Church communication and constructions of the self:

Exploring identity & identification

in church communication

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Attestation of Authorship

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Angelique Nairn

2013

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to examine the everyday communications of Christian religious organisations for evidence of intentional and unintentional construction of member identity (Cheney, 1983a). My interest in this research emerged when I observed what appeared to be a proliferation of church communications in New Zealand society. On the one hand, these everyday communications seemed designed to promote the church to its constituents. On the other hand, however, they were also embedded with messages that could deliberately and deliberatively limit the possible range of members' self-identities if they identified with the church. My research investigated the practices that churches adopted in connection with developing prototypical identities for members (Hogg & Terry, 2000). To that end, I established two overarching research questions: how do religious organisations use rhetorical tools to construct identities for current and potential members and produce identification and disidentification? And for what purpose(s) are such member identities constructed, mobilised and perpetuated?

Rhetorical analysis proved particularly useful in answering these questions because of its capacity to reveal attempts to influence peoples' attitudes and behaviours. I found Cheney's (1983a) rhetorical identification typology, with its textual focus and wide application fit my needs for detecting both overt and subtle attempts at encouraging members to identify with their church. At its core, the typology comprises four strategies: the *common ground technique*, *identification through antithesis*, the *'transcendent we'* and *unifying symbols*. In my analysis, I found that, although the strategies presented across the texts - some more than others - their incorporation could, in fact, produce both identification and disidentification, depending on how the members decoded the messages. If identification inducement was successful, it could lead members to adopt the preferred decisional premises of the organisation into their self-concepts (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985), ultimately subordinating members to the control of the church.

Another of my research findings was that the churches had one prevailing motivation for encouraging identification: altruism. Such a motivation was not entirely unexpected, given that, central to Christianity, is the need for members to go forth and do good (Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001), which will not only earn them an eventual place in heaven (Irons, 1996), but in the interim, will meet members' needs for self-worth and self-esteem (Pffefer & Fong, 2005). Yet underneath this motivation, was a much more 'church-centric' reason for binding members to the church: survival. In a secular society, such as New Zealand (Koilg, 2000), where religion is declining and denominations compete among themselves for memberships (Lambert, 1999; Melton, 1998), the need to establish a societal presence to survive was likely unavoidable. The need to survive perhaps accounts for the growing shift of churches to adopt secular communication channels in order to target their messages at current and potential members.

In conclusion, my research found that churches would establish prototypical characteristics (Hogg & Terry, 2000) for members by incorporating rhetorical practices, which could be beneficial to members, but which were certainly worthwhile to the church.

Chapter 1

Overview of the Research

The purpose of this research is to examine the everyday communications of Christian religious organisations for evidence of intentional and unintentional construction of member[1] identity (Cheney, 1983a). In this thesis, the expression "Christian religious organisations" refers to communities of people who, on the one hand, profess a shared belief in Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God (Hurlbut, 1954), but who on the other hand, possess such divergent understandings of the bible that their everyday religious practices have created distinct denominations. Research that interrogates religious communication might have focussed on the 'grand' messages found in artefacts of material religion such as liturgy and sacraments, religious symbols and architecture, and priestly vestments and ceremony, but it was not in these obvious areas that my interest lies. Rather, I am fascinated by the everyday, and as the title of the thesis suggests, the research examines the way in which commonplace messages such as church magazines, bulletins, television advertisements and billboards, situate members within the communications and simultaneously within the hierarchical structures of the church organisations.

1.1 Origins of the research concept

My research does not engage with or critique any individual's or group's personal faith but instead, examines the processes by which faith in general can be manipulated to produce member identification with the churches. My interest in the field was stimulated by the reflection that religious organisations may deliberately and deliberatively limit the possible range of members' self-identities through frequent and seemingly innocuous articulations that may nevertheless be instructively

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[1] For the purpose of this research, members are understood to be those who regularly attend church services.

moralistic and powerfully normative (Johnstone, 1975; O'Dea, 1966)[2]. My chief contention is that the production of identification is achieved as much by the consumption and internalisation of persuasion in pervasive everyday messages as by the more noticeable and grand practices of religious expression and communication.

I had previously explored a small sample of what I termed the 'noticeable and grand' forms of religious communication. In 2007, as part of my Honours dissertation, I analysed the Divine Liturgy of *St John Chrysostom* of the Greek Orthodox Church. My analysis discerned several forms of power relationships inherent in this example of formalised worship, and my primary finding from that research was that the language of the liturgy created and enforced asymmetrical power relations between God[3], the clergy, and the congregation. It was also clear that the Greek Orthodox Church deliberately aimed to construct particular identities for its members: first as sinners, and second, as redeemed sinners who were likely to sin again. These identities were constructed around the notion that members were unworthy in the eyes of God, and that the only path to worthiness was one paved and policed by the church (Nairn, 2008). These two findings inspired me to consider other ways in which Christian religious organisations are able to influence members outside the formality of the liturgy and led me towards the mundane complexities of everyday communications.

The imbricative relationship between the secular and spiritual elements of Christian religious organisations fascinated me, and married with my general interest in organisational theory and the production of social identity. My interest in these academic areas began with my employment in secular organisations, especially in the retail, health and education sectors. My work experiences were such that I became intrigued by the functions and influences of organisations, noting, for instance, how secular organisations were entities constituted in flows of communication and further, that such communication practices forged hierarchical stratification (Burke, 1969). Issues of power and money appear to be endemic in secular organisations (Conrad, 1983; Conrad & Poole, 1997; Mumby, 1987), but seemed to me somewhat unexpected in organisations whose daily currency purports to be the spiritual and the

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[2] See Chapter two, section *Religion as a social institution*, for more detail concerning the moralistic and normative capacity of religious organisations.

[3] Although God can be perceived by individuals as a "universal and impersonal force" or a "personal God" who responds to their prayers (Emmons & Crumpler, 1999, p. 22), for the purposes of this research, God is conceptualised as the creator of Heaven and Earth "and ultimate personal power behind all things" (Kaufman, 2001, p. 410).

sacred. This general reflection on organisations made me particularly sensitive to the saturation of church branding around me. For example, the billboards for Destiny Church[4] abound and their television sermons occupied Sunday morning broadcast scheduling. The kindliness of the overt messages began to be overlaid by covert yet discernible efforts to entice congregants with messages of prosperity theology (Coleman, 2000). The emphasis on money and matters that are ostensibly worldly seemed to point to a commodified religion that offers products and services in return for brand loyalty and continuing allegiance by its members.

The commodification of religion was inevitable. In fact, others (Giggie & Winston, 2002; Moore, 1998) have recognised the commingling of religion and commerce, remarking that although it is perhaps an uncomfortable state of affairs, religions are increasingly capitalising on the prevailing culture of consumerism in order to survive (Giggie & Winston, 2002; Moore, 1998). Consumer culture proliferates choice by clothing standardised products in a guise of uniqueness that audiences can readily select from to meet their individual requirements (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1977) and religion is no different. Modernity has led to an abundance of organisations developed to cater to peoples' spiritual needs (Gedicks, 2005; Kitagawa, 1967; Voyé, 1999). The proliferation of religious choice has forced religious organisations to engage in practices of marketing such as building brand awareness to target a fragmented audience (Giggie & Winston, 2002; Moore, 1998; Voyé, 1999), who consumes products and services for their symbolic meaning (Elliot, 1999). The work of Wernick (1991) accounts for the growing immersion of religions in promotional culture. Wernick argued that promotional culture has colonised "all the circuits of social life" (p. 188), leading to the processes of capitalism, such as 'buying and selling', dominating cultural phenomena, including religion.

There is a sense therefore that churches compete in the marketplace for their congregations. Given the prevailing situation for religions, I contend that the quotidian communications of churches are becoming increasingly hybridised. On the one hand, the crux of these church communications for members is the caring and sharing, which construct "a system of symbols" and "general order of existence"

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[4] Destiny Church is, by its own admission, "one church in many locations" nationally, that seek to spread to their local community "the Gospel of Jesus Christ" (Destiny Church: About Us, n.d.). The church and its leader, have received unfavourable media attention for their enforced 10% tithe (McCracken, 2010), disrupting Auckland traffic in their protests against civil unions (Gregory, 2005) and accusations the church was responsible for the break-up of three couples marriages (Smith, 2009).

(Geertz, 2002, p. 63). If members subscribe to these messages, they reap the benefits of church identification, which comes across in the messages as one of the products alluded to in the communications. To clarify, the 'products' are subjectively determined, and can range from the need for salvation (Irons, 1996), to fulfilling feelings of belonging (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Hogg & Terry, 2000). This perhaps accounts for why organisations identities are often intentionally ambiguous outside of their "central", "distinctive" and "enduring" characteristics (Albert & Whetten, 2004, p. 91), in order to appeal to a broad market. In the case of the religious organisations of this research, they all promulgate a Christian identity, but how they conceptualise that identity denominationally, reflect distinct variations that attract specific memberships, which fits with the key marketing principle that achieving organisational goals is contingent on meeting the demands of 'consumers' (Kotler & Anderson, 1987).

On the other hand, although these communications are ostensibly about altruism directed at church members, a secondary purpose is that they market the organisation according to the marketing mix which has been traditionally referred to as product, price, promotion and place[5] (McCarthy, 1960). The marketing mix in religious communication, as with other forms of communication, is designed to target current and future members and inspire them to make 'buying decisions' in favour of the church. In this case, the 'buying decisions' establish that identification with the church is mutually beneficial. Therefore, in response to elements of promotional culture in the environment to which they operate, the messages of churches are incorporating strategies commonly associated with the managerial behaviours of secular organisations.

Throughout the research I have been mindful, following Heidegger's (1962) discussion of states of being, of a tension between the theological concept of 'the Church' as a community of believers (Beyerhaus, 2011; Higgins, 2009; Steinberg, 1965) and 'churches' as quotidian organisations. The distinction I draw between the *Church* and the *church* is no small one. I take the *Church* in its purest state of being

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[5] According to Jagger (2007), the products characteristics need to match the preferences of the targeted audience, in order for people to view the product as valuable to them. Price refers to the expected costs of the product and whether they can be offset by the anticipated uses that accompany the product. Promotion is designed to inform audiences about the product in order to encourage people to remember it, while place refers to the effort the audience needs to expend to acquire the product. Thus, the marketing of churches is developed to urge members to view the 'product' provided as worthwhile, to persuade them to identify and invest in the church.

(Heidegger, 1962, p. 33) as a faith community united by a belief system of moral beauty, and contrast it with the *church* which has its "being in the world" (p. 79). The *church* operates according to a managerialist ethos[6] which adopts a focus on the fabric of the church, its assets, financial concerns and the survival of the organisation (Twitchell, 2007). At the most fundamental level, the *church-in-the-world* needs members to survive, and in this respect, is not much different from any other worldly organisation (Albert & Whetten, 2004).

I am not, of course, the first to note the managerialisation of churches: many scholars (for full discussion on this matter, see for instance Angheluţă, Strâmbu-Dima & Zaharia, 2009; Ekelund, Hebert & Tollison, 1989, Iannaccone, 1991; Newman & Benchener, 2008; Olds, 1994)[7] have remarked on the move among churches to achieve efficiencies and economies of scale. This tendency towards a 'managed church' seems to suggest some distancing from the principles of the "fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22)[8] once seen as the 'product' of the church, towards the deeply secular ideas of public relations, the bottom line and branding. It seemed to me that the embracing of managerialism revealed a philosophical disjoin marking an uncertainty on the part of church organisations about identity and mission, a sort of tipping of a spiritual hat to the principles of the commercial world and an uneasy attitude of 'Well, if you can't beat'em, join'em'.

As I designed this doctorate, I was tempted to include a study of spiritual practices in secular organisations, because as I began the preliminary reading for the research, I found that inasmuch as Christian religious organisations appeared to be permeated by secular practices, secular organisations were, similarly, increasingly making space for the spiritual (for further discussion on spiritual practices in the secular see Davidson & Caddell, 1994; Garcia-Zamour, 2003; Grant, O'Neil & Stephens, 2004;

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[6] The term "managerialisation," here, refers to the ways in which the church is subject to market forces, competition and government regulation (Iannaccone, 1991, p. 156) and has historically not been opposed to the implementing of "regulations governing the scheduling and distribution of labour, the development of a management hierarchy and rules governing the interaction within and beyond the community were required" (McGrath, 2005, p. 554), epitomised in secular knowledge-intensive firms.

[7] The work of Ekelund, Herbert and Tollison (1989, p. 307) emphasises a 'marriage' between secularised organisational characteristics and religious organisations, sharing how the Catholic church in the Middle Ages exemplifies "theories of monopoly, rent-seeking and industrialised organization" in its economic behaviour. Similarly, Olds (1994) argues that religious organisations in America are becoming privatised and subject to market forces. The privatising of religious organisations sees preachers as providing a service that can be paid for by church patrons through the renting of church pews (Olds, 1994).

[8] All direct quotation from the bible made in this thesis originate from *The New Jerusalem Bible* (1990).

Hicks, 2003 ; Sullivan, 2000; 2006)[9]. These scholars have examined the significance of employees referring to their jobs as 'callings', companies hiring chaplains, holding prayer sessions before meetings, constructing altars in the workplace, having Christmas parties and blessing offices. The scope of a doctorate, however, did not allow adequate investigation of both types of organisation, and therefore, the colonisation of business life by religion, though fascinating, does not form part of the enquiry of this research.

1.2 Research questions and theoretical framing

My increasing interest in the social phenomenon of the secularisation of the Christian church soon began to focus on the persuasion evident in the messages that were published with the obvious aim of building and maintaining membership. Eventually I designed my research project around two research questions:

1. How do religious organisations use rhetorical tools to construct identities for current and potential members and produce identification and disidentification?
2. For what purpose(s) are such member identities constructed, mobilised and perpetuated?

