



## **Restorying Priests as Entrepreneurs: A Reflective Essay on Entrepreneurial Leadership in the Scottish Episcopal Church**

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### Keywords

*Faith-based organizations*

*Clergy*

*Cultural change*

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### Abstract

This paper explores and reflects upon how far clergy may act as entrepreneurial leaders in a faith-based organisation which values tradition and continuity, yet wishes to open its membership to a wider constituency. In spite of increased secularisation in Britain, religion and its role in people's lives refuses to disappear. Churches and other religious movements now frequently seek to adapt change management techniques to promote cultural diversity and thus appeal to a wider potential membership. At congregational level, clergy become responsible for implementing cultural change initiatives. Consequently, the clergy role may involve responsibility not just for spiritual and ministry issues, in the context of caring for church members' emotional needs, but also for management. If, as managers, clergy are responsible for promoting cultural change through management initiatives, it is but a short step to restory them as entrepreneurs, or at least entrepreneurial leaders. Indeed, strategic enterprise thinking is needed to achieve successful cultural change. The pressures on clergy to act as both spiritual 'therapists' and to manage sophisticated corporate operations place a strain on their ability to be also ministers, and obvious anomalies exist. For example, congregations might value leadership behaviours in their clergy, but not when leadership involves acting as a catalyst for cultural change. The more enterprising clergy can experience frustration in bringing about even small innovations and change, and may experience role strain when required to balance the need for providing individual support to existing congregation members with an expectation of appealing to new sources of membership.

### Introduction

Whilst some scholars maintain that secularisation in Britain is complete, the issue of religion and its role in people's lives refuses to disappear. In response to contemporary challenges, churches and other religious movements continue to seek to adapt change management techniques to promote cultural diversity and thus appeal to a wider potential membership. To this end, at congregational level, clergy become responsible for implementing cultural change initiatives. This authors research into the Scottish Episcopal Church suggests a three-fold clergy role which involves responsibility not just for spiritual and ministry issues (the latter in the context of caring for members' emotional needs), but also for

management. If, as managers, clergy are responsible for promoting cultural change through a type of corporate management initiative, it is but a short step to restory them as entrepreneurs, or entrepreneurial leaders. Indeed, strategic enterprise thinking is needed to achieve successful cultural change.

Consequently this essay reflects on the challenges of the complex role of clergy as entrepreneurs in the Scottish Episcopal Church, and proposes that understanding of this aspect of their role sheds unique light on the experiences of faith-based organisations in responding to contemporary challenges. The heavy pressures on these individuals both to act as spiritual ‘therapists’ and to manage frequently sophisticated corporate operations places a strain on their ability to be ‘ministers’. For example, congregations might value entrepreneurial leadership in their clergy, but not when such leadership requires them to act as catalysts for cultural change. As a consequence, the more enterprising among the clergy can experience frustration in bringing about even small innovations and can also experience role strain when required to balance the need for providing individual support to existing congregation members with an expectation of attracting new sources of membership. Entrepreneurship is needed to keep the churches alive, yet it sits uneasily with the need to provide emotional sustenance to the current membership. Is it possible to maintain both elements – of tradition and of radicalism – in creative tension, or must one be sacrificed to the interests of the other? Therefore, this paper reflects on the way in which restorying priests as entrepreneurs can provide new insights into the challenges mainstream churches face in restorying the Christian message for a wider constituency, when that message has become inextricable from a world of tradition and continuity.

### Starting the restorying process

This essay reflects upon the writer’s doctoral study into the experiences of clergy in the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) of managing cultural change, two years after its completion. The term ‘restorying’ here applies at two levels. First, revisiting the data reveals significant new insights to be gained into the challenges facing contemporary churches by restorying clergy as entrepreneurial agents, seeking to revitalise a way of ordering corporate religious experience that may appear irrelevant for contemporary society. Secondly, an entrepreneurial view of the clergy role can, and should, involve restorying Christian narratives for a generation which seeks spiritual meaning, but is sceptical of tradition and conventional religious practice (Drane, 2001, 2005). Moreover, the study of Christianity lends itself particularly well to narrative approaches, since its theology is predicated on narrative: ‘...religious beliefs and practices cannot be refuted, but rather out-narrated’ (Hardy, 2002).

This paper reflects on how far clergy in a liberal mainstream church are able to restory their faith narrative in the context of an organisational change initiative. How far does the nature of the clergy role at grassroots level help or hinder innovation and creativity in an enterprising sense? If clergy do have an important role to play as social entrepreneurs, this role appears to be largely ignored by clergy and their congregations. But this is not an isolated phenomenon in the SEC. Other liberal mainstream denominations like the Church of England (2004) and the Church of Scotland (2001) have commissioned reports into how they may restory their essential mission to contemporary society, and both reports have a subtext exhorting clergy to be more enterprising and innovative.

In a purposive sample of SEC clergy and congregations, the clergy role chiefly valued by both groups was that of ministry: congregations sought affirmation and emotional support from their priests. Congregations might value entrepreneurial leadership in clergy, but not when such leadership involved driving through changes which might challenge traditional values or principles. Consequently, clergy could experience role strain when required to balance the need for providing individual support to existing congregations with an expectation of being enterprising in attracting new membership. This essay continues with a critical review of relevant literature.

### Reviewing the Literature

Like other liberal mainstream churches, at the end of the twentieth century the SEC wished to reorder its approach to mission in contemporary society. As a disestablished church in Scotland<sup>1</sup> there is evidence that it attracts people who regard it as a more unconventional alternative to other Christian churches. The aim of its chief spokesperson (Primus) Bishop Richard Holloway, to seek out ‘marginal’ Christians therefore made sense historically and psychologically (Holloway, 1999). As a long disestablished church the SEC had had time to adapt to its ‘niche’ in Scotland, but still had to consider whether it should be more radical, and entrepreneurial, in developing fresh expressions of Church life.

