay persons in a diocesan synod. Does his synod-like gathering suggest that he is thinking of ways to limit or exclude lay participation from such an event – perhaps to avoid the confrontational displays from parishioners such as the participants in this study? The highest priority, the "first stage," is for all priests to craft a vision for the diocese, one that will "affect the lives of all of us." Since the bishop is speaking to other priests in this address, does he means by "all of us," all priests? If so, all of us, astonishingly, can be uttered in a way that excludes 99.9% of Catholics, thus reaffirming the low status of lay parishioners in the eyes of the hierarchy. Parish reconfiguration is about the needs of the lives of priests first, then at some point, it is presumed that the needs of the community life of lay parishioners will emerge in an unspecified and unnamed second stage; an emergence which may or may not involve consulting the laity about their needs, but may involve determining what they are from an unnamed spiritual process.

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