As the questions show, it is an assumption of my research that the everyday messages of the churches do, in fact, contain intentional and unintentional efforts to influence and construct member identities. Following the work of organisational scholars like Cheney (1983a), Adler (1995), and DiSanza and Bullis (1999), I will proceed on the basis that, like secular organisations, churches will attempt to build strong member identification with the organisation (although this may, of course, play out differently given the religious focus of the organisations under investigation). The focus of this

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[9] These different practices assist the employee to reflect spiritually in the situations that present themselves. Sullivan (2000) suggests that employees dealing with different clients can be soothed by the sight of an altar. In essence, workers gain strength from the religious practices they enact at work. When interviewing low-income working mothers, Sullivan (2006) found that praying was a useful tool for the women as they encountered the inevitable stresses associated with their jobs. For the women, praying made them feel as if their 'god' was close by, that 'god' was looking out for them and that meant they could maintain their self-control and act ethically. Religion in the workplace, then, can help employees to feel whole, but this 'wholeness' is just as beneficial to the organisation (Mitroff & Denton, 1999) as religion is seen to encourage "positive" work place behaviours because the employee thinks and acts ethically (Biberman & Tischler, 2008; Sullivan, 2006). That is, the employee is less inclined to lie or steal from their employer as they feel closer to 'god' in their workplaces.

research, then, is not to prove that identification strategies are present in everyday communications – but, rather, to show the nature and purpose of the strategies.

To reiterate, the purpose of this research is to examine the everyday communications of Christian religious organisations for evidence of intentional and unintentional construction of member identity (Cheney, 1983a). To achieve this, I will explore efforts to construct identity in church communications from a critical interpretivist perspective. In the context of my research, a critical interpretive perspective means that I am not basing this research on the positivist position that organisations "are perfectly observable", distinct and stable entities (Bailey, Ford & Raelin, 2008, p. 19); instead I consider organisations to be socially constructed (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000) and subject to symbolic processes, where "the social world is ongoingly accomplished" (Prasad & Prasad, 2002, p. 7). My adoption of a critical interpretive perspective allows me to question the social constructions apparent within an organisational framework, thus gaining insight into "what dominates and leads to constraints in human decision making" (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, p. 1), which, in the case of my research, could very well be their organisationally-constructed identity.

This study singles Christianity out of the wide range of religions that might have been researched, because even in contemporary New Zealand's multicultural and largely secular society (Kolig, 2000), Christianity retains a tenuous hold on its historical status as New Zealand's official religion (Ahdar, 2006). I remark that Christianity's hold on New Zealand society is tenuous, because the last national census showed a decline of 5% in the number of citizens identifying themselves as Christian (Statistics New Zealand, n.d.). Although this leaves approximately 50% of New Zealand's population identifying as Christian (Statistics New Zealand, n.d.), it is likely that many of those two million self-identify as Christian more because of lip-service tradition than active involvement in church (Gendall & Healey, 2009; Kelley & De Graf, 1997). Additionally, the number of New Zealanders indicating 'no religion' continues to increase (Statistics New Zealand, n.d.). Reading these statistics in conjunction with the findings of the International Social Survey Programme, where it was found that 45% of those surveyed believed that the influence of religion on New Zealand society was declining and only 35% of those New Zealanders surveyed described themselves as religious, it is easy to support the view of New Zealand as "a very secular country" (Gendall & Healey, 2009, p. 4).

However, New Zealand's predominantly secular society is expected in its Constitution to acknowledge spirituality in accordance with the expectations of the Treaty of Waitangi. For Ahdar (2003, p. 612), "modern secular liberal" states such as New Zealand, stress a commitment to "religious neutrality and equal treatment of faiths", yet they cannot be categorised as solely secular in nature as historically-agreed expectations have meant the need to privilege "traditional indigenous religion in the name of fostering indigenous people." In New Zealand, The Treaty of Waitangi enforces the maintenance of the spiritual constructs of the Maori worldview throughout the political and social fabric of New Zealand society. For instance, the increase in Maori education initiatives has led to an emphasis being placed on Maori values and beliefs within the school curriculum (Fraser, 2004). Given the influence of the indigenous people on the country's development since the Maori renaissance[10], it would be inaccurate to consider New Zealand as a wholly secular society. Habermas (2008, p. 19) asserted that "[Q]uite apart from their numerical weight, religious communities can obviously still claim a 'seat' in the life of societies that are largely secularized." I follow Habermas in believing that it is worthwhile to explore the role of religion, particularly Christianity, in constructing identity, given the influence of religion even within a secular framework.

1.3 Specifics of the research

Within Christianity, I draw on the communications of different denominations including Anglican, Eastern Orthodox, Pentecostal, and Presbyterian, studying a range of communications (in the sense of multiple messages) aimed at achieving communication (in the sense of shared understanding). The distinction I have drawn here between communication and communications is not a pedantic one. The messages -- bulletins, billboards, magazines and the like -- are meant to achieve communication, here understood as the "shared understanding" (Deetz, 1982; Deetz, 2001; Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005, p. 417) from which identification is built.

I intend to apply Cheney's (1983a) rhetorical identification typology to a series of texts distributed by different Christian denominations. In developing his typology to analyse organisational communications, Cheney operationalised Burke's (1969)

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[10] The Maori renaissance has been referred to as the period from the early 1970's, which prompted the establishment of the Treaty of Waitangi Act (1975) (Sissons, 1995).

theories of rhetoric and identification. Burke (1969, p. 138) observed what he referred to as hierarchical stratification in social organisation and conceptualised rhetoric as a way to bridge the divisions that stratification produces. His aim was to use rhetoric to generate a state of consubstantiality[11] between the rhetor and any given audience. Burke suggests that consubstantiality can be achieved by establishing common ground, creating antithesis and constructing unconscious identification with the audience. Cheney's (1983a) typology of rhetorical identification depended heavily on Burke's techniques, but was extended to include unifying symbols, which provide a focus for organisational identification[12].

Since 1983, Cheney's typology has been amended and extended several times by other scholars of organisational communication, rhetoric and identification. For instance, when they analysed the newsletters of the U.S Forest Service, DiSanza and Bullis (1999, p. 357) included new rhetorical tactics "invitation", "bragging", and "global recognition of individuals".[13] Cherim (2002) also added to the original typology including exemplification as a specific tactic in the common ground technique to account for certain identity inducements used to encourage acceptance of organisational changes. In analysing corporate communications following a "malevolent-type crisis", Downing (2007, p. 350) added shared grief to the common ground strategy and Turnage (2010) argued that the typology could include metaphors.

The preceding paragraph is not intended to be an exhaustive list of the ways that Cheney's (1983a) typology has been modified by different scholars, but even these four examples show that the original method is sound in its own right yet flexible enough to include new tactics when they are needed. The typology has usefully uncovered identification attempts in a range of texts beginning with Cheney's (1983a) own examination of corporate house documents, the newsletters of the U.S Forest service (DiSanza & Bullis, 1999), articles of Canadian (Cherim, 2002) and New Zealand banks (Guo, Cockburn-Wootten & Simpson, 2008), press releases and executive speeches of Verizon (Koenigsfeld, 2004), internal documents of American Airlines (Downing, 2007) and emails from Enron (Turnage, 2010). Ahmed (2009)

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[11] Consubstantiality is explored in section 4.3 (pp. 63-64).
[12] For more information on the typology and its specific strategies and tactics see section 4.3 (pp 64-69).
[13] I have also included invitation and bragging in my analysis but have omitted global recognition of individuals' contributions given the texts analysed were developed for a national audience.

used the typology to analyse a political speech and Adler (1995) analysed religious communication. All of these scholars were able to show intentional and unintentional construction of audience identities and their successes have encouraged me to adopt Cheney's (1983a) rhetorical identification typology as a valid form of textual analysis.

Narrowing my research to instances of identity inducement (Cheney, 1983b) in everyday communication is worthwhile, given that everyday communication are simultaneously pervasive and invisible. In other words, everyday communications are 'naturalised' (Fairclough, 1989): their uses and purposes become "self-evident" (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 95). I contend that everyday communications, which may, to a cursory examination, appear to be merely newsy, light-hearted, welcoming or inclusive, may be forms of the overt and covert controls delineated by Cheney and McMillian (1990) and DiSanza and Bullis (1999). For example, a sermon in a church service may stress the church's lofty expectations.

The expectations may be reproduced in everyday communications such as, for example, a follow up bulletin delivered to the homes of church members, as was the case for the congregation of an Auckland Greek Orthodox Church (personal communication, February 15, 2010). Not only was the congregation exhorted in church to live moral lives, but written reminders further encouraged them to meet church expectations. They were instructed to "pray unceasingly, about anything and everything in your hearts, and for strength, patience, and wisdom as we chart our course together to full Christian witness" (personal communication, February 15, 2010). The bulletin referred to here illustrates how everyday communications can powerfully produce and reproduce organisational identifications initially enacted in other environments. Additionally, everyday communications assist in maintaining identifications through being simultaneously co-ordinated, difficult to attribute to any one person (unless they are deliberately attributed) and developed to reflect the hierarchically determined identifications (Cheney, 1991; Cheney, Christensen, Conrad & Lair, 2004; Cheney & McMillan, 1990; Crable, 1990) of the church's members.

1.4 A brief overview of the fields of inquiry: identity and rhetoric

My research pivots on the concept of identity, which is not an academic field that allows a linear, singular understanding. In fact, the concept of identity is so capacious as to draw on the research of scholars across many disciplines, including aspects of sociology and psychology (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Brewer & Gardner, 2004; Cooley, 1922/2004; Mead, 2004; Scott, Corman & Cheney, 1998). Although my research concentrates principally on social identity theory, I am aware that many scholars such as Brewer and Gardner (2004) and Sluss and Ashforth (2007) describe identity as multi-layered, formed from an amalgam of three separate yet intermingling levels: personal, role/relational and social. Sluss and Ashforth (2007, p. 9) believe that individual identity originates from comparisons of "…traits, abilities, goals, performance and the like," suggesting that the formation of personal identity, is, as Gioia, Schultz and Corley (2000) and Albert and Whetten (2004) showed, a matter of establishing distinctions between *self* and others.

The second of the three levels of identity is role identity (Stryker & Burke, 2000), and refers to "the categorization of the self as an occupant of a role, and the incorporation, into the self, of the meanings and expectations associated with that role and its performance" (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 225). Positive performance in role-based identity can improve self-esteem and self-efficacy (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007; Stets & Burke, 2000), and requires people to compare their role to counter roles (Burke & Reitzes, 1991) as a means of discerning their personal purpose (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007) and distinctiveness (Stets & Burke, 2000). As part of the second level of identity, relational identity allows people to define and evaluate the relationships that accompany their roles. Such definition and evaluation can influence self-concept as the nature of the role-relationship is internalised into definitions of the *self* (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007). Internalisation creates a tension between belonging, on the one hand, and the need for separation and uniqueness on the other (Albert & Whetten, 2004; Brewer, 1991; Brewer & Gardner, 2004; Leonardelli, Pickett & Brewer, 2010; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007).

All research on identity postulates that it is a product of social interaction (Brewer & Gardner, 2004; Margolis & Catudal, 2001; Mead, 2004; Swann Jr, 1987). Individuals "assess the identity implications of interactions and initiate behaviors that maintain or restore congruency between the identity and the reflected appraisal" (Burke & Reitzes, 1991, p. 242) and by reflecting on their interactions, make choices

about which attitudes and behaviours to adopt into their self-concepts. The selection process that accompanies reflection reduces the number of identities available to the person, ultimately creating a sense of the unique self (Lifton, 1970; Parekh, 2009; Scott, 2007).

Although the two concepts of identity discussed above will, to some extent, inform the data analysis, the third level, social identity, is so important to the design of this research that it is explored in detail in chapter three. At this point, however, I have come to a general definition of identity as the self-meanings (Burke & Reitzes, 1999; Parekh, 2009; Peek, 2005; Pratt, 2000; Schlenker, 1986; Stets & Burke, 2000) that include "core beliefs, assumptions, values, attitudes, preferences, decisional premises, gestures, habits and rules" (Scott, Corman & Cheney, 1998, p. 303) used by individuals to evaluate their own conduct and the conduct of others (Burke & Reitzes, 1991; Parekh, 2009; Scott et al., 1998). Many of the same elements that comprise the general definition of personal identity established above are also, unsurprisingly, present in a definition of religious identity, although of course, the focus is narrowed to the religious context. Religious identity, then, is understood here as the adoption into an individual's self-concept of the theology, norms, institutions, traditions and values of a given religion and sets parameters for evaluating cognition and determining behaviour within the religious context (Greeley, 1985; Minkler & Cosgel, 2004).

According to Rymarz and Graham (2006) individuals with a strong or salient religious identity derive high levels of satisfaction from the traditions of their religion, actively engaging in the practices of material religion such as regularly attending church services (Rymarz & Graham, 2006). The reward for establishing a strong, belief-based religious identity is, according to Rymarz and Graham (2006) and Stark and Finke (2000), the belief in the formation of a personal relationship with a higher being. In relation to this research, the higher being in question is the monotheistic Christian God.

Much like other aspects of identity, religious identity is expressed in interactions with others. Obviously, the more individuals interact with people who share their religious beliefs, the more likely they are to establish and preserve a vital religious identity (Olson, 1993). However, although Olson's work has considerable utility in explaining the way in which religious identity is maintained, his scholarship is at odds

with earlier work, such as that of Berger (1967). Berger argued that because religion lost the hold it once had as the purveyor of absolute truths, religious identity can now, to some degree, incorporate personal choices and opinions.

Despite the greater space that is now available for personal interpretation, religious organisations still play an important part in establishing and reaffirming religious beliefs and thus are essential to the sense of religious *self* (Ammerman, 2003; Berger, 1967; Olson, 1993). Although Lee's (1971) research in the Federal Public Health Service did not involve the study of religious organisations, he did show that the loss of familial and cultural models of identification encourages individuals to identify with organisations to construct self-meaning. Individuals may enhance their feelings of self-esteem by associating with those organisations whose values they perceive as congruent with their own and as expressing positive attributes (Abrahamson & Anderson, 1984; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994; Pfeffer & Fong, 2005). People who enhance their self-esteem by identifying with an organisation are likely, according to Cheney (1983a), Dutton et al. (1994), and Hogg and Terry (2000) to conform with its rules and policies, leading, ultimately, to the result that the "goals of the organisation and those of the individual become increasingly integrated and congruent" (Hall, 1971, p. 176). Such goal alignment, obviously, can be beneficial to an organisation because it gains the loyalty of members and probable active engagement with its culture (Martin, 2002; Meyerson & Martin, 1987; Schein, 1992). Equally obviously, it can also benefit the individuals in terms of belonging, self-worth and other psychological needs (Pfeffer & Fong, 2005; Swann Jr, Milton & Polzer, 2000).