The Mission 21 initiative developed by Holloway represents a type of ‘reformation’ of the SEC - not, clearly, on a par with the development of Scottish Calvinism, but in Holloway’s terms throwing open Christianity to ‘thinking people’ as he termed them (Deveney, 1999). Holloway, agnostic about traditional theologies, was extending a welcome to those who like him wished to question and challenge traditional mores and could be restoried as an entrepreneurial leader (Brown,

2009), who worked with sympathetic colleagues to re-package Christian belief and practice. However, in the Church's approach to managing perceived decline, there appeared to be a significant gap between organisational rhetoric and the reality at congregation level. As the recipients of unconscious projections, both from congregation members and the programme's architects, clergy could find themselves trapped into inactivity, or active inertia, unable to make enterprising decisions on change which would cause pain to many of their traditional members. Restoring the narrative of their role can shed more light on how and why this happened.

### Restoring narrative and its methods

The original doctoral research took the form of a case study using multiple data sources. For the purposes of reflecting on the conclusions two years later, restoring the narrative was appropriate, especially given that in investigating the role of clergy a number of vignettes or micro-stories were elicited. How these were used in several ways to build up a picture of the clergy role is discussed in the methodology section. The restoring process involves reading and rereading material, analysing the story then retelling it (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, cited in Ollerenshaw and Creswell, 2002). In writing this essay the researcher's original doctoral study was also restored to examine the relationship between SEC clergy and entrepreneurial leadership.

#### Priests as entrepreneurs – situating the term:

There have been several studies of faith-based organisations and their impact on entrepreneurship (Anderson, Drakopolou Dodd and Scott, 2000, La Barbera, 2006, Gotsis and Drakopolou Dodd, 2007), so the idea of linking clergy with enterprising behaviours is not new. But what is meant by entrepreneurship in this context? Some writers have made links between entrepreneurship and leadership; Lazear (2005), for example, regards entrepreneurs as simply a subset of leaders in view of both groups' requirement to get things done through other people, certainly a task for clergy, although their 'other people' are more likely to be volunteers than employees. Jensen and Luthans (2006, p 46), link entrepreneurial behaviour, and leadership to clergy activity. They suggest that the former involves initiating new ventures; the latter spearheading the development of ideas and resources. An entrepreneur, they suggest, becomes a leader when others are attracted to their ideas, something which the Mission 21 programme hoped would occur for clergy who embraced its change strategy.

Perhaps a more appropriate term to describe clergy would be 'social entrepreneur', a term which, as Dees (2001) points out, has several associated meanings but essentially involves a mission to create social value in an innovative and energetic way as 'reformers and revolutionaries' (ibid.). Such a description might well be applied to particular clergy, but the question remains how far the overarching church organisation allows them to pursue such aims. If they are first and foremost ordained members of a church, are they not rather acting as intrapreneurs, who might be enterprising, but are protected by, and innovate on behalf of, an existing organisation (Carrier, 1996, Antoncic and Hisrich, 2003)? There appear to be aspects of the history and context of the SEC which might make the former entrepreneur description more applicable, given the tendency for its churches to operate 'congregationally' with minimal intervention from the wider church organisation.

#### Churches, communities and functions

Religious worship provides the opportunity for a synchronisation of the process of temporarily stepping back from everyday life and its problems to contemplate the divine, a psychotherapeutic process Reed (1978) calls oscillation, which binds together (religio) participants (ibid. p 50). The comparative absence of similar enterprise by SEC clergy might have been because the latter were simply not enterprising. Alternatively, were there factors in the structures and culture of their church which militated against enterprising behaviour by clergy?

Reed's psychoanalytic analysis of church organisation proposes a contrast between the models of the so-called associational church, and the parish (or communal) church (Ecclestone (ed.) 1988, Reed, 1993). The former focuses upon the needs and concerns of its members (ibid., p 10). The parish or communal church, on the other hand, is concerned for the cure of souls... of all those residing in the parish [including] members of other faiths and of none (Reed, 1993, p 3). However, in Scotland, a small town may have a Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and several others besides an Episcopal church - which is the parish church here? There are questions, too, about the role clergy play in the community. As Giddens (1991, p 9) points out, personal meaninglessness is a fundamental contemporary psychic problem which churches are well placed to tackle. Reflection on the nature of the clergy role suggests that enterprise skills could, and should, be part of this engagement with contemporary society. Drane, for example (2005), is happy to sell his 'wares' at 'psychic fairs' along with astrologers and clairvoyants, using the approaches of such New Age practitioners to 'sell' the benefits of Christian belief, and such examples imply a need for the innovation and creativity which exemplify enterprise behaviour.

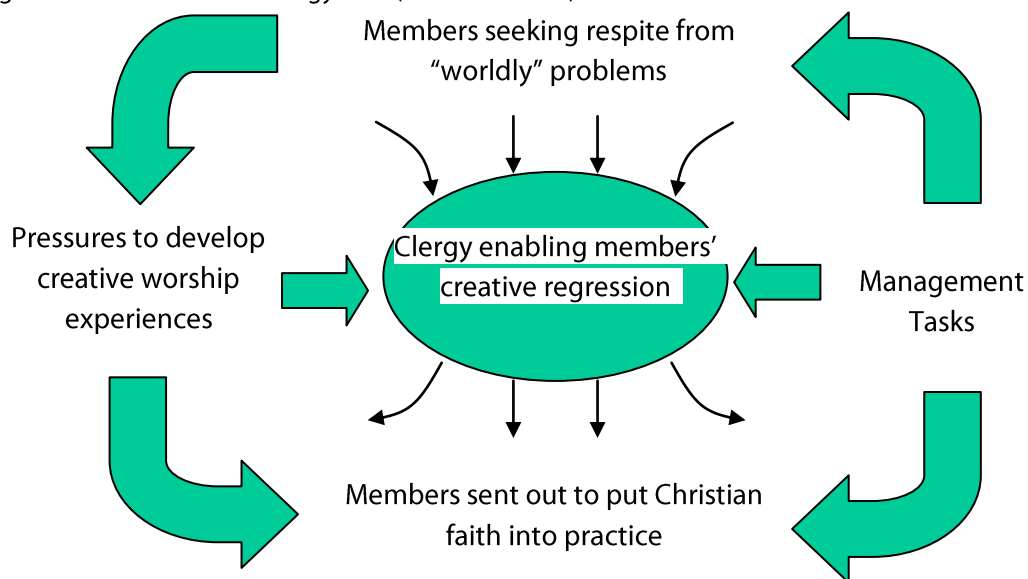
Churches are not just theatres producing corporate religious performances, with clergy acting as a type of impresario. Christian scholars like Reed argue that churches' unique purpose is to address psychodynamic tensions by helping individuals work through them to gain psychological well-being. However, if clergy are required to promote such 'spiritual services', they are also needed as befrienders of the vulnerable. Fulfilling this range of accountabilities in the context of corporate acts of worship requires them not only to be effective spiritual performers, but also to have regard for the material resources of their churches, if the surroundings are to become a setting for fantasies to be transformed into resources which maintain the states of welfare and development (Reed, 1978, p 60). Thus clergy are required not only to be spiritual intermediaries and befriending ministers, but also entrepreneurial leaders and managers.

#### Priests restoring their faith

Many writers have described the apparently irreconcilable demands of the contemporary clergy role (Carr, in Ecclestone (ed.), 1988, Harris, 1998, Startup and Harris, 1999). These studies reinforce the fact that significant organisational behaviour skills are required. Clergy need to be psychically wise at 'liminal' times like birth and death, and to be enterprising in helping people, especially non-churchgoers, to find meaning through religious ritual surrounding such events. Again the question arises of where they might most profitably expend their energy: in looking after existing church members or using entrepreneurial skills to seek out the new?

Clergy increasingly need to spend time on 'management' tasks for which they may lack training or enthusiasm (Harris, 1998, p 35, Stamford, 1999). The multiplicity of responsibilities for clergy might incur role stress of various types (Francis and Jones (eds.), 1996, p 121 f). Startup and Harris (1999, p 119) surveyed clergy in the (Episcopal) Church of Wales, the majority of whom reported visiting their parishioners as most important, but felt hampered by too much administration, as well as the need to engage in 'evangelism'. Their management tasks tended to be more transactional than entrepreneurial.

Figure 1 Pressures on the Clergy Role (Source: Author)



As the figure illustrates, clergy are required to fulfil the conflicting demands of, firstly, supporting church members to maintain their 'psychic health' so that they can go out and 'sell' the church's services to potential new members, and, secondly, of keeping on top of the fact that this requires not only creativity in 'mediating meaning' but also entrepreneurial leadership in making everything happen. Some may embrace an entrepreneurial role enthusiastically when it comes to delegation and involving others in enterprise activities. Yet clergy point out that congregations too often regard them as omniscient, expecting them to perform tasks the congregations could easily do themselves (ibid. p 96, Reed, 1993, p 6, Holloway and Avery, 1994, p 18f). Thus their social entrepreneurship skills do not always translate into entrepreneurial leadership, as they are not effectively attracting those who will take forward the ideas they have promoted (Jensen and Luthans, 2006).

The opportunity to lead one's own group of (presumably) value-driven co-religionists to go out and spread the news of a counter cultural movement, especially at a time when many people are expressing dissatisfaction with consumerism, could be deeply satisfying for an entrepreneurial individual. Conversely, the role may also seem all consuming and fraught

with contradictions (Harris, 1998, p 153 f, Rayburn et al., in Francis and Jones (eds.), 1996, Startup and Harris, 1999, p 119). For good or ill, a three-factor model of clergy activity encompasses elements of Spirituality, Management and Ministry, where Spirituality involves helping people to find spiritual meaning in life and its challenges, Management encompasses making things happen, and Ministry is helping people ‘feel good’ about themselves. Co-ordinating all three elements successfully suggests effective entrepreneurial leadership.

## Methodology

The original qualitative study made use of a case study strategy using a range of data collection instruments and an analytic strategy undertaken through an interpretivist lens. This data was collected through two significant methodologies: a Repertory Grid exercise, derived from Personal Construct Theory (Kelly, 1955, Fransella and Bannister 1977), and a longitudinal participant observation study.

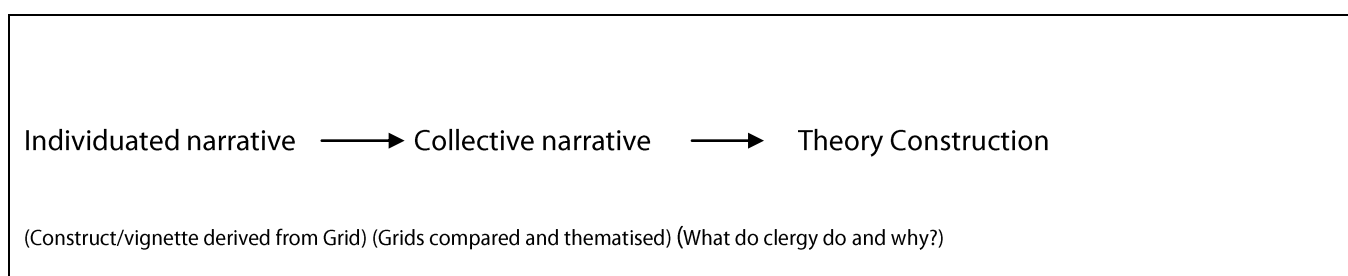
Personal Construct Theory (PCT): alternative constructivism or individuated narrative?

Repertory Grids were developed in a commercial context (Stewart and Stewart, 1976, Stewart, 1981). The Repertory Grid instrument was developed by Kelly (1955)<sup>ii</sup> and provides a way of describing the attitudes of individuals with minimal interaction from the researcher. Personal Construct Theory (PCT) resurfaced in the 1970s when a number of researchers rediscovered it (Stewart and Stewart, op. cit., Fransella and Bannister, 1977, Easterby Smith, 1980). The key message of Kelly’s theory is essentially interpretivist - that the world is perceived by individuals in terms of the meaning each applies to it (Kay, Goldspink and Preston, 2008) Goldspink and Kay, 2009). The descriptive term is ‘constructive alternativism’, (Bannister and Fransella, 1989) a dynamic process through which every event or situation may be subject to alternative meanings at different times by different subjects, although social processes involve mutual interpretation, giving rise to some consensus within a group situation (ibid.). Thus it is being continually restoried. Moreover, the process appears to echo both social constructionist and constructivist standpoints, as all three concepts regard the idea of a fixed reality outside human experience as questionable. In focusing on the process of individual meaning making, but recognising that this is significantly influenced by social interactions, PCT may almost be said to ‘bridge’ the social constructionist and social constructivist standpoints. Amongst a range of operational methods repertory grids provide a means for mapping these constructs.