The process of creating identification with an organisation need not be sinister: the tools that create identification could be considered value neutral[14]. However, members' identification with organisations sometimes depends on the manipulation of personal beliefs and inclinations through the use of identification strategies and in such cases, individuals are rendered susceptible to both the organisation's dictates, and, therefore, to limitations on their autonomy (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). In these circumstances, individuals may feel compelled to make decisions that "best promote the perceived interests of the organisation" (Scott, Corman, & Cheney,

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[14] The academic scholarship is largely uncritical of rhetoric as a tool of persuasion until the critical point of propaganda is reached. It is difficult, however, to view any tool as value neutral when its sole purpose is to alter states of mind, attitudes and behaviour. For discussion on assigning blame to the rhetor and not to rhetoric see Bryant (1953).

1998, p. 299) rather than their interests, and eventually come to identify with an organisation so strongly that their identities align. Such identity construction is usually reported in research that peels back the organisational processes of secular workplaces (see Carroll, 1995; Cheney, 1983b; Dutton, et al., 1994; Lee, 1971), suggesting that exploring the identity construction conducted by religious organisations is worthwhile to determine whether similar effects are apparent and subsequently further develop the field of inquiry.

Understanding the role of everyday communications in identity construction appears to depend on revealing the power of persuasive communication contained either covertly or overtly (Sperber & Wilson, 1995) in the message. Persuasive communication attempts to invoke attitudinal and behavioural changes that will be, ideally, consistent with the goals of the rhetor (Areni & Lutz, 1988; Taillard, 2000). Persuasive communications can draw on a range of strategies such as creating fear (Sutton & Hallett, 1988; Witte, 1992) and inducing guilt (Basil, Ridgway & Basil, 2006; Coote, Coulter & Moore, 2005; Miceli, 1992), and both these techniques have been endemic in church teachings, particularly during the evolution of rhetoric in the middle ages (Cockroft & Cockroft, 2005; Perelman, 1968). Other strategies may depend on emphasising the credibility of the message source or on frequent repetition of the message (Berger & Mitchell, 1989; Greenwald, 1968; Miller, Brickman & Bolen, 1975), and as Petty and Cacioppo (1984) show, they may also use 'pester power' the number and length of arguments or strengthening the argument (Areni & Lutz, 1988; Cacioppo, Petty & Morris, 1983). Sometimes messages are framed in the most simple language (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984) in order to attract a positive reading. These strategies are likely to elicit favourable cognitive responses in audiences (Greenwald, 1968; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984) and create enough confidence in a changing attitude that modification of behaviour will follow.

When an audience evaluates persuasive communications favourably, attitudes become ingrained and are the point of access for behaviour in particular situations (Berger & Mitchell, 1989). Moreover, persuasive communication is intended to develop frames of reference that will guide cognition and action. Persuasion is, therefore, salient in shaping, reinforcing and changing recipients' responses (Miller, 1980; Stiff & Mongeau, 2003) developing favourable perceptions of an organisation and its product, resulting in consumption (Taillard, 2000), commitment and conformity (Sistrunk & McDavid, 1971).

Tittle and Welch (1983) argue that individuals with a higher degree of religiosity tend to exhibit a greater commitment to their religious organisation, internalising the proclaimed norms of religious organisations. The suggestion from Tittle and Welch, then, is that religiosity, coupled with increased exposure to church communications, increases the members' susceptibility to externalised identity construction. This is not to say that the communications will uniformly affect the attitudes and behaviours of members: rather, it is assumed that a commitment to the organisation may increase the number of communications members are willing to consume, which in turn enables identity construction.

1.5 The organisation of the thesis

This chapter has been created to offer a brief overview of the fields of inquiry and the driving motivations for pursuing this research project. Consequently, it has drawn parallels between secular and sacred organisations to justify exploring the potential identity construction by Christian organisations. It has introduced the reader to the key method of analysis and the types of texts chosen for examination. Therefore, the chapter has functioned to provide insight into how the research concept was formulated and presents a foundation, which the thesis will document the development of.

In the chapter that immediately follows this one, I provide a general overview of religion as a social institution, and briefly interrogate the influence it has had on identity construction for individuals and communities. Chapter three explores the published research on identity and identity construction, with particular attention to concepts of social identity. Social identity becomes the focus as it outlines the motivations and impacts likely experienced by members identifying with organisations.

Chapter four outlines the methodology and method of the research recorded in this thesis. The chapter opens by outlining theories of persuasive communication, and then develops a discussion of rhetoric and surveys Kenneth Burke's contribution to the field. The chapter's emphasis on the work of Kenneth Burke occurs, as Cheney (1983a) draws on Burke's conceptualisation of rhetoric, and specifically consubstantiality, to create his rhetorical identification typology, which I intend to use as the means of analysing the everyday communications distributed by Christian

religious organisations. Cheney's (1983a) rhetorical identification typology with its four strategies for determining the intentional or unintentional constructions of member identities is also introduced in this chapter. Cheney's (1983a) typology has been chosen as the method of textual analysis as it has been successfully used to identify instances of identity construction in both sacred and secular organisations (Adler, 1995; Ahmed, 2009; Chreim, 2002; DiSanza & Bullis, 1999; Turnage, 2010). The strategies included within the typology are the common ground technique, identification through antithesis, the transcendent 'we' and unifying symbols with their application explored in the data chapters to follow. The analysis itself, however, will identify the use of these communication mechanisms within newsletters, bulletins, advertisements and billboards. The chapter finishes with a detailed method.

Chapters' five to eight present the data and each of the four chapters opens with a background to the denomination and church which produced the texts I have analysed. The background is followed by a close reading and an analysis using Cheney's (1983a) rhetorical typology. However, whereas the texts of the Pentecostal and Greek Orthodox churches are analysed according to specific themes that emerge from the texts, the mass communications of the Salvation Army, Presbyterian and Anglican churches have been formatted according to the strategies of the typology. All four data chapters show how the rhetorical strategies construct the identity of the rhetor, the members and identification with the organisation. Preliminary conclusions are made either at the end of the text analysed or close of the chapter and are based on my impressions from the analysis.

The final chapter contains my conclusions and the discussion of my conclusions. It reiterates the rationale for my research and is structured to address my two research questions individually. It also includes a discussion of the types of identities established for the members of the church and offers conclusions drawn from the previous data chapters. I have also pointed to areas for future research.

Chapter 2

Reconnoitring Religion

This chapter surveys the literature on religion in order to contextualise the research. It opens with a discussion of the definitions of religion, before shifting the focus to the evolution of the different roles religion occupies in society, showing how those roles have affected the types of identities that are constructed and disseminated by Christian religious organisations.

2.1 Defining religion

Defining religion is problematic in that the term encompasses a multitude of broad concepts and is often interpreted in a highly personal way (Arnal, 2000; Nye, 2004). Religion has been studied over many years from a wide range of disciplines, and the definitions offered by scholars depend on which approach they take. For example, Tylor (1871/2002, p. 23), working from an anthropological perspective, considers religion to be best defined in the broadest possible way. He offers "the belief in Spiritual Beings" as a working definition because he objected to definitions that exclude the religions of "primitive" cultures. Like all broad 'portmanteau' definitions, Tylor's (1871/2002) has utility in that it focuses on the phenomenon of religion, but it is a weakness of this definition that it does not account for religion as a product of social interaction. By contrast, Durkheim (2002) considered religion to be the basis of society. He studied native Australian cultures, which at the time of his research were considered primitive, and he determined that there was a correlation between religious activity and social organisation (Nye, 2004). For Durkheim (2002), religion had two functions. First, religion was considered in terms of the beliefs and practices associated with "sacred things" that unify people towards "one single moral community called a Church" (p. 46). In this way, religion was conceived of as bringing people together and potentially creating social solidarity (Nye, 2004).

Durkheim considered the second social function of religion was to provide people with a way to understand their societies through shared practices, beliefs and institutions which forge religious identities that subsequently form the basis of social identities (Durkheim, 2001; Durkheim, 2002; Nye, 2004).

However, Durkheim's (2002) definition is not without its critics. Nye (2004) argues that Durkheim's understanding of religion is flawed in that his analysis was based on textual accounts of primitive cultures, which Durkheim discusses as if the primitive cultures had not been subject to historical development. According to Nye (2004 p. 44), Durkheim treats the primitive cultures as if they were "stuck in rudimentary 'evolutionary' backwater" and then attempts to apply conclusions made about the religions of "primitive" cultures to much more complex and sophisticated societies whose religious developments were produced in widely different contexts. It is another of Durkheim's (2002) assertions that religion encompasses the beliefs and practices associated with 'sacred things'. The problem identified here is 'sacred things' does not just account for God or spirits, but can refer to sanctified objects. According to Pargament, Magyar-Russell and Murray-Swank (2005), anything has the potential to be sanctified, which diminishes the explicit relevance of 'sacred things' in Durkheim's definition. Finally, Durkheim's (2002, p. 46) definition assumes that there is a development of "one single moral community," which implies sameness among the members of any belief system. In fact, the belief system may well have members with differing interpretations of what constitutes morality and religion can actually create conflict rather than binding people together (Allport, 1950; Nye, 2004). Durkheim's definition, then, does not consider the impact individual agency may have on the construction of a moral community.

Like Durkheim (2002), Johnstone (1975) also stresses the beliefs and practices associated with the sacred. Johnstone, however, includes the supernatural as part of religion and argues that it is how people interpret and respond to the sacred and supernatural that constitutes religion. The supernatural or 'the ineffable' was also incorporated into O'Dea's (1966) earlier working definition of religion, in which he considered religion to be inherent in people's attitudes to the 'beyond'. These concepts all associate religion with belief systems and communities of practice. For most monotheistic religions, the belief system imposes a general order on society, for which there is someone else responsible, that someone else being God (Hale, 1998).

As the previous paragraphs have shown, religion is by no means a settled concept. For the purposes of this research I will rely on Clifford Geertz's foundational work on the relationship between what people do and the meanings they make in and of the world. According to Nye (2004, p. 46), in developing his definition of religion, Geertz argued that "human activity...needs to be related to the ways in which people are bound together in the symbolic 'webs of significance' that they themselves spin." These "webs of significance" refer to the entanglements that form individuals' cultural understandings, which subsequently guide their cognition and action. For Geertz (2002), religion lay at the heart of these webs of meaning. Given that Geertz's perspective of religion alludes to its social nature, I have chosen to follow his understanding of the concept of religion. Geertz (p. 63) defines religion as:

> A system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive and long lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.

I have chosen Geertz's (2002) definition to underpin this research because he includes the concept of power in the system of symbols employed by the churches to "establish powerful, pervasive and long lasting moods" (p. 63). The relevance of 'power' here is that religious organisations, through their modes of communication, can encourage particular 'moods and motivations' in their congregations by presenting religious ideologies as final truths, which inevitably speak of the powerful influence of religion on identity. In other words, by constructing "a general order of existence" (p. 63) for followers, religious authorities can influence and control their followers. Part of the "general order of existence" of which Geertz speaks is created through message development and dissemination, and I anticipate finding evidence of this power in the texts I will analyse[15].

The symbols to which Geertz (2002, p. 64) refers cover what he calls "the social and psychological processes that shape public behaviour." The symbols construct understandings of the world and shape how people act and think within it (King, 2010). For example, a given symbol of God can assist in establishing a conscience within people, determining how they think and act, if they intend to seek 'salvation'. Similarly, a devoted Christian who wears a crucifix might do so to symbolise and encapsulate family background and religious routines and rituals acquired in

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[15] *See Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 (pp. 76-184) for more details*

childhood. Thus, as King (2010, p. 1) argues, symbols can be objects and images of religion used to signal belonging to a particular religious group and they "can offer an emotive outlet for those in search of a secure identity."

As much as symbols have power to develop beliefs, Geertz (2002, p. 67) sees moods and motivations as enforcing the "liabilities to perform particular classes of acts or have particular classes of feeling," which push people to behave in sanctioned ways. In other words, religious moods and motivations help to maintain what comes to be seen as a natural law or societal moral code for society (Ward, 2000). People are constrained by this natural (or rather, supernatural) law or moral code, because through it, they are held accountable for their actions. A social law that is taken as divinely inspired has considerable power to effect and maintain cohesion in a community (Johnstone, 1975; Ward, 2000).

Finally, Geertz's (2002, p. 63) reference to a "general order of existence" suggests that people believe in God to make known the unknown. In other words, shared answers to the big questions, such as what happens after death, can build social cohesion. Geertz maintains that there is "a persistent, constantly re-experienced difficulty in grasping certain aspects of nature, self and society" (p. 69) that emerges when people question their human experience on a day-to-day basis. Religion provides an explanation for phenomena that make people feel "adrift in an absurd world" (p. 69). According to Johnstone (1975), people need to perceive an order of existence so as to fit life into a divine plan that interprets the experiences of disaster, illness and death. Scholars suggest that without this general order of existence, believers would struggle to feel secure and capable of enduring the threats, failures, frustrations and injustices that typify daily life (Geertz, 2002; Johnstone, 1975; O'Dea, 1966).

2.2 Religion and Society

It is impossible to consider the institution of religion without becoming aware that it is often a source of social tensions. On the one hand, when Christian organisations teach responsibility and respect and encourage reconciliation and forgiveness (Martin, 1997; Moore, 1994; Ward, 2000), they assist in the enactment of social control by providing a positive guide for how people should think and act (Moore, 1994). On the other hand, organised Christianity has also been accused of fostering

intolerance, exploiting the masses as productive units (Weber, 2002), oppressing minority groups and inciting wars (Johnstone, 1975; O'Dea, 1966; Martin, 1997; Moore, 1994; Ward, 2000). Such negative repercussions may result from the imposition of religious beliefs on societies through the mechanisms of the criminal law codes. For instance, there has been a long held belief in some Christian denominations (Buchanan, Dzelme, Harris & Hecker, 2001) that homosexual practices are unnatural and contrary to the will of God, and this belief came to be codified in criminal law (Brickell, 2000)[16]. Another example that is sometimes used to argue that Christianity fosters intolerance is the apparent spiritual justification for the claim that women are inferior to men and, therefore, should be subordinate to them. Such interpretations of Christian doctrines to suit the needs of dominant groups can create values and beliefs that discriminate against those with less power (Børresen, 1995; Dailey, 2004; Daly, 1973; Felder, 1993; Fiorenza, 1975; Goldenberg, 2003; Holder, 1993; Jordan, 2004; Mahon, 2004).

Despite perceptions that organised Christianity has preserved social structure, it has nevertheless both invoked, and also been privy to, the changes that Christian groups have striven for as they attempted to align traditional religious beliefs and practices with modern society (Silberman, Higgins & Dweck, 2005). In fact, Silberman et al. argue that religion is malleable and that Christian groups variously interpret religion to invoke change, support the status quo, or to encourage dissent. Received wisdom has been that organised religions are conservative to the point of being reactionary in their support and preservation of the status quo. However, that does not mean there has never been tension between Christianity and the establishment. For instance, Henry VIII's decision to disestablish the monasteries and redistribute their lands and wealth shows that spiritual power, no matter how great, can be set aside if the political needs of a secular monarch are sufficiently compelling (Beales, 2005).

The dissolution of the monasteries was a specific act of political defiance against the established church of the time, but other forms of secularisation have changed the relationship between church and society as well. The emphasis on scientific understandings that began during the period of Enlightenment eroded the hold the church had on belief and undermined faith (Bellah, 1967; Gedicks, 2005; Jaspers, 1953; Kitagawa, 1967; Lambert, 1999; Voyé, 1999). As Gedicks (2005, p. 1198) says,

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[16] In New Zealand in 1986 the Homosexual Law Reform Bill was passed to decriminalise male-male sex. Sexual relations between women was never illegal in New Zealand (Brickell, 2000).

the enlightenment period promised that science would allow control of the resources of the physical world, and thus broke "the preeminence of the medieval church as arbiter of truth and knowledge." The displacement of the metanarrative of Christianity by the metanarrative of modernity pushed religion to the margins of society (Gedicks, 2005), as preference was given to engaging more with the phenomenal world (Kitagawa, 1967). Individuals chose to define their faith according to their preferred understandings (Voyé, 1999), which forced Christian churches to compete against non-Christian and non-orthodox institutions for public allegiance (Lambert, 1999; Melton, 1998), forcing Christianity to evolve in response to the needs of people (Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001; Johnstone, 1975; Moore, 1994). Accordingly, a "new way of doing religion happens" (Twitchell, 2007, p. 46) which pressures churches, who are competing for members, into adopting innovative and unique strategies, such as praise and worship dance, to make the religious experience 'fun'. That is not to say, however, that the changes made by religions are not also for the benefit of specific Christian groups, as these new strategies can attract current and potential congregants to church.

Religion and the shaping of society

In the following exploration, my intention is to interrogate the roles of religion and its current involvement in society.

Johnstone (1975) argues that Christianity has several functional roles in society. The first is that it provides normative reinforcement (see above). Ideally, organised Christianity works to reinforce the norms of society to prevent people from infringing upon the rights of others (Johnstone, 1975; Ward, 2000). To prevent infringement, Christianity stresses beliefs such as human dignity, freedom, respect for legitimate authority and equality before the law (Johnstone, 1975). Essentially, it provides a guideline for society to live by that attempts to create perfect citizens that adhere to God's commandments.

Normative reinforcement can be problematic in that it has no impact on those who are not religiously inclined and the norms enforced are those dictated by the church hierarchy (Ward, 2000). As Johnstone (1975) puts it, Christian groups and by extension institutions, are partial to their own interpretations of what are the best norms to integrate into society, constructing society and the people in it in a way that meets the objectives of religious hierarchies. Unfortunately the enforcing of

particular Christian beliefs can lead to social conflict. Ireland's so-called sectarian violence is often cited in this regard (Johnstone, 1975; Mitchell. 2005). However, the Irish example of violence between Protestants and Catholics has its roots in such complex issues that religion is arguably only ostensibly the cause of the violence. In the case of inter-religious wars, such as occurred with Christianity and Islam during the crusades, religious difference was much more a blunt instrument of cause given that there was absolute disagreement about interpretation of Abrahamic tradition (Tyerman, 2006). Therefore, rather than promoting norms that make for peaceful lives for citizens, religious norms can produce intolerance and ignorance (O'Dea, 1966).

That said, the norms enforced by Christian groups have been subject to societal backlash, and have in some cases been forced into changing. As will be explored further later in the chapter, norms that encouraged the subordination of non-whites and women have been alleviated with both playing greater roles in religion and society as a whole (Dailey, 2004; Gudorf, 1999). Similarly, homosexuals have rebelled against the prejudice of the church and in some cases, have created their own denominations that embrace gay rights (Barret & Barzan, 1996; O'Brien, 2004; Olson & Cadge, 2002). It could be argued that the norms reinforced by Christianity have had to change to accommodate societal pressures, for without those changes, denominations would run the risk of losing members and the power they have over aspects of society.

Another functional role of the Christian religion is that it assists in creating meaningful group relationships (Johnstone, 1975). In this situation, immigrants view religion as a way of entering already established communities where they share cultural capital (Johnstone, 1975; Peek, 2005). Peek (2005, p. 218) states that religious organisations allow for the "maintaining (of) group identity and solidarity" aiding in the creation of meaningful relationships. However, as Johnstone (1975, p. 135) states, because religion is able to perform certain functions for society, "it does not mean that religion is either inevitable or nonexpendable." Obviously, non-religious people would not look to Christianity to create meaningful relationships but might allow other social institutions, such as work, to fulfil the role instead.

According to Johnstone (1975) the most important function of religion is helping people adjust to and move on from debilitating personal crises. According to

Weaver and Flannelly (2004, p. 1210), "faith can give a suffering person a framework for finding meaning and perspective through a source greater than self, and it can provide a sense of control over feelings of helplessness" that may otherwise prompt questioning, chaos and fear (Pargament, Magyar-Russell & Murray-Swank. 2005). Religious activity can restore feelings of safety, fairness and predictability in the world and in other cases, can facilitate a positive relationship with God that leads to increased hopefulness and improvement in health and well-being (Park, 2005; Thompson & Vardaman, 1997; Weaver & Flannelly, 2004).

Although Pargament (1997) argues that some individuals perceive organised Christianity as being more successful for dealing with the problems that can accompany human insufficiency than secular institutions, there are issues associated with seeking religion as a means to coping with life's misfortunes. Thompson and Vardaman (1997) found that of the six religious coping strategies[17] available to individuals coping with loss, pleading, discontent and deeds actually increased feelings of distress in the believer. Pleading made individuals passively dependent on God; discontent caused individuals to harbour angry feelings towards a God who, they felt had abandoned them, and the enactment of deeds pushed individuals to move on towards a better life. Thompson and Vardaman acknowledge that families of homicide victims used religion to cope with their situation, but religious coping strategies could actually cause disaffection towards a person's religion. Therefore, as Pargament et al. (2005) have shown, negative religious coping mechanisms could prove detrimental to the recovery from stress, although Park's (2005) research suggests that in the long-term, individuals can benefit by using religious frameworks to help them through anxiety and tension. However, Park's (2005) research suggests a symbiosis between Christian institutions and the individuals who turn to organised Christianity to deal with trauma: in as much as individuals find strength and coping mechanisms, the presence of the institutions in society is perpetuated.

Johnstone (1975) points out that a historical role of religion has been to stimulate aesthetic expression. Although religions are not the only institutions in society to have encouraged and continue to encourage aesthetic expression, some of the most renowned buildings, music and fine art paintings can be religiously inspired and they

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[17] The six religious coping strategies were spirituality based coping, religious support, avoidance, pleading, good deeds and discontent (Thompson & Vardaman, 1997).

are now as much markers for cultural as religious aspirations[18]. For example, The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem continues to attract thousands of pilgrims annually, the Cologne Cathedral in Germany is said to be "a masterpiece of Gothic architecture" (Hoffman & Krings, 2007, p. 128), the church of La Sagrada Familia is Barcelona's most famous building, and the statue of Christ the Redeemer overlooks the city of Rio de Janeiro and was voted one of the new seven wonders of the world (Hoffman & Krings, 2007; Wilkinson, 2007). A critical reading of these iconic religious artefacts could suggest that they are displays of authority and wealth, but on the surface, at least, they are intended to function as powerful symbols around which communities of believers can unite (King, 2010).

However, in as much as some aesthetic expressions of Christianity are revered, they can also cause controversy and division. For instance, a young Catholic girl in Philadelphia was accused of blasphemy for creating panties decorated in the crotch with red crosses (DiMaggio, Cadge, Robinson & Steensland, 2001). She argued that her art depicts the conflict she experiences between her sexuality and faith, but her argument was not accepted by the church who deemed the work as blasphemous, scandalous and anti-Catholic (Cheng, 1997). In cases like this, as in New Zealand's experience of the Madonna in the condom (Kolig, 2004), the freedom of the artist is set aside in favour of the feelings of the offended believers and their violated religious freedoms (DiMaggio et al., 2001). Believers are likely to argue that their position on 'blasphemous' art is justified because the sacred is at the core of life (Pargament, Magyar-Russell & Murray-Swank, 2005). Although there is frequent conflict between religion and the arts (DiMaggio et al., 2001), the struggle is not as pronounced or as frequent as news media imply. In their research into cultural controversies reflected in Philadelphia news media, DiMaggio et al. found there had been only twenty-three religious controversies in the media over a 32 year period, and that some of these so-called religious controversies were about religious expression in public schools. The findings of this research suggest that the place of religion in the secular world is being questioned, and attempts are being made to drive religion back into churches.

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[18] Although it is noted that the Church was also the beneficiary of outside patronage, suggesting not all literary, musical, architectural and artistic expressions were religiously inspired, but were designed to "make friends" (Bahlman, 1979, p. 254) and influence the voting public affiliated with the church (Cross, 1996).

Religion has also marked rites of passage. However, as long ago as 1974 Pickering noted that society was becoming increasingly secular, which is observable in the decline of "rituals of initiation" (Blumenkrantz & Gavazzi, 1993, p. 201) that mark the transitions from birth to death such as baptism, confirmation, marriage and funerals. These rituals "symbolize shared constructions of reality and legitimize particular social prescriptions, moral stances or world views" (p. 201), but it is arguable that the shared cultural constructions these Christian rituals represent are slowly losing prominence as increased secularisation means the shared understandings of these rites of passage and their religious importance decline (Barry & Nelson, 2005; Blumenkrantz & Gavazzi, 1993; Nelson, 2003; Pickering, 1974). Declining participation in traditional rituals of initiation appears to be partly symptomatic of, and partly a cause of, the reduced salience of religion in an increasingly secular world (Barry & Nelson, 2005; Blumenkrantz & Gavazzi, 1993; Nelson & Barry, 2005).

Abrahamic religions have traditionally provided charity to fill the gaps left by governments, which are sometimes accused of being bureaucratic, impersonal and unresponsive to people in need (Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001). A criticism of religiously-based welfare systems is that they do not come for free: that is, along with the meeting of a need such as housing, there is often an expectation of change in morals and behaviour (Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001). The work carried out by Chaves and Tsitsos (2001) shows that religion still plays a role in the providing of charitable services, and the collaboration and subcontracting occurring between religious and secular organisations can benefit communities by making more resources available.

All of the above functional roles of Christianity assist in the formation and maintenance of societies indicating a capacity for identity construction, depending on the prevalence of religion in any given society. Christianity has played a positive role in society at various times. However, as I have mentioned, there is a plethora of evidence that divergent religious beliefs can provoke sectarian violence (Ward, 2000) and can impede social evolution by enforcing doctrinal differences that have negative social, political and practical implications (Johnstone, 1975). Quality of life for individuals can also be diminished by adhering to doctrines that counter common-sense or science, such as, for example, offering a religious teaching that immunisation against disease is not pleasing to God (Johnstone, 1975).

Religion is frequently accused of constructing followers as productive units (Johnstone, 1975). According to Weber (2002), the Protestant work ethic has had a marked influence on the development of a material culture. A focus on the Proverbs passage (22:29) "You see someone alert at his business" assists in creating the belief that 'salvation' is not free and that it needs to be worked for. In fact, religious messages were popularised in 19th Century America to advantage the monetary exchange (Moore, 2004). Taking a Marxist perspective, Johnstone (1975) refers to the Protestant ethic as religion manipulating and exploiting its followers for capitalist gains. It is difficult to see religion as a positive force given its increasing money-conscious, business-oriented, marketing and self-promotional focus (Moore, 1994; Twitchell, 2007).

Continuing the discussion of the negative influences of organised Christianity on society, the remainder of this chapter focuses on exploring how biblical interpretation can favour dominant groups because they construct identities that are to the detriment of non-whites, women and homosexuals.

2.3 Power, biblical interpretation and the construction of religious identity

The purpose of my research is to explore the letters of address, bulletins, advertisements and billboards of Christian religious organisations for evidence of the intentional and unintentional construction of member identity. I will now draw on theories of power to outline how identities are constructed and focus more specifically on how discussions of power relate to biblical interpretation.

Biblical interpretation, or exegesis, is concerned with drawing out the true meaning of scripture for the purposes of understanding the meaning of human existence (Eakin, 1927; Ogden, 1996). However, biblical exegesis is criticised because of the potential for bias. It has been convincingly pointed out (Eakin, 1927; Ferré, 1959; Muilenburg, 1958; Ogden, 1996) that people who interpret the bible and draw up the rules for societies to live by, are often self-appointed as having the qualification and experience to do so. According to Eakin (1927, p. 597) biblical exegesis can be more accurately considered biblical "eisegesis" because those interpreting the bible read their own understandings (Muilenburg, 1958) into its content, to fit with the beliefs accepted by the church (Eakin, 1927). Furthermore, Ogden (1996) outlines

that bias in biblical exegesis occurs because the interpreter seeks to answer a number of different questions through their exegesis and, therefore, will orient their approach to answering these specific questions. Similarly, bias permeates biblical exegesis through the omissions of portions of the bible that fail to fit with the interpreters perceptions (Muilenburg, 1958). Such arguments suggest that biblical exegesis can be used to advance the positions of powerful groups (Eakin, 1927) and, consequently, influence and shape the identities of those who rely on biblical interpretations to understand human existence.