For the purposes of this paper on restorying narrative, it is important to point to PCT’s links with narrative, since constructs are in essence ‘micro-stories’ or vignettes of the individual’s construal of reality. If narrative data may be said to provide insight into the relationship between events (Goldspink and Kay 2009), the repertory grid technique provides a means to map individual (micro) and collective (macro) patterns of making meaning within a specific social context (ibid.). The vignettes thus produced are interpretive tools through which people represent their view of the world to themselves and others (Lawler, in May, 2002).

## Bringing the process together: vignette, collective narrative and theory formation

Figure 2 - Process of constructing theory from narrative using Repertory Grids (source: Author)



As the Stewarts point out (1976, p 87, 91), there are difficulties with the use of grids. Some respondents argue that they would have come up with the same answers if asked directly. Repertory Grid technique may also be challenged on the basis that it represents people’s perceptions of what people do, rather than the actual behaviour of these individuals. Nevertheless, it is relatively free from investigator bias (Stewart and Stewart, 1976, p 83), especially if the information is obtained through form completion rather than interview alone. For this reason it is a useful restorying tool.

The grid used in this study was designed in two parts, asking volunteers to consider four members of clergy (the elements) and their behaviours (the constructs, or in narrative terms vignettes). Four individuals were suggested, to ensure

triad comparisons without requiring respondents to have difficulty with sufficient nominations. They were asked on the second half of the form to rate the individuals' on how they matched the behavioural construct, that is, fully matches the specification through to, does not match it. Several respondents failed to complete this part, claiming it was disrespectful to clergy, so the decision was made to analyse the data qualitatively (as advocated by Stewart, 1981). This enabled the researcher to obtain more intimate knowledge of the data set. Moreover, given the dense and complex nature of the data sets, it is arguable that statistical analysis alone would not have been a sufficiently robust tool with which to elicit insights. From eleven churches consulted, 610 behavioural constructs were elicited, of which 589 were usable, with some repetitions.

The Stewarts (1981) argue that qualitative analysis of grids may be time consuming, but its advantage over computer analysis is that the researcher achieves in-depth and intimate understanding of the data set (Belenky et al., 1997). In the current study the handwritten grids were transcribed on to spreadsheets for ease of reference. When the point of data saturation had been reached (Flick, 2002, p 64-65) and constructs were beginning to be repeated, constructs were written on adhesive labels. The process of analysis (described by Stewart and Stewart, 1981) involved a form of concept cataloguing (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002, p 123f), which the researcher had encountered when indexing a book using the *précis* concept (Austin, 1984). The researcher iteratively located the labels at appropriate points on a theoretical continuum ranging from 'managerial' to 'spiritual'. Eventually fifteen discrete sets of constructs were derived, reflecting the collective narrative of the respondents:

- Academic/Theologian
- Change Agent/Catalyst
- Counsellor and Carer for Vulnerable People
- Ecumenical Role
- Educator/Developer of Young People
- Leader/Decision Maker
- Liturgist/Worship Leader
- Local Community Role
- Motivator/Enthusiast
- Musical
- Official SEC Role
- Organiser/Manager of People and Things
- Pastor/Befriender
- Preacher/Communicator
- Spiritual/Prayerful

Obviously these activity areas in some cases involved subsets of constructs – e.g. Academic/Theologian contains subsets of Intellectual/Academic, Theologian/Historian, Teacher/Trainer, and Media Performer. Pastor/Befriender contained the largest number of constructs (92), but synthesised only two subsets: Kind Communicator and Sociable/Extravert, the former referring to individuals' kindness and love for others whereas the latter encompassed their bonhomie in social contexts. Constructs were repeated: good listener appeared four times, approachable was mentioned three times, and sincere twice, joined by appears to be sincere, the qualification of the term itself noteworthy. Note that these are invariably social skills.

'Negative polarities' (for example, refuses to move forward, under Change Agent/Catalyst) were differentiated in bold text. The researcher aimed to avoid 'miscellaneous' categories. It was not always easy to select an area for certain constructs. For example, lets people down might fit either into Activity 9, Motivator/Enthusiast, or 6, Leader/Decision Maker, but the latter was selected as its emphasis was on getting things done, which appeared to be for several laity an area where clergy were deficient.

Subsequently descriptions were written for each activity area, based on the concepts it contained, and these were set into a questionnaire to establish the areas of the role rated more or less important by the respondents. These descriptions represented the researcher's aim both to theorise from the collective narrative but also to provide a focused description summing up the main thrust of this narrative<sup>iii</sup>.

The comments in the next section represent stories of the respondents to this latter process which were thematised into a series of collective narratives reflecting perceptions of the story at grass roots level (clergy and congregations), at the level of culture-in-practice in churches, and at the level of strategic leadership (the Mission 21 programme).

## Analysis and Discussion

### The three-factor clergy role

A process of selective coding of the fifteen activity areas (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, Strauss and Corbin, 1990) developed three discrete themes, which comprise the Spiritual; Management and Ministry.

The spiritual (i.e. core business) elements included the Academic/Theologian; the Liturgist/Worship Leader; the Musical; the Preacher/Communicator; and the Spiritual/Prayerful. The focus here is away from the ‘here and now’ and towards the enactment of an Event (Morris, 1975) together with an ability to ‘do theology’ and act out its themes in liturgical services. The Preacher/Communicator appears in the liturgist context but is particularly about sermonising and communicating in other ways than the traditional sermon, such as producing a church magazine or weekly service sheet, which is rarely considered in the context of enterprising behaviour, although it may present many opportunities to ‘sell’ the church externally.