Because biblical interpretations are imbued with discourses of power, religious communications and those disseminating them can influence identities (Scult, McGee & Kuntz, 1986). As Fairclough (1992, p. 3) states, discourse does not "just reflect or represent social entities and relations" but "constructs and constitute(s) them." The ideologies embedded in discourse (Fairclough, 1992; Mumby, 2004; Thompson, 1990) whether business, environmental, or religious, reflect constructions or significations of reality that encourage susceptible subordinates to act and think according to certain sense-making practices that favour the dominating elite. For example, bible-based teachings about salvation and damnation are religious ideologies that can induce such guilt and fear that believers happily follow the dictates of church hierarchies (Welch, Tittle & Grasmick, 2006).

Religious discourse is embedded with 'God-language' that, among other things, constructs women as inferior to their men (Daly, 1973; Fiorenza, 1975; Hargrove, 1987; Ruethers, 1985). Feminist theologians argue that the God language and ideologies (such as the 'Fall of man' Genesis 3:1-24), that pervade religious texts contribute to the maintenance of patriarchal structures and androcentrism (Børresen, 1995; Daly, 1973; Fiorenza, 1975; Ruethers, 1985; White, 1995). These ideologies oppress women, allocating them such identities as the "servile wife" or "reproductive vessel" (Braun, 2000, p. III). Such biblically-derived identities, reinforce women's status as the second sex (Daly, 1973; White, 1995), a point developed further later in the chapter. Here it is evident that religious ideologies have the power to influence individual identities at a fundamental level (Scult et al., 1986; Witten, 1993) and even a prosaic level: in their discussion of Genesis, Scult et al. (1986, p. 118) argue that "[T]he relationship between human beings and God is conducted through a story that is firmly grounded in the material world in which the author and audience both live."

Identity construction in the church occurs "through overt experiences and direct references" (Ammerman, 2003, p. 216), but forms of covert control also abound. According to Mumby (1987), covert control is possible when ideology is subtly embedded into the verbal, non-verbal and material practices of everyday life, and in the context of this research, 'everyday life' includes Christian practices. If Christianity is taken as a culture that is unanimously agreed upon by members (Martin, 1992; Meyerson & Martin, 1987), and which underpins its activities with "a pattern of shared basic assumptions" (Schein, 1992, p. 12) that guide behaviour and understanding, then it is clear that the culture heavily depends on biblical interpretation and its manifestations in the lived world. To digress a little into an example that makes my point, readings of Genesis 9:18-25 "the curse of Ham" have justified beliefs in white supremacy as they have been used to argue that God gave a divine judgement about the inferiority of black people (Goldenberg, 2003), thus constructing an ideology that Christian groups have abided by, and in some cases continue to abide by.

In keeping with the discussion that ideologies are embedded in Christian practices which ultimately influence individuals' identities, is the research of Felder (1993) and Barton (2004). Both Felder and Barton have explored biblical racism and claim that it is the Eurocentric biases in the interpretations of the bible which have led to an ideology of white supremacy, not the actual content of the bible. As Felder (1993, p. 47) puts it:

> The Bible itself reflects a genuine multiculturalism, patterns of racial and ethnic diversity, and a bona fide universalism that have all been minimised and effectively trivialised in the triumphant march of the Western church.

Here Felder shows how, although, the bible is blamed for racism, it is in fact a product of hegemonic groups placing and maintaining their own ethnicity over others. Admittedly, Felder's interpretation can be accused of promulgating a bias, and is another example of the bible offering contestable narratives that may be agreed with, or opposed according to an individual's preferences. Interpretations of the bible, then, justify a range of positions that can have powerful flow-on effects to individuals' identities.

Barton's (2004) research also offers insight into how hegemonic groups can control identities through preferential readings of the bible. Barton pinpoints the origins of biblical racism in relation to Eurocentric translators, suggesting that the European

perception of black as negative and white as positive is not a biblical principle. Both black hair and black human skin colour were praised, as the famous quotation from Solomon's Song of Songs 1:5 shows: "I am black but lovely." Furthermore, white is not exclusively used for purity in biblical writing: skin "as white as snow" denoted leprosy, a disease so feared that sufferers were seen as impure and cast out of their communities (for example see Leviticus 13:1-59). Even sin is depicted as red, not black, suggesting that "European interpreters... read black and white colours into the text when they are not present" (Barton, 2004, p. 185). Barton also argues that Black and Asian people have been taught by Christian ministries that they should want white skin, which may have a negative impact on how they identify with their ethnicity[19]. Felder (1993) and Barton's (2004) works reaffirm the perception that European scholarship has held intellectual dominance in previous centuries and that little attention has been paid to the potential of new knowledge permeating non-white, Third World societies (Joseph, 1987; Mohanty, 1988; Prakash, 1994). More specifically, their works reinforce the perception that biblical exegesis and the ideologies disseminated can adversely affect identity formation for members of particular ethnic groups.

To return to the main point of the earlier discussion of religious organisations and their effect on member identity, religious leaders can influence individual identities because they possess and deploy knowledge and power (Foucault, 1979)[20]. Reber's (2006) contention is that the possession of knowledge develops "individuals who claim a privileged relationship to supernatural beings and forces- such as priests" (p. 193) who adopt positions of legitimate power (Hardy & Clegg, 1996) over their congregations and who therefore have the authority to influence the actions and cognitions of believers (Eakin, 1927). Reliance on religious leaders to interpret and communicate religious meaning to believers indicates asymmetrical power relations, where a "powerful group may limit the freedom and action of others, but also influence their minds" (van Dijk, 1993, p. 254). Thus, religious leaders can construct identities for believers according to their own interests (Thompson, 1990), which is in line with Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony. Gramsci (1971) argues that subordinates in a given hierarchy have their individuality and self-reliance restricted by an external authority, which is possible because subordinates accept their positions in the hierarchy (Mumby & Stohl, 1991). According to Foucault (1980, p. 98),

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[19] See discussion in Barton (2004) pp. 167-187
[20] Foucault (1979) argues that the possession of knowledge is also the possession of power.

individuals accept the effects of power because "[I]t is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourse, come to be identified and constituted as individuals… the individual is an effect of power." Therefore, people accept the effects and constraints of power to evaluate who they are and are thus susceptible to hegemonic groups' attempts to construct individual identities for their own benefit.

This chapter has so far explored the role of religion in society and the impact of biblical exegesis on the development of individuals' identities. Much of the discussion has also pointed to the role religious authorities have had in constructing those identities. History suggests that subordinated groups have come to resent the identities formulated for them, have tended to produce alternative religious identities (Barret & Barzan, 1996; Buchanan, et al., 2001). Therefore, to offer an holistic understanding of religion's role within society, the chapter will investigate both the traditional ideologies and identities of religion, and also how dissenting groups have aided in the social evolution of religion.

First, traditionally Christianity has been predominantly negative about the body (Camille, 2008; Delaney, 2004; Nelson, 1992), a point reflected in the seven deadly sins which illustrate a "profound suspicion of the human body" (Nelson, 1992, p. 30). The Christian perspective portrays the body as a corruptive vessel that enslaves the superior spirit, preventing the believer from attaining spiritual purity (Delaney, 2004; Mahon, 2004; Nelson, 1992). By disseminating such a negative perception of the body, Christian organisations construct identity around the mortification of the flesh (Delaney, 2004). Shilling (2003) has noted that extreme religious teaching about the body can allow believers to justify eating disorders and self-mutilation. However, in as much as one strong tradition has promoted the body as a source of sin, another tradition has developed that argues that the body should be revered (Camille, 2008; Rachels, 2003). Camille's (2008) examination of the Judaeo-Christian tradition reveals that Jews believe the body is sacred, and that it is central to the most important tenets of Christian belief: incarnation, resurrection, ascension, all of which are celebrated in the ritual of the Eucharist.

Second, during the civil rights movement (from roughly 1955 onwards) in the United States, the bible was reinterpreted to support the liberation rather than the subordination of African-Americans, overturning segregationist positions which were

based on the interpretations of the apostle Paul. Activists like Martin Luther King were vociferous in their belief that Christian segregationists were heretics (Dailey, 2004). Dailey (2004) notes that activists' use of religious material, especially Christian dogma, proved to be a major success of the civil rights movement because it liberated black people from a religiously-based subordination to white supremacy. This is an instance of the discourses of religion being interpreted to oppose the social norms constructed by Christian hegemonic groups which is not uncommon. There has been a long tradition of emancipation via Christian teaching, where religious groups on the margins of society have interpreted or added to religious doctrine to suit their own agendas. These groups have gradually gathered momentum with more people amending their attitudes in line with the 'dissenting' group (Harvey, 1996), until what was once deemed heresy has become naturalised into thinking[21].

The two examples show how Christian discourses can encourage resistance, especially when the resistance is based on perceptions of injustice, paralleling work carried out in non-religious organisations by Hardy and Phillips (2004). Resistance to authority can happen when personal perceptions of injustice become more salient than organisational values. For hegemonic groups to maintain authority they need to shape:

> ...people's perceptions, cognitions, and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they view it as natural and unchangeable, or because they value it as divinely ordained and beneficial. (Luke, 1974, p. 24)

Chomsky (1998) argues that if subordinates have choice, they cannot simply accept subordination but will instead, challenge power. Despite religious leaders attempting to manufacture consent through the reinforcement of religiously sanctioned norms, challenges to organised Christianity have become increasingly common in recent history with cases of child abuse among clergy prompting followers to 'de-baptize' as a form of protest (Bryant, 2012). Consequently, the messages of the church are incurring oppositional readings, which has led religious leaders to lose their stronghold on the construction of member identity. This has been particularly marked in the case of gay rights and women's rights.

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[21] For an example *see* Howell and Brewster's (1970) discussion of the Levellers' views on religious toleration.

Changes in religion and society are particularly notable in connection with the treatment of Christian homosexuals. As Buchanan, Dzelme, Harris and Hecker (2001, p. 435) found some Christian denominations have stressed the sexual identity of homosexuals as "morally wrong". For instance as Berliner (1987), Maher, Sever and Pichler (2008), and O'Brien (2004) point out, the Catholic Church has distinguished between sexual identity and sexual activity teaching that homosexual orientation is an affliction that can be cured and requires support from the clergy. Moreover Barret and Barzan (1996) Buchanan, Dzelme, Harris and Hecker (2001) and O'Brien (2004) found that some instances of Christian teaching have prevented gay people from participating in religious activity, and have even caused some individuals to denounce their religion and reject their religious identities.

Buchanan et al. (2001) argue that discrimination against homosexuals by certain Christian institutions has formed an impenetrable barrier for some Christians negotiating their sexual identity. For some homosexual Christians, discrimination has led to self-hatred, internalised homophobia and a delay in the development of their sexual identity, and revoking ties from institutional religion to gain some form of 'salvation' (Buchanan, et al., 2001). Despite the struggle to reconcile religious beliefs with sexual orientation, others have found that the difficulty of being gay and Christian assisted in defining who they were, and they were assisted in such understanding of their identities by the move of some churches, for example the Episcopal Church, to accept gay men and lesbians (Barret & Barzan, 1996; O'Brien, 2004). Such action by Christian denominations has assisted in forging the sexual identities of members, either in reference to, or through exclusion from, religion.

The work of Olson and Cadge (2002) suggests that while some Protestant clergy are open to homosexuality, others remain uncommitted because they fear the effect open acceptance will have on their congregations. Olson and Cadge quote a Lutheran minister who said he "feels that the Christian perspective against homosexuality 'hurts the whole church' and 'even our own personal faith element' (but) he has difficulty deciding when to articulate his position to his congregation" (pp. 158-159). There is evidence, however, that society at large is more accepting of homosexuality as Eskridge (2000) and Harris (2005) argue in their examination of civil unions. Maher et al. (2008) contend that Catholics in particular are becoming more reliant on their own moral judgements than on church authority, which will tend to diminish the authority of institutionalised Christianity.

Hodge (2005) contends that media are in part responsible for forming perceptions of both homosexuality and Christianity. Media representations tend to portray Christians as "haters" (Hodge, 2005, p. 211), ignoring the full Christian arguments on homosexuality[22]. Perceptions that have been changed by media activity may marginalise Christianity when the norms of the Church teach that homosexuality is wrong (Olson & Cadge, 2002).

The issue of the treatment of women by Christian organisations is, like the issue of homosexuality, changing. As mentioned earlier, women were traditionally portrayed as subordinate to men and discussion of women in in the bible constructed women as the lesser sex (Fiorenza, 1975; Ruethers, 1985; Mulder, 1997). Women tended to fall into one of two stereotyped portrayals: they were either Mary the virgin or Mary the Magdalene, "virtuous angels or entirely corrupt temptresses of men" (Styler, 2007, p. 70). Women were nearly always mentioned in relation to men as either mother, daughter, or wife but seldom as "woman for herself" (Mulder, 1997, p. 16). The portrayal of women implied that a reliance on men was needed because women's normative femaleness was disruptive to the order of society (Juschka, 2005). That is, women were considered prone to evil and ranked alongside matter, the body and nature in the systematic hierarchy of religion leading to the need for man to speak and act on behalf of women (Ruethers, 1973; Mulder, 1997).

As mentioned above, for most of the period from the development of Christianity to the twentieth century, the depictions of women as subordinate within the Hebrew bible and New Testament were possible because the church, in order to reduce alternative perceptions and interpretations, disallowed female bible scholarship and limited women's access to scripture (Eakin, 1927; Styler, 2007). Female scholarship was prohibited on the grounds that women did not possess spiritual authority. Any material that was produced by women was subject to censorship by male clerics attempting to protect their patriarchal theology (Børresen, 1995). The censorship meant that a "stereotypical and derogatory understanding of women" (Pears, 2002, p. 10) shaped religious perspectives. According to Styler (2007), the censorship did

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[22] Silk (1998) explains that one such reason for the scrutiny of religions and their beliefs and practices is because of the hypocrisy permeating the messages and behaviours of religious groups. Silk argues that religious groups can abuse the faith of the people and all believers, and are consequently held accountable by the public and media alike, perhaps accounting for the unfavourable treatment of Christians advocating for and against homosexuality.

not stop women writing commentary on the bible in an effort to resist to discriminatory religious treatment. The commentary written by women was purposeful in that it strove to address the stories and the characters of the bible from a female perspective. In an attempt to portray biblical women positively female biographers omitted or changed the histories of those they considered unduly subservient. For example, Eve was no longer cast as the first sinner or an afterthought in the creation order, but instead as the person who made Adam complete, alluding to the feminist perspective that men need women (Styler, 2007).

Similarly, a different depiction of Mary Magdalene was offered by the biographers (Styler, 2007). Men had depicted her as a sexually fallen woman (Ruethers, 1985), but the biographers believed that Jesus respected her, and through this respect and concern, rebuked the scorn shown to her by nineteenth century moralists (Styler, 2007). In essence, their commentary expressed displeasure of patriarchal theology that condemned women to subservient identities and this is illustrated through their challenging of the assumptions made about women within the bible. It was their way of attempting to bring about spiritual equality and reclaim a heritage and identities traditionally denied them (Joy, 1995; Styler, 2007).

Following the female biographers of the 19th century, feminists have continued their resistance to religious norms by arguing against the oppression perpetuated by Christian institutions, to the benefit of society (Hargrove, 1987; Styler, 2007). Fiorenza (1975, p. 612) argues that feminists are not just arguing for equal rights with reference to the ecclesial but for the church "to serve people and not to oppress them." According to Gudorf (1999), the protesting of women's oppression in religion resulted in Pope John Paul II apologising to women for the church degrading women and denying rights and privileges owed them. In fact Pope John Paul II publicly acknowledged that for men to subjugate women is sinful and subsequently, Catholic social teaching has been amended (Gudorf, 1999). It can be argued that on the one hand, the reaction of the Catholic Church to women's oppression reflects a change towards recognising the equality of women to religion and society. However, on the other hand, some denominations (e.g. Catholic and Orthodox) have only made small in-roads into improving their treatment of women, in some cases continuing to oppress and discriminate against women through denying, co-opting or rejecting their arguments for greater equality in the church (Fiorenza, 1975; Pezzini, 2005). For example, although the Catholic denomination allows

women lay members of the congregation to read the lesson and introduce the service, both denominations continue to reject female ordination and maintain the patriarchy within the church organisations (Cooke & Macy, 2004; Gudorf, 1999; Haskins, 2003; Reali, 2006). However, continued oppression is not universal: other Christian denominations (or factions within denominations) take a proactive approach to changing the norms of the church organisations to encourage greater equality. Anglicans and other Protestant denominations both allow for the ordination of women, reconstructing women's identity in the church in ways that reflect their fair treatment in society (Francis, 1991; Wallace, 1975). The above historical account of women's resistance to religious oppression illustrates how alternative interpretations can change the religious norms enforced in society to accommodate the changing perceptions of members.

Summary

The above discussion commenced with an exploration of various definitions of religion, before narrowing the focus to Geertz's (2002) understanding as the working definition for this thesis. The chapter also outlined the role Christianity has occupied in society, pointing to how religion can teach people to be forgiving, respectful, responsible and enlightened by enforcing particular norms, constructing meaningful relationships, offering assistance to the less fortunate and inspiring aesthetic expression. In counterpoint to my examination of the role Christianity has played in building the positive aspects of societies, I have also considered the way in which Christianity has sometimes been represented as debilitating to individuals and as a source of social intolerance and discrimination. My intention with the discussion was to demonstrate the sometimes highly polarised and polarising attitudes both towards and emanating from religion.

Chapter 3

Identity & Identification

Introduction

It seems impossible to approach any sustained discussion of identity without also addressing identification, and by extension, disidentification. In their comprehensive review of the scholarship on identity and identification, Ashforth, Harrison and Corley (2008, p. 326) state that the literature on identity has become "diverse and large," with contributions from such diverse disciplines as psychology, sociology and communication. In an effort to clarify and simplify this dense academic field, Ashforth et al. have structured their review around four orientating questions: 1st, what is identification? 2nd, why does identification matter? 3rd, how does identification occur? and 4th, one or many? The final question relates to multiple identifications.

Yet, despite Ashforth, Harrison and Corley's (2008) best efforts, it is immediately noticeable that the answers to the four questions are not simple. Rather, copious amounts of framing and contextualisation precede any direct discussion of the question because no specific issue of identification can be understood in separation from broad, central concepts of identity. Therefore, their survey includes definitions of identity and detailed discussions of theories of personal identity within the context of social identity and its accompanying theories of self-categorisation. Moreover, their work provides an understanding of organisational identity, pointing out that identities are situational. Only after each of these areas has been accounted for does their discussion proceed towards a definition of identification. The question, "What is identification?" then, becomes an holistic view of the theories of identity, emotions and organisational commitment drawing on a number of studies conducted across time and disciplines. The review of identity which appears to have been written to simplify this complex area, in fact, highlights how abstract and vast the field is.

As I have already stated, the purpose of my research is to explore the intentional and unintentional attempts made by Christian religious organisations to construct their members' identities, and in relation to this purpose, my own review of the literature is scarily less intricate than that offered by Ashforth, Harrison, and Corley (2008). In this chapter I will explain concepts of identity and organisational identification opening with a brief discussion of Mead's (2004) work on social interaction. The chapter then reviews research on multiple identities and identity salience (Abraham & Anderson, 1984; Parekh, 2009). The scholarship on social identity, organisational identity and organisational identification offers insights into how the formation of an organisational identity occurs (Albert & Whetten, 2004; Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Hatch & Schultz, 2004), how members can come to align with that identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Bullis & Bach, 1989; Lee, 1971; Michel & Jehn, 2003; Scott, Corman & Cheney, 1998), and specifically refers to the motivations behind, and the benefits that ensue, from the identification process (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Cheney, 1983b; Hogg & Terry, 2000; Michel & Jehn, 2003; Scott, Corman & Cheney, 1998).

I would first like to premise my review with the acknowledgement that research, specifically on religious identity and identification is scarce and has led me to rely on scholarship that originates from research in predominantly secular organisations. Although the research that I review in this chapter was conducted in secular organisations, I contend that the principles that emerge in the literature are generally applicable to spiritual organisations because their needs for member identification and commitment are no different.

3.1 Identity: product of social interaction

Identity, and particularly social identity, is established through social interaction, when individuals actively formulate their identities by assessing themselves against other people and also by affiliating with organisations (Brown & Humphreys, 2006; Pfeffer & Fong, 2005; Swann Jr, Milton & Polzer 2000) who are likely to support and validate their own self-conceptions (Swann Jr, 1987). Successful self-validation increases feelings of connectedness, cohesion and productivity within a group, as individuals feel comfortable expressing the idiosyncratic self-views which their fellow group members have confirmed (Swann Jr et al., 2000). Identity formation, then, is

in part, a product of discursive regimes, which can manifest in the communication practices of people trying to make *sense* of the self in relation to others (Brown & Humphreys, 2006; Humphreys & Brown, 2002; Williams & Connaughton, 2012).

Swann Jr's (1987) explanation of social interaction reflects Mead's (1934/2004) seminal work on identity, which offers a view of a person as comprising the 'me' and the 'I'. The 'me', the part of the self of which the individual is conscious (Mead, 1934), is developed through interactions with others and parallels Cooley's (1922, p. 184) notion of the "looking-glass self", which is an explanation of how individuals match their behaviour to roles imposed by outsiders. Therefore, people acquire their 'me' by acting within social structures, naming one another and allotting each other specific roles that in turn prompt specific behaviours (Burke & Reitzes, 1991; Stets & Burke, 2000). Because the 'me' is an accumulation of the attitudes of others (Margolis & Catudal, 2001), it is composed of individuals' relational or social identities as they are produced by assimilating to others' expectations (Brewer & Gardner, 2004).

As opposed to the objective nature of the 'me', the 'I' is subjective, elusive, unknowable, and is always in the process of becoming (Mead, 2004; Griffin, 2009). Individuals may be aware of the desirable response to a situation, but until they act in that situation, they do not know who they truly are (Mead, 2004). The developing identity -- which is the interplay of the 'me' and the 'I' -- is in part dependent on the outcome of individual reflection and bears out Swann Jr's (1987) assertion that individuals are not passive recipients of identity, but rather, are agents actively engaged in forming their identity (Ashforth, Harrison & Corley, 2008; Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Weick, 1995; Yberma, Kennoy, Oswick, Beverungen, Ellis & Sabelis, 2009).

Exploring agency in the formation of identity is particularly relevant to my project as the research indicates that, although organisations may attempt to construct members identities, the members' are still active participants in the process, given that they may choose the organisations they affiliate with and whether they 'buy into' the attempts at identity inducement. The concept of agency in the formation of identity has been explored by Peretti and O'Connor (1989). Research with strippers led Peretti and O'Connor (1989) to conclude that when the 'me' has a strongly formed ideal *self*, the 'I' may reject perceived attacks on aspects of the ideal. In other words,

external attributions of anti-social behaviour cause a deliberate defence of self-identity, suggesting that people are actively involved in constructing a sense of *self* that may not match the identity proffered in the social context. However, because identities are fluid, this maintenance is not without effort (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Scott, Corman & Cheney, 1998).

In exploring the effects of social interaction, Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) and Scott, Corman and Cheney (1998) concur with Swann Jr (1987), that identities are not a stable collection of traits, but rather, that individuals can have multiple identities which will be invoked at different times depending on situational cues. Individuals develop their multiple identities (Abraham & Anderson, 1984; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Brewer & Gardner, 2004; Pratt & Rafaeli, 1997; Scott, et al., 1998) through their varied interactions with other individuals (Burke, 1937; Cheney, 1983a; Larson & Pepper, 2003) and social groups (Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994). Thus, as Scott et al. (1998, p. 312) argue, "[I]t is useful to conceptualize individuals as having organizational, gender, class, occupational, ethnic, work-team, national and several other identities." In some instances these multiple identities can be 'nested' or embedded within one another, as an individual's different identities may actually possess similar characteristics (Ashforth et al., 2008; Roccas & Brewer, 2002).

Parekh (2009) suggests that the multiple identities that emerge in social interactions are beneficial to individuals on two levels. First, a plurality of identities implies "multiple belongings, loyalties, and sources of meanings" (p. 276) that help individuals to understand who they are, offering a range of resources on which individuals can draw in life situations. Second, multiple identities, accompanied as they are by differing moral and emotional investment, influence individuals' actions and cognitions (Parekh, 2009) and so obviate the emergence of a single dominant and possibly flawed identity. Abraham and Anderson (1984, p. 373) argue that "flexible role obligations" stop individuals from becoming engulfed by their identification with any one institution. On the other hand, Parekh (2009) argues that 'true believers' can relinquish all other possible identities, although previous research by Greil and Rudy (1984) and Pratt (2000) suggests that for this to happen, an individual would need to be cut off from all previous interpersonal ties through a process of physical encapsulation. Greil and Rudy (1984) maintain that such single-minded identification is more typical of cults than of the mainstream religious organisations that are the focus of my study. The identities that an individual

possesses can be arranged hierarchically (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Hecht, 1993; Peek, 2005), with religion still considered an important organising factor in the identities comprising the self (Peek, 2005; King, 2010; Verkuyetn & Yildiz, 2007).

Identity salience is produced during social interactions when a specific identity is activated and "tied to the social requirements of the situation" (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 230). Stets and Burke (2000) stress that, despite the influence of situational cues on identity salience, the situation does not make the identity. Rather, the individual adopts a specific identity to respond to the situation (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Stets & Burke, 2000). The process will require an established social identity to be moored to the new context. As Ethier and Deaux (1994) showed, a group of new university students drew on their Hispanic ethnic identity to establish new relationships and to maintain their social identity, while still acknowledging their new environment. Therefore, the salience of social identities can influence how individuals interact and interpret the world (Maitner, Mackie, Claypool, & Crisp, 2010).

Identity conflict occurs when individuals experience contradictory demands from the multiple identities that are available in any social interaction (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Ashforth et al., 2008). There has been some debate in the literature about the cause of conflict: the question appears to be whether it is the identities themselves that clash or the beliefs associated with them (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Ashforth, 2001; Handley, Sturdy, Fincham & Clark, 2006; Wenger, 1998). Regardless of the cause, Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) make it clear that identity conflict can lead to emotional dissonance and self-alienation. Hochschild (1983) explored this concept in her earlier work on emotional labour, showing that emotional dissonance occurs when individuals experience the strain of portraying emotions they do not feel.

3.2 Social Identity

As mentioned previously, my intention with this research is to explore the attempts at identity construction made by Christian religious organisations. An exploration of social identity theory is valuable as it offers insight into how individuals can become cognitively tied to organisations and, therefore, susceptible to identity construction. Broadly, the development of social identity entails defining the self-concept according to membership of particular social groups (Albert, Ashforth, & Dutton, 2000; Brewer & Gardner, 2004; Chen & Xin Li, 2009; Dukerich, Golden, Shortell,

2002; Hogg & Terry, 2000; Hornsey, 2008; Kärreman & Alvesson, 2004; Scott, 2007; Spears, 2011; Stets & Burke, 2000; Tajfel, 1978). Social identity theory explains how individuals cognitively order and segment society by systematically defining others and both comparing themselves with, and also distinguishing themselves from others, in given social environments (Albert et al., 2000; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Kärreman & Alvesson, 2004; Parekh, 2009; Hornsey, 2008; Shinnar, 2008; Spears, 2011). This labour of self-categorisation constructs the world as in-groups and out-groups. A sense of self-enhancement derives from feelings of belonging to positively evaluated in-groups and to not belonging to negatively evaluated out-groups (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Brewer & Gardner, 2004; Chen & Xin Li, 2009; Scott, 2007; Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986; Shinnar, 2008).