The Management Elements included those of Change Agent; Ecumenical Role; Leader Decision Maker; Official SEC Role; and Organising / Managing People and things. The theme is managing: making things happen at strategic and operational levels. Interestingly, as a category Change Agent (attracted relatively few constructs) embraces both organisational and liturgical change. Many of the activity areas reflect enterprise behaviours – e.g. Leader/Decision Maker encompasses classic ‘leadership’ constructs such as making enterprising decisions on behalf of others. Organiser/Manager of People and Things involves transactional management tasks which are operationally necessary.

The Ministry role encompassed - Counsellor/Carer; Educator/Developer of Young People; Local Community Role; Motivator/Enthusiast; and Pastor/Befriender. The Ministry theme involves care; affirming people and creating ways for people to feel part of the church ‘family’. Counsellor and Pastor/Befriender emphasise the helping role; the latter encompasses both caring for the vulnerable and social host. Obviously there are areas of cross over in all the categories as indicated by figure 3 below:-

Figure 3 -The Clergy Role: three dimensional model

Spiritual (S)	Management (Ma)	Ministry (Mi)
1. Academic/theologian	2. Change Agent/catalyst	3. Counsellor/carer
7. Liturgist/worship leader	4. Ecumenical role	5. Educator/developer
10. Musical	6. Leader/decision maker	8. Local community role
14. Preacher/communicator	11. Official SEC role	9. Motivator/enthusiast
15. Spiritual/Prayerful	12. Organiser of people and things	13. Pastor/Befriender
Worship: access spiritual dimension through corporate religious ceremony	Manage: make things happen at strategic and operational level	Care: affirm people and create ways for people to feel valued

(Source: Author) Note that the shaded cells represent enterprise activity areas.

In contrast with Blake and Mouton’s (1964, 1978, 1985 cited in Mullins, 2005, p 241) two dimensional management model, this one has three dimensions. The spiritual one may be superficially compared with organisational ‘values’ (McEwen, 2001), but is here more about relationship with the transcendent. Reflection on these activity areas and themes reinforces how much of the clergy role is about enterprise – these areas are shaded in the figure above. Every activity in the Management theme could be linked with entrepreneurial behaviour, especially Change Agent, Leader/decision maker, and Organiser. The Ministry theme is not just about being ‘Mr Nice Guy’, although Pastor/Befriender attracted the most statements – it requires the clergyperson to be tireless in working with the local community and supporting social projects, for example. Even Spiritual is not just about prayer – it requires enterprise in leading creative worship and in internal and external communications.

The eight variations the model might elicit are shown below. For example, the person with a high emphasis on Spiritual and Ministerial could be expected to focus on a type of caring which would emphasise the transcendent. Conversely, a clergyperson with a low emphasis on Spiritual and Managerial, and a high emphasis on Ministerial might be

a carer, perhaps regarding the job as akin to a therapist or social worker role, and a high scorer on Ministerial and Managerial with a low Spiritual score would probably be more of a strategic carer or social reformer. Someone who could achieve success in all three would certainly be acting entrepreneurially. Obviously, there are variations of the themes as indicated below:-

Variations of the three dimensions (Source: Author)

High S, low Ma, low Mi	Ascetic, spiritual person
High S, high Ma, low Mi	Career clergyperson
High S, low Ma, high Mi	Priestly befriender
High S, high Ma, high Mi	Enterprising clergyperson
Low S, high Ma, low Mi	Worldly person
Low S, high Ma, high Mi	Social reformer
Low S, low Ma, high Mi	Carer/Counsellor
Low S, low Ma, low Mi	Abdicator (Burned out person?)

This is significant because for clergy, spiritual type constructs were more frequently considered than those relating to management or ministry. For laity on the other hand, ministry constructs were significantly more common, whereas traditional management activities only made up a quarter of those proposed by laity. It is also significant that these variations may encourage enterprising behaviour as in the (Worldly) Priest who met parishioners in the local pub because that is where he tended to his Ministry; or the burned out Priest who abdicated to run his own business.

For Management activity areas, all clergy and most laity regarded Leader/Decision Maker as an important activity. But what sort of leader? Clergy noticed someone who challenges the accepted beliefs of the church, generally referring more to controversy and charisma than their lay members. The lack of constructs in the Change Agent/Catalyst area has been noted above, but for both clergy and lay respondents it is unclear where a leader is supposed to be leading their followers. Given the number of people with problems presenting themselves for help, it is not surprising that the bigger picture might appear neglected: Reed (1978, p 174) might well argue that priests are not therapists but teachers (an ‘educator’ of course being a leader who also develops), but here the key stakeholders seem to be demanding from their clergy more therapy than education or entrepreneurial flair.

For the Ministry theme again, there are no major differences between clergy and lay constructs. Laity particularly emphasised ministry. Moreover, the importance attached by all respondents to the pastor/befriender role may of itself be significant, especially when congregational key stakeholders appeared to value leadership from their clergy. Can clergy effectively act as both friends and entrepreneurial leaders, especially when, for many active church members, leadership is more about standing firm than going anywhere new? It is hard to be enterprising when your enterprise is seen by existing church members as hurtful, disloyal or even heretical. There is a clear need here for a restorying to take place.

### Restorying the clergy role: clergy and congregations telling their stories

Managing religious worship services effectively maximises the accessibility of religious ritual both to ‘official’ members and casual attendees. But how easily can clergy successfully manage this in a way which is both enterprising and sensitive? This was articulated by one respondent thus *“The secular/sacred division... to me is not a fixed one, but my congregation... want to compartmentalise the two. It’s frustrating as I want to explore new liturgies and they don’t”*. This could mean bland services which did not engage people. Yet liturgy and impactful performance of worship were considered important by most key stakeholders in this sample. At both strategic and operational levels in the SEC members were aware of the current trend towards the re-enchantment of reality (Flanagan, 1998, Drane, 2000, Turnbull, 2001, Heelas and Woodhead, 2005). *“There is a deepening spirituality in society; we can meet the cravings of a secular society; there is a growing realisation that there is a need for something other than the material life; there are many people looking for a spiritual home”* were among respondents’ comments. One cleric used a poetic metaphor in proposing that *“Scots are haunted by God. They left God behind but he still haunts them”*. There is an interesting hint of Calvinism here – God as the voice of conscience which refuses to let people alone. However, if phrases like ‘we can meet the cravings of a secular society’ are undoubtedly poetic, there seemed to be less understanding of how the SEC might act in an enterprising way to meet these cravings. Stranraer-Mull (2000) refers to the inertia resulting from unimaginative thinking and action at all levels of the church which Mission 21 attempted to address. It may be that the inertia in some cases arose not because of lack of imagination, but the unmoveable tension between different ways of expressing it. Being enterprising in developing ‘new ways of being church’ could easily alienate existing members.