To self-enhance, in-group members will positively accentuate perceived similarities with the in-group and negatively accentuate the out-group differences (Stets & Burke, 2000), to establish positive group distinctiveness that will "protect, enhance, preserve, or achieve a positive social identity for members of the group" (Tajfel, 1982, p. 24). In-group favouritism is established through the creation of positive distinctiveness. A perception of positive distinctiveness will allow members to overlook negative characteristics of the in-group, to the point that even if they have more in common with out-groups, these members will still demonstrate significant in-group bias (Allen & Wilder, 1975; Billig & Tajfel, 1973).

According to Hogg and Terry (2000, p. 123), "[P]eople cognitively represent the defining and stereotypical attributes of groups in the forms of prototypes." That is, they internalise into their self-concept the culture, beliefs, behaviours and attitudes of the social category. Such internalisation may lead to a depersonalisation of the self as individual uniqueness may be overshadowed by conformity with the norms, sanctions and expectations of in-group membership (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Brewer & Gardner, 2004; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2006; Hogg & Terry, 2000; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007; Stets & Burke, 2000). Parekh (2009) and Tropp and Wright (2001) argue that the effect of prototypes on self-concepts can be mediated by the degree of importance an individual allocates to social identity at any given time. In other words, the power of the prototype depends on whether there is complete and unchanging acceptance of the social identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) and whether people overidentify, underidentify or hold an optimal

balance between their individual identity and social identity (Dukerich, Kramer, & McLean Parks, 1998; Kreiner et al., 2006).

Prototypical leaders embody desired organisational behaviours and lead by example (Hirst, van Dick & van Knippenberg, 2009; Hogg & Terry, 2000), influencing the construction of member identities. Skilful "prototypical leaders" manipulate the circumstances that reveal their "perceived prototypicality" (Hogg & Terry, 2000, p. 129) in such a way that members may adopt the characteristics of the organisation. Hogg and Terry refer to leaders disseminating ideologies that suit the organisation's interests, removing members they feel do not fit the prototype, demonising out-groups and encouraging uncertainty "[T]o ensure that members are motivated to identify strongly with a group that is defined as the leader wishes" (p. 129). However, as Carroll (1995, p. 476) found, if members do not accept the characteristics of the organisation that are presented, they will escalate their dissonance into disidentification. These arguments suggest that self-categorisation and social identity theory explains how members of social categories are not influenced equally.

Much of the early research on self-categorisation argues that identification with social categories can occur even if there is little communication among in-group members (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Scott, 2007; Stets & Burke, 2000; Swann Jr et al., 2000). Regular communication is likely to influence the level of identification with a social category, such as an organisation, because members will share their feelings and attitudes and engage in sense-making (Albert, Ashforth & Dutton, 2000; Cuno, 2005; Weick, 1995). As Ashforth and Mael put it (1989, p. 25), "[A]lthough the SIT literature indicates that categorization is sufficient for identification to occur, the pervasiveness of formal and informal groups in organisations suggests that categorisation is seldom the only factor in identification."

Identification with social categories and assimilation to the prototype occurs to reduce feelings of uncertainty (Grant & Hogg; 2012; Hogg & Terry, 2000; Pratt, 2000). In the context of this research, a religious organisation may offer individuals a sense of place and individual meaning through the "community networks, economic opportunities, educational resources, and peer trust and support" (Peek, 2005, p. 219) that accompany church memberships. Although the research on the self-esteem that derives from group membership has been done on non-religious

organisations (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Pratt, 2000; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007; Stets & Burke, 2000), there is no reason to think that church membership would not, in a similar way, improve an individual's self-esteem, especially if the group signals its acceptance (Stets & Burke, 2000).

Social categories that are perceived as attractive and prestigious permit positive self-esteem (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Dukerich et al., 2002; Mael, 1988), deriving from the belief that the high regard in which other members are held will extend to the identifying individual (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000). Strong identification with a social category is likely to promote defence to outsiders (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991), because having individuals who adopt the organisational identity as part of their own, take attacks on it personally (Dutton et al., 1994). Therefore, members will seek to enhance and maintain the identity of the social category to maintain their feelings of positive self-esteem, and are more inclined to adopt citizenship behaviours that include courtesy, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, civic virtue and altruism (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Organ, 1988; Podasakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000). However, not all group identifications encourage self-esteem (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). As Ethier and Deaux point out, an individual whose self-esteem is lowered by membership with a particular group is likely to reduce identification with that social category. Alternatively, members may adopt cynical distancing to maintain their well-being and positive personal identities (Frandsen, 2012).

3.3 Image, identity and action: constructing organisational identification

Having outlined theories of social identity, the focus of this section shifts to organisational identity and image as both contribute to the identification process. A common view in the literature on organisational identity is that it is an aggregate of those "central", "enduring" and "distinctive characteristics" (Albert & Whetten, 2004, p. 91) which are communicated to stakeholders (Dukerich et al., 2002; Scott, 2007) to stress the "important or essential" characteristics of organisations (Albert & Whetten, 2004, p. 91). Therefore,it is built in part through the dissemination of images, advertising, names, logos, jargon and mascots (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) designed to prompt cognitive, and ultimately, behavioural connections (Dutton et al., 1994; Albert & Whetten, 2004) between the *self* and the organisation.

In the plethora of materials promoted by organisations to create a desired image, the organisational image of real concern to members is the "construed external image" (Dutton et al., 1994, p. 240). The construed external image is what insiders perceive outsiders think of the organisation, and affects the strength of members identification according to whether outsiders perceptions are positive or negative (Dukerich et al., 2003). Corporate image makers construct organisational identities that are likely to give outsiders as positive an opinion as possible (Dutton et al., 1994), distributing the image through various channels in the mass media in the "pursuit of success in an increasingly volatile and hypercompetitive marketplace" (Gioia, Schultz & Corley, 2000, p. 72). If image is given precedence over other aspects of the organisation's culture, however, the "hyper-adaptation" (Hatch & Schultz, 2004, p. 396) that occurs means that stakeholder images will have a powerful influence on organisational self-definition. The privileging of the demands of external stakeholders striates the organisation causing insiders to experience disidentification.

Despite their argument that the components of organisational identity are relatively stable, Albert and Whetten (2004) and Foreman and Whetten (2002) do make the point that over time, the mono-identity of an organisation can change to dual or hybridised identities. For the most part organisations possess either normative or utilitarian identities (Albert & Whetten, 2004). Parsons (1960, p. 40) argues that normative organisations are those with "cultural", "educational" and "expressive" functions. Albert and Whetten (2004, p. 108) consider that religious organisations epitomise normative typecasting and as "repositories of traditions," are slow to change and dependent on authorised leadership for guidance. By contrast, utilitarian organisations are concerned with economic production, with the success of the organisation evaluated according to profits and effective operations (Albert & Whetten, 2004; Foreman & Whetten, 2002; Glynn, 2000; Parsons, 1960; Sheldon, 1971).

However, Albert and Whetten (2004) argue that, although churches fall into the category of normative organisations, they will gradually take on the characteristics of utilitarian organisations, increasingly looking and behaving like businesses with concerns for financial survival and longevity of the organisation. Clearly hybridisation suggests that purely normative identities are hard to sustain in the face of internal and external pressures (Zaleski & Zech, 1995). Members' identification with organisations will decrease if gaps in the congruence of normative and

utilitarian aspects of the organisation come into being (Foreman & Whetten, 2002; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). For example, church members may evaluate the spiritual satisfaction they receive from their membership against their disquiet at a perceived excessive focus on money and the lack of congruence in the identity of the organisation.

Obviously, it is in an organisation's interests if its members will, first, accept the identity it promulgates, and then, second, act in accordance with organisationally-determined roles. Much of the research on organisational identity has, therefore, focused on the relationship between the 'received' identity of the organisation and the assimilation of that identity into an individual's self-concept (Albert & Whetten, 2004; Alvesson & Empson, 2008; Humphreys & Brown, 2002). One particularly useful explanation of identification is offered by Dukerich et al. (2002), who summarised much earlier work to develop the theory that member identification depends on the organisation being able to satisfy the three principles by which members self-define: "self-continuity, self-distinctiveness, and self-enhancement" (p. 509). When members are able to act on these three principles, conditions have been created that allow the organisation to influence the cognition and behaviour of members (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985).

However, identification is not to be confused with the related concept of organisational commitment, which is "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation" (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 23). Commitment is evidenced in organisations by the individuals' acceptance of the organisation's goals and values, the effort the individuals exert on behalf of the organisation (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Burke & Reitzes, 1991), and furthermore, it creates desire to maintain organisational membership (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982). Organisational commitment and identification are powerful forces in identity formation (Ashforth & Mael, 1992; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Bullis & Bach, 1989; Edwards, 2005, Lee, 1971; Michel & Jehn, 2003; Scott, Corman & Cheney, 1998). When members 'attach' their own self-concept to the organisation, their organisational identity is found to be most salient, even among the multiple and fluid identities (Abraham & Anderson, 1984; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Brewer & Gardner, 2004; Humphreys & Brown, 2002; Pratt & Rafaeli, 1997; Scott, et al., 1998) an individual possesses at any one time (Cheney, 1983; Dukerich et al., 2002; Dutton et al., 1994; Hall Schneider & Nygen,

1970 Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Scott et al., 1998). Strong identity salience may well generate behaviour that is congruent with the goals and values of the organisation (Dutton et al., 1994), because members believe that what benefits the organisation is likely to be personally beneficial as well (Dukerich et al., 2002).

Like identity itself, identification is not a stable construct. Scott et al. (1998) argue that identification is simply the means by which individuals reflect on their identities, drawing on them as a resource as they reflect them within the system which is identification. As Bullis and Bach (1989) remark, strong socialisation into the organisation can powerfully influence the degree of salience an organisation has for members, but once that salience is established, it is not necessarily permanent or even long-lived. Pratt (2000) and Scott et al. (1998) note that the intensity of identification changes as the salience of the organisation diminishes or increases within members' lives. As Scott et al. (1998, p. 306) argue, in this way, "Identification represents the dynamic social process by which identities are constructed, through which they guide us, and by which they order our world," implying that identification is a cognitive state that can influence behaviour and emotion.

The process of identification takes place when people feel enough commonality with the organisation (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton et al., 1994; Hall et al., 1970; Humphreys & Brown, 2002; Scott et al., 1998) to build common interests that supersede any differences (Rosseau, 1998), and thus, it is clear that the goal of identification with an organisation is commitment, belonging, solidarity, unity and cohesion (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Michel & Jehn, 2003; Verkuyetn & Yildiz, 2007). According to Peek (2005), religion creates solidarity and cohesion as specific religious practices and affiliations can function as identity markers that "[P]romote individual self-awareness and preserve group cohesion" (p. 219). However, not all identification is positive. Dutton et al. (1994, p. 242) claim that when an organisation fails or proves to be inherently misguided, members may feel "shame, disgrace and embarrassment," but may also continue in their commitment because of the costs of leaving or the lack of feasible alternatives (Gautam, Van Dick, & Wagner, 2004). At the same time, a failing organisation can exert pressure on members to remain. Coercion of this sort, according to Elsbach and Bhattacharya (2001), may well foster ambivalence or disidentification, which reduces members' positive action and increases the likelihood of neutral or negative action towards the organisation.

Identification with the organisation does not occur only at the macro-level. For instance, individuals can identify with parts of the organisation while feeling a degree of distance from the organisation as a whole. In other words, identification may occur at the micro-level with any group that provides a *sense* of belonging: therefore members may strongly identify with their immediate work groups, or a social grouping such as the people who sit together for lunch, or a political group like the union (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Cheney (1983b) argues that this selective development of identification is influenced by the style of communication members experience with others. This partial identification has a pragmatic quality: people identify to the degree that it benefits them, but are able to achieve a degree of cognitive distance from displeasing elements of the organisation, such as certain policies. In a similar vein, Barker and Tompkins (1994) and Rosseau (1998, p. 218) argue that the communicative relationships with colleagues can determine the "mental model" of the organisation members hold. Identification with the organisation, therefore, is based more immediately on relationships with the people within it and less immediately on the goals, purpose and activities of the organisation. The research that explains partial or limited organisational commitment suggests that the positive commitment and internalisation that is implied when identification occurs may not be unequivocally useful to the organisation.

Ashforth and Mael (1989) offer a more finely-nuanced version of identification. They begin with the idea that individuals need not expend any effort to identify with an organisation, provided that some degree of psychological belonging exists.   What does require some effort is internalisation, which requires a higher level of commitment than identification. For instance, according to Ashforth and Mael (1989), identification can occur when individuals situate themselves in relation to an organisation in a way that can be encapsulated in a statement such as "We are Anglican." This statement may, but need not, express deeply-held beliefs: it does not hold any sense of the commitment captured in the statement, "I attend an Anglican church." By contrast with identification, internalisation occurs when the values of the organisation are incorporated into the individual's self-concept and become guiding principles for behaviour.

The sinister side of identification and internalisation is that both can be used as a means of control by the gradual possession of members' hearts and souls. In their

examination of decisional enthymemes, Tompkins and Cheney (1985) wrote of the increasing subjugation of individuals to organisational control through identification. They argued that organisational identification orientates individuals towards the needs of the organisation by inculcating ethical and value-laden premises as guides for action and cognition (Cheney, 1983b; Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). Individuals sacrifice a degree of their autonomy (Barker, 1993; Cheney, 1983b; Tompkins & Cheney, 1985) because they accept the organisation's authority (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985) and believe rewards will follow compliance (Burke & Reitzes, 1991; Cheney, 1983b; Tompkins & Cheney, 1985).

However, Tompkins and Cheney (1985) also assert that individuals who hold personal decision premises are unlikely to accept total control by the organisation, because they will always favour their personal enthymemes over those of the organisation. Furthermore, they argue that even when individuals do engage organisational decision premises, those premises are likely to be modified and adapted rather than uncritically applied in a 'pure' form. Regardless, even an incomplete assimilation is likely to benefit the organisation at least somewhat (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). In controlling members, the organisation needs to adapt "…the individual to the accepted and approved ways of organized life" through processes of socialisation (Fichter, 1973, p. 29). The end point of successful socialisation is identification and an adoption of the values, beliefs and attitudes of the organisation into individuals' self-concepts. Efforts at identification are successful when members, forced to choose between alternatives, choose the alternative that best suits the interests of the organisation (Cheney, 1983b; Tompkins & Cheney, 1985).