## Restoring the past to encounter the present:

There is a pressing need to restore faith and religion in the SEC. A great deal of the emotional [and] negative response to the promulgation of fresh insights in Christianity arises from honest folk for whom the received wisdom of ages is sufficient. However, there was ambivalence about the idea that the Church was on a downward membership spiral and as a dying organisation. Tradition is important and one respondent noted “*My congregation are like the hobbits – they are comfortable with everything as it is – no surprises*”. This clergyperson’s strategy was not unusual – “*I try to concentrate on the people in my church – I like them and I would like to do something for them even if I can’t change the whole church – I can do things congregationally*”. This individual was knowingly or not, acting entrepreneurially. If they could not be enterprising at SEC level, small gains could be made within the local environment.

The majority of respondents were well aware of the paradoxes of late modernity and that Christians were no longer “*living in Christendom but a pluralist society*” according to Lay Respondent. Although Holloway (2000a) at SEC 21 labels his organisation as the first truly post-modern church, where human imperfection is the reality and there are no prescriptive solutions, not all his colleagues shared his vision of a LIVE Church. A genuine enterprise strategy was needed.

But how far was the SEC even regarded as an essential part of the community? Given that the “English Church” epithet is still current after over two hundred years, and that liberal mainstream churches are in decline, how far can the Episcopal Church (in Scotland) operate as a Parish church, responsible for curing souls in a geographical area, rather than an Associational Church focused on its own members’ needs. However, the term Parish was used both by Mission 21 strategists such as Mann (1998, 1999), and by a number of clergy in the sample, one of whom was clear about its implications. According to one respondent only “*quirky types come to us*”

How far, given the SEC’s historic disestablishment is it possible to articulate (or restore) an overall culture, especially when the ‘congregationalist’ reality would tend to lend itself to an associational group set of norms and values? “*How do you translate Mission 21 into locally acceptable initiatives?*” asked one cleric. There was also the sense in which ‘locally acceptable’ might be seen to reflect the ‘last knockings’ of Tory politics, given the propensity of Scottish landowners still to patronise some SEC churches as links with their family tradition: as one clergyperson cruelly put it “*the upper class twits are alive and well in the SEC*”.

The picture emerges of a complex and enterprising role for SEC clergy, requiring the performance of a wide range of skills, and where clergy themselves suggest that there is not always enough training and development support to enable them to perform it effectively. On reflection, this is a key point – is the SEC supporting clergy to be entrepreneurial? The evidence from the Repertory Grids suggests an ambiguous relationship between Pastor/Befriender and Leader/Decision-maker, as well as an issue about how far clergy are leaders only within their congregations and not in the wider community. Startup and Harris’ respondents from Wales reported that laity preferred them to concentrate efforts parochially (1999, p 119). There is also the sense that the communal church approach, with its emphasis on response to the whole community (Reed, 1978) is more likely to encourage such skills than the associational approach. The latter requires clergy to minister to a small group of individuals who, although they may want their clergyperson to be a leader in terms of maintaining standards or setting examples, may not see leadership as entrepreneurial – that is, leading them anywhere new.

The clergy role demands a significant investment in affirming church members, although there is also an appreciation of the importance of meaningful worship services, not just for church members but the wider community, thus implying a potential communal as well as associational church – the potential to be truly spiritually entrepreneurial. The lesser value placed by respondents on management activities could indicate difficulty by clergy in prioritising accountabilities. All respondents valued the caring clergy role. Clergy indicated more awareness of the communal context in terms of activities in the local area, although in practice they were aware that more progress could often be made by acting associational and focusing on their own members’ needs and being enterprising at local level.

The ‘omnicompetent priest’ issue, although often described negatively, could have a tacit pay-off for both clergy and laity. The former would be able to retain a status they perceived at risk from a change programme which might provide discontented laity with a means of knocking them off their pedestal; the latter could project all their responsibility for spiritual leadership onto clergy. In this context, the Church’s historic heritage could be both a boon and a blockage to healthy regression in Reed’s (1978, p 62) terms, as well as militating against enterprising behaviour. The SEC’s culture-in-practice, which members identified as belonging to the past but still active in many areas in the present, suggests frequently a traditional, conserving, respectful entity (Heelas and Woodhead, 2005, p 4). This could be positive as articulated by one respondent “*One knew one’s place, there was less controversy, a sense of security and members were*

*conscientious and responsible for others' welfare*", but it could also involve a culture of 'respectability' where the upper middle classes were predominant. The politics of class and enterprise culture are often intertwined.

It may be assumed that the social activities available in some churches would have brought individuals together in spite of the suggestion from some members that intimacy was rare. However, Church activities tend not to have changed to reflect the preoccupations of the fast moving present: they are still frequently about 'doing the flowers', serving drinks, organising coffee mornings and sales of work. If Holloway (2000) could suggest that it was fun to debate theology and the nature of God, would this be a 'fun' activity for many? There seems little here to attract contemporary people, especially young people, who are already a minority group in the Church. Even with Fresh Expressions of church, the likelihood is that many of these people would be put off by the 'corporate vibe' (Church of Scotland, 2001, p 23), or the need to accept the sometimes literalist theology of the more interactive evangelical churches. The issues discussed above illustrate the limits of restoring and suggest parallels between the tragic tale of clergy and entrepreneurs.

### Limits of restoring: clergy and the 'tragic tale':

As one respondent eloquently put it – *"They want you to be Mr Nice Guy but they don't realise that a lot of it is about performance"*. In a communal church, which responds chiefly to the needs of its environment rather than its members, it may be possible to hold more people, and a wider range of people, in creative tension – if the clergy are able to be enterprising in mediating meaning for a range of individual differences. In an associational church model where there is no real enthusiasm for corporate initiatives, the need for 'agreement over our shop window' becomes more acute. It will be difficult for clergy to 'mediate meaning' for traditionalists as well as for the liberals (Stark and Finke, 2000, p 197f). In other words, enterprise is stifled by the need for achieving agreement.

Although it's possible to operate the programme model of church<sup>iv</sup> regardless of size, it was also recognised that *"we don't have the leadership skills to engage [Mission 21]. As a strategy for increasing membership it didn't work. The programme's goal setting could be too managerial/too prescriptive, and was felt to be mundane and pragmatic"*. As one respondent noted - *"We focused on what we knew we could achieve; we did the easy stuff. In other words, we did not act enterprisingly but transactionally"*. There was also evidence of lack of clergy confidence amongst the clergy to act entrepreneurially.

How far had clergy internalised an entrepreneurial leadership role? Some clearly had as articulated by one respondent *"I'm an organiser. I know that, and because of it people might not do as much as in a more 'messy' parish"*. But can clergy manage 'creative tension' between radicals and traditionalists in an enterprising way? Worryingly, some felt that clergy are sometimes set up to fail in 'difficult' parishes, especially where laity had too many expectations, or were frustrated/angry/sulky/difficult. For some clergy the idea of lay involvement was liberating; freeing them to focus on their preferred areas of interest, but for others it meant giving up the clergy power base. Where there was uncertainty about what clergy should be doing, some could feel threatened: if increasingly laity were running the church. As one respondent articulated *"Are we just Mass Priests, then? Clearly restoring is difficult where even the gatekeepers of the faith cannot agree on the story."*

Another important factor is that the sample indicated heavy investment by clergy into congregational psychological health and well-being, reflecting many aspects of the clergy role in ensuring healthy regression (Reed, 1978, p 13). But supporting vulnerable people is a significant drain on clergy time and resources, and looking after them often leaves little energy to be enterprising in approaches to the spiritual searchers or the questioners (Startup and Harris, 1999, p 117). Providing congregational members with friendship and support works up to a point by retaining existing members, because friendship is what many seek from church. But it does not bring in new members unless such people are in particular need of support which the church might provide. In terms of restoring this begs the question – Whose story is it anyway?

It is not just the emotionally desperate who need affirmation: most people are looking for meaning and acceptance as individuals. There is a lot of friendship in congregations. But if the needy individual does not obviously fit into the quiet, peaceful, honest, and reticent culture prevailing in the congregation he or she may find themselves a temperamental isolate. The in-group may exhibit kindness and good manners but not necessarily accept a troubled individual as they are. Essentially, clergy and congregations may be supportive of people with problems, but those looking for acceptance as individuals who do not fit into a predominantly traditional culture may feel isolated (Francis, Butler and Craig, 2004, p 9), and possibly even misled by clergy enterprise into a milieu which fails to live up to expectation.

The spiritual/theological differences from which the church was seen to suffer were not just about Holloway's radicalism. There was a real sense in which the Church was regarded as two bodies, one of which embraced liberalism and the other tradition, with both hinting that we have difficulty in distancing ourselves from fundamentalism and dogma in

the context of its opponent. A troubled clergyperson described the problem “*We need to be diplomatic. We can’t alienate those already here – in spite of the fact that in the past they have been taught ‘bad’ theology – with its emphasis on ‘thou shalt not’, and that they think the church should never change*”. In other words, it is not easy to accommodate a liberal view in a congregation where the emphasis is on duty and tradition, let alone restory it. As another respondent put it – “*What IS our common ground? What DO we have in common? ‘What is our religious niche?’* These are the very questions asked by Stark and Finke (2000). It would take an enterprising Priest to even begin to answer the question. Often the politics of Priesthood prevent the ambitious and the enterprising amongst the clergy from even attempting to answer the questions.

Failure to agree the Church’s ‘shop window’ could also result in resistance to perceived changes. However, traditionalists explained this viewpoint: in a culture where people are encouraged to ask questions, might it all get out of control? In other words, where would be the Church’s unique doctrine, and what would stop it breaking down into a post-modern soup of spiritual belief? A respondent described those fearful of change as “*like the settlers in Westerns forming their wagons into a circle to repel the Indians*”.

Another issue is that of the learned helplessness of many men in the clergy. A lay individual suggested that part of the problem lay with ministry training which emphasised clergy autonomy rather than team collaboration. Reflection on this raises a significant question: were there in effect mixed messages from Mission 21 about clergy enterprise behaviours? An entrepreneur tends to be seen as comfortable with being in the vanguard of change; at times a lonely role, but going it alone was typical of the situation of many SEC clergy of the past<sup>v</sup>. Yet the implication of Mission 21 was that the future would be about working more collaboratively with others. How might they combine these standpoints, if at all?

Clergy rarely admitted any lack assertion skills themselves, but were quick to describe colleagues so afflicted arguing that “*X cannot deal with conflict and antagonism, whilst Y is too humane to bring in change harshly*”. As one respondent stresses, “*congregations cannot cope with the truth about clergy. They put you on a pedestal and enjoy knocking you off*” (This is a similar story to how society treats entrepreneurs).

The Mission 21 material discusses the welcome churches might provide to those who are not conventional churchgoers (Oswald, 1992, p 61), but equally, it proposes that individual churches might restructure for growth by moving incrementally from pastoral models of ministry to corporate churches. The latter, though, are predicated upon clergy who are able both to work with a form of entrepreneurial leadership at local level, and to operate collaboratively with lay key players and other groups, with minimal training and support available to them. There is little evidence that churches actively attract many such entrepreneurial individuals into ordination. One respondent remarked “*I always thought I was mediocre, and going into the church enabled me to be a big fish in a small pond*”. An older clergyperson remarked that “*today’s curates are Thatcher’s children – they are just looking for security*”. Here again we see a convergence with enterprise culture.