Trice and Beyer's (1984) study of organisational rites and ceremonies as socialising activities shines a light on the influence organisations can have on the construction of member identity. Rites and ceremonies require the deliberate performance of endorsed behaviours which offer psychological, emotional and spiritual satisfaction (King, 2010) and in religious organisations, mark progress, for instance, from life to death and from boyfriend or girlfriend to husband or wife (Blumenkrantz & Gavazzi, 1993). Therefore, rites and ceremonies are often part of the adjustment of individuals' identities. Even story-telling can take on a ceremonial function and serve to socialise new members (Santino, 1990). Organisational rites and ceremonies can

form the basis of an organisation's culture, providing guidelines for how people act and think, and therefore influencing individual identities.

Deetz (1997) and Pratt (2000) argue that organisations use forms of covert control to align members' values with those of the organisation, and that this control is achieved by the manipulation of insiders' hopes, fears and aspirations. Pratt (2000) sees the alignment of values as a product of *sense-making* practices that follow *sense-breaking*. The sense-breaking activities are designed to make individuals re-evaluate their identities and to focus them on their membership of the organisation (Pratt, 2000; Rosseau, 1998). For instance, Pratt's (2000) research on Amway employees established that the technique of dream building encouraged employees to develop goals, which both benefited the organisation and linked the sense of *self* to status gained from the material possessions that successful selling would provide. At the same time, the organisation teaches that failure to achieve the goal is a defect that cuts away at members' sense of *self*. Using defects as a form of motivation is linked, in this case, with the establishment of an ideal identity and parallels the rhetoric of religious organisations who push the concept of sin as a motivation for joining the church and attaining salvation. A diminished sense of *self* forces individuals into the seekership behaviours and sense-making offered by organisational membership (Pratt, 2000). Lofland and Stark's (1965, p. 868) examination of religious seekers suggests that discontent can be rectified by finding a "satisfactory system of religious meaning," and it is not a stretch to equate a religious belief system with the aspirational goal-setting of the Amway corporation.

When organisational members feel ambivalence towards an organisation, or disidentify with it, organisations are less likely to be successful in constructing member identity. Ambivalence occurs when some organisational elements allow identification and others simultaneously create disidentification (Carlin, End & Mullins, 2010; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Pratt, 2000; Scott, 2007; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007; Williams & Connaughton, 2012)[23]. Ambivalent identity causes members to experience cognitive and emotional dissonance, which leads to underperformance and eventual disidentification (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). When disidentification

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[23] Ambivalent identification is not to be confused with neutral or nonidentification (Carlin, End, & Mullins, 2010; Elsbach, 1999; Ikegami, 2012). Neutral identification refers to a disinterest in, or detachment from, the organisation (Carlin et al, 2010; Elsbach, 1999; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Pratt, 2000). According to Kreiner and Ashforth (2004), prolonged neutral identification can present as disidentification.

occurs, individuals strongly oppose enough aspects of the organisation that they cognitively and consciously separate their identities from organisational life (Carlin et al., 2010; Elsbach; 1999; Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Hollinshead & Butler, 1996; Ikegami, 2010; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Osbourne 1997; Williams & Connaughton, 2012), focussing on negative defining characteristics of the organisation, such as conflicting values, discourses, cultures and vision (Costas & Fleming, 2009; Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Bhattacharya & Elsbach, 2002). Pratt (2000) points out that if an organisation attempts to create member identification but fails, the result will be increased anger, dissatisfaction and resentment leading to cynicism, self-alienation (Costas & Fleming, 2009) and withdrawal (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007).

Summary

Chapter 3 was designed to explore the pertinent areas of identity and identification, given their centrality to my thesis. Accordingly, theories of social interaction, identity salience, multiple identities and social identity have been included to advance the discussion of the levels of identity introduced in chapter 1. To offer an holistic discussion of identification, the chapter then proceeds through theories of organisational identity, organisational identification and identity construction, before finishing with an explanation of ambivalence and disidentification. Admittedly, the chapter does not account for every possible understanding of the scholarship of identity and identification, because to do so is outside the scope of a doctoral thesis. Nevertheless, the significant areas of this academic field are acknowledged, pointing, not only to the breadth of contributions already offered on these subjects, but also to the necessity to continue researching both identity and identification. Understanding both is particularly important as a person's identity is the intersection of an individual with society (Brown & Humphreys, 2006; Josselson, 1994) and where subjective meanings and experiences that govern future cognition and behaviour emerge (Alvesson, Ashcraft & Thomas, 2008). Thus, investigating how individuals negotiate their self-concepts is worthwhile as it provides insight into how they engage in the phenomenological world and how sources, such as organisations, may have both useful and undue influence on the process.

Chapter 4

Methodology & Method

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to examine the everyday communications of Christian religious organisations for evidence of intentional and unintentional construction of member identity (Cheney, 1983a). The methodological framing for the research is rhetorical analysis, chosen because of the nature of the messages church organisations are producing. Early examinations of the archive revealed that the communications they contain are seldom straightforward: in as much as the messages might contain useful details of services or meetings, their underlying purpose was also nearly always, to persuade, exhort, convince and thereby induce desired behaviour. Although the communications, then, seem to locate themselves in a hybrid genre (Fairclough, 1992) somewhere between informing and influencing, the efforts at persuasion are the chief concern of this research, making rhetoric, with its long tradition of influencing audiences, the logical tool to dissect the corpus of church communications chosen for analysis.

As Bryant (1953, p. 413) says, the objective of rhetoric is to "adjust people to ideas and ideas to people" and so influences the construction of identity, persuading audiences through emotional appeals and the promotion of benefits, to act and think in ways that meet the desires of rhetoricians (Bitzer, 1968; Bryant, 1953; Corbett & Connors, 1999). With these ideas as the foundation, this chapter sets out the broadest principles of persuasive communication and rhetoric, covering the principal changes in the way that rhetoric has been conceived and used since classic times. After these ideas are established, a detailed exploration of Cheney's (1983a) rhetorical identification typology is offered as it is the methodological tool I have used for close textual analysis.

4.1 Research paradigm

Before I explore the literature pertaining to persuasive communication and rhetoric, I feel it is pertinent to first offer an explanation to my overall research approach.

To address my two research questions, how do religious organisations use rhetorical tools to construct identities for current and potential members and produce identification and disidentification, and for what purpose(s) are such member identities constructed, mobilised and perpetuated, my study will involve qualitative analysis of a selection of texts distributed by churches from the Pentecostal, Greek Orthodox, Salvation Army, Anglican and Presbyterian denominations. As a method used in qualitative analysis, Cheney's (1983a) rhetorical identification typology gives the researcher a means of exploring whether identity construction is present in everyday communications. Accompanied by a critical interpretive perspective, the typology offers insight into the possible motivations for why organisations construct member identities and will, therefore, narrow my research focus to direct instances of identity construction that may otherwise not be central in other forms of textual analysis.

Burrell and Morgan (1979) propose that research can be approached from four perspectives. A critical interpretive perspective, as opposed to the radical humanist, radical structuralist or functionalist perspectives of their four-grid paradigm[24], best fits my research intentions as this position requires the researcher to view social reality as fluid. The researcher acknowledges that social reality is produced and responded to by individuals, whose sense-making is influenced by personal experiences (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Morgan, 1980). Therefore, I have understood organisations to be socially constructed through symbolic processes -- as revealed through their everyday communications -- (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Prasad & Prasad, 2002), which has determined a research approach that reveals how religious identities are constructed and disseminated through everyday communications (Morgan, 1980; Morgan & Smircich, 1980).

In his critique of Burrell and Morgan's (1979) paradigm, Deetz (1996, p. 198) argues that a researcher's position can actually be plotted along a grid with the

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[24] A radical humanist perspective entails examining the influence social and organisational forces have on change. A radical structuralist perspective centres on economic power relationships, while a functionalist perspective requires developing explanations for social order or the status quo(Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Goles & Hirschheim, 2000)

"local/emergent — elite/ a priori" x axis and the "consensus - dissensus" y axis. On the "local/emergent — elite/ a priori" continuum my research would fit firmly towards the centre (see figure 4.1 below). Although my research sets out to present insights rather than truths and is focussed in time and place as is expected of local/emergent research, it is still theory-driven and subject to the privileged language system of the researcher which can be observed in research where the scholar holds an elite/ a priori position (Deetz, 1996). Additionally, Deetz argues that research can veer towards either consensus or dissensus. The focus of consensus is on advocating for social order and shared understandings in society, while the focus of dissensus is on struggle, conflict and tension in "the natural state" (p. 197). On this premise, my research would fit within the dissensus paradigm as it aims to critique and, consequently, challenge the mechanisms used to maintain social order and encourage domination, emphasising a critical-edge to my research that fits with my approach to academic life.
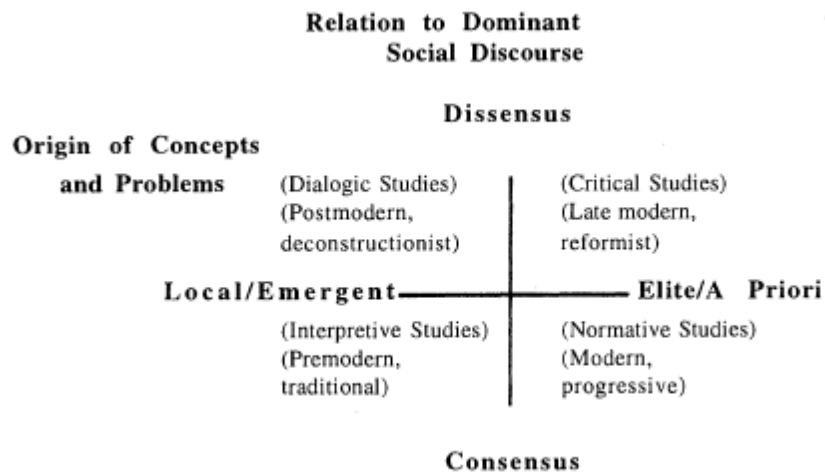
Figure 4.1: Contrasting dimensions from the metatheory of representational practices (Deetz, 1996)

I have preferred to adopt a qualitative approach to analysis, as quantitative analysis leads researchers to "freeze the social world into structured immobility" (Morgan & Smircich, 1980, p. 498), thus implying that human beings are subject to social forces, rather than actively engaged in the formation and maintenance of such processes. To adopt a quantitative approach, in my case, would mean neglecting to acknowledge that members of religious organisations can respond to attempts to construct their identity, choosing as they create meaning from the distributed communications, to accept and reject the offered identities (Morgan & Smircich, 1980). Qualitative analysis has been chosen, then, because having its foundations in individual

interpretation, it does not offer absolute truths, but rather, offers plausible explanations to organisational phenomena. Qualitative analysis does furnish "opportunities for understanding" (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009, p. 9) through its incorporation of reflective and reflexive practices. As Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009, p. 9) stress, in qualitative analysis, focussed attention is given to "linguistic, social, political and theoretical elements" to develop knowledge allowing for a research context to be explored, and enriching a researcher's understanding of a given field of inquiry.

Among the limitations to using qualitative analysis, and particularly Cheney's (1983a) rhetorical identification strategy is that his method is "purely interpretive" (DiSanza & Bullis, 1999, p. 386). As a form of textual analysis, Cheney's (1983a) typology does not verify whether the strategies and tactics he examines actually impact on the identities of members (DiSanza & Bullis 1999). Instead, the researcher is left to speculate on whether the enthymemic processes of identification are occurring or at least creating the probability that members will adopt the organisation's preferred decisional premises into their self-concepts (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). DiSanza and Bullis (1999) outline that the influence of the strategies in constructing identities can only be confirmed through conducting additional forms of research such as interviews or focus groups. Additionally, because of its highly interpretive nature, Cheney's (1983a) typology does not instruct the researcher on how to determine what the organisation's identity is. The researcher is left to infer from the texts what the identity of the organisation is, but other consumers of the communications may infer different interpretations, potentially limiting the conclusions drawn.

The interpretive nature of Cheney's (1983a) method means the research can be subject to researcher bias. As Schegloff (1997) acknowledges, although it is a disadvantage, it is not uncommon for researchers to build their political biases and prejudices into their research. Such a disadvantage can be greatly reduced by researchers being aware of their biases and accounting for them in their work. In my case, such biases may stem from a tenuous affiliation with the Greek Orthodox Church and through my gravitation towards a critical perspective in my academic life. Biases, of course, have the potential to influence research findings. As a researcher undertaking qualitative analysis, it is my responsibility to be aware of my personal biases and to take precautions against them. Having outlined my research position, I will now proceed to explore literature relating to my chosen method.

4.2 Persuasive communication and rhetoric

The material covered in section 4.2 interrogates key notions about persuasive communication and draws a relationship between persuasion and rhetoric, moving from the macro-level elements of cognition to the micro-level elements of the text. This section, therefore, deals with the broadest ideas contextualising the later and more detailed material of Cheney's (1983a) typology of identification, which is the specific tool used for textual analysis.

Persuasive communications attempt to create attitude and behaviour change in recipients, and as Greenwald (1968) and Petty and Cacioppo (1984) point out, induced change inevitably affects identity, even if the changes are not stable or deep (Festinger, 1964; Miller, Brickman & Bolen 1975). Miller et al. (1975) determined that persuasive communication created behaviour changes in the short term, but that earlier patterns of behaviour were reverted back to -- about two weeks later -- supporting Festinger's (1964) assertion that a change in the recipient's environment was needed to prevent reversion to establish behaviour. However, having compared the influences of attribution and persuasion communications, Miller et al. (1975) argued that a deficiency in persuasive communication was an inability to influence a target's self-concept.

Although persuasive communications can be created for maximum impact on an individual's sense of identity, their ultimate success is likely to be mediated by the personality of the individual (Greenwald, 1968), the environment (Festinger, 1964) and their overall perception of the message (Greenwald, 1965, 1968; Miller et al., 1975; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984), all of which, over time, reduce the power of the communication. In any survey of the early work on the effectiveness of persuasion, Festinger's (1964) research is important, because he showed that although audiences may agree with the content of messages, they may not adopt the desired behaviour, showing, instead, a "reverse relationship between attitude change and behaviour" (p. 409), especially if the rhetorician