It is noteworthy that one of the respondents who faced serious questions about his future in the SEC successfully pursued several entrepreneurial initiatives on behalf of the Church but left to pursue a role within another major faith-based organisation. He is an example of the free thinking ‘marginal’ Christians who Holloway had sought to bring to the SEC. Ironically he was unable to act enterprisingly in a strategic way to bring about wider change and retain a sense of enterprise. This example illustrates the limits to restorying the clergy role within the SEC. However, this example is a tragic tale (Brown and Humphries, 2003) on the periphery of church life.

## Priests as entrepreneurs and the lessons for churches: concluding thoughts

The experience of SEC clergy in attempting to act as entrepreneurial leaders of change suggests that this role could significantly conflict with the need to support and affirm their mainly traditional congregations. This is not an isolated phenomenon in Christian churches. Indeed, with the aim of the Anglican Communion to promote Fresh Expressions of faith it may be said to be a key issue. Is it possible both to support existing church members and to seek out new ones, or do the latter have to be steered towards specific new faith communities? One problem about attracting radicals on the periphery of faith is that such individuals tend to be iconoclasts who, as well as being comfortable with theological ambiguity, tend to challenge existing norms and values. Being entrepreneurial can thus be divisive.

The Mission 21 project was in the main a top-down process which stressed the role of clergy as managers. Although its literature points out that increased church membership may come at a price of losing the priest as a befriender, the cost of such an approach failing could be the disappearance of the traditionalists who have been the backbone of the churches. Yet if corporate managerialism is not an appropriate tool for change, social entrepreneurship, with its emphasis on winning hearts and minds in an organic way, may well still win out, not least because of its emphasis on the ‘family values’ dear to many SEC traditionalists. Restorying as a process permits and encourages this process.

But how far were clergy encouraged to act entrepreneurially? Given that enterprising leadership was regarded as of key importance by these respondents, the conflicting pressure to be a strong decision maker and caring counsellor may have increased clergy role strain. There was a sense of clergy isolation, emphasised by the congregational culture of the Church, which some clergy, comfortable with the historic autonomy of the role, might value as giving them freedom of action to be innovative. These would tend to be the individuals who would be comfortable with the description 'entrepreneur'. Others might feel unsupported by the wider church in being intrapreneurial, especially as it was not clear how far the bishops had a role in clergy development, either to support or challenge clergy actions. Dependency on clergy (the 'omnicompetent priest' syndrome) could lead to disappointment and cynicism for laity when clergy failed to live up to this description. Conversely, attempts to 'empower' laity could be hampered by clergy lack of confidence in their role as social entrepreneurs, and could lead them to keep within areas of the 'comfort zone', especially if these were strengths, such as befriending others.

Clergy who are effective social entrepreneurs will encourage and develop such enterprise behaviour in followers, who will go out and 'evangelise' to new members, many of whom might be marginal Christians or Spiritual Searchers in Drane's (2001, 2005) terminology. But are such individuals likely to remain if they discover they are in an underrepresented group in a traditionalist church, where the clergyperson has not appreciated Francis et al's (2002, p 9) injunction to play to the strengths of all individuals?

The problem in Scotland is that the established Presbyterian Church of Scotland has also begun to develop this approach (Church without Walls, 2001) and so how would the Episcopalians have differentiated theirs – if indeed they had wanted to? Reflection suggests almost the continuation of an entrepreneurial battle of wills between two established faiths in Scotland – beginning at the Reformation and perhaps still ongoing! In a society where corporate bodies are mistrusted, why do Christians not simply abandon the 'corporate vibe' and concentrate on Christ's message? Anecdotally, some are already discussing the 'death' of the institutional church and its role vis à vis Christendom. But it would require major change to dismantle corporate organisations in which many have invested their energy – and this change may be more likely to emerge as a bottom up rather than top down strategy as those at the top have always more to lose from such a change. Had Holloway been completely radical in considering Church structures and communication he might have become a powerful (and entrepreneurial) prophet of change, but his widely publicised loss of faith damaged his credibility in a Christian context. Ultimately, it appears that clergy at grass roots level are still attempting to manage the dilemma of having to drive through change in an enterprising spirit, whilst affirming those who find change unacceptable. How long this 'creative tension' can remain is a moot point, while the contemporary world increasingly looks to alternatives to Christian mainstream denominations for spiritual meaning. The restorying continues at many levels!

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<sup>i</sup> The SEC is a member of the Anglican Communion of Churches (ACC) under the primacy of the Archbishop of Canterbury. To simplify a complicated historical account, Scotland made Presbyterianism (church governance by 'elders' or senior laity) its established religious denomination in the seventeenth century after years of often bloody conflict with Episcopalianism (church governance by bishops or senior clergy). The latter, linked as it was with the deposed Stuart dynasty, was subject after the 1745 uprising to legal restrictions on its movements until the early nineteenth century when the 'penal laws' were repealed (Luscombe, 1996).

<sup>ii</sup> As a psychotherapeutic tool to counteract the filtering he had observed in psychiatric patients who would appear to present with Freudian problems when consulting a Freudian analyst and Jungian ones when consulting a Jungian specialist, because of the observer's bias (Stewart and Stewart, 1976, p 83).

<sup>iii</sup> In the original study, data from the Repertory Grids was supplemented by a personality instrument (Myers Briggs Type Indicator, not discussed here) and by participative observation data over several years from the researcher's involvement with the SEC as a member and group facilitator.

<sup>iv</sup> In the Mission 21 material, the 'programme church' is contrasted with the 'pastoral' model: the latter is based on clergy providing support to all members, whereas the former implies a more managerial structure.

<sup>v</sup> See footnote [1] regarding the eighteenth century 'penal restrictions' on Episcopal clergy and congregations, the impact of which required both groups to be innovative and creative in keeping their faith going: in effect, to act entrepreneurially. Clergy often travelled long distances to take services in isolated churches, attempting to avoid legal sanctions in doing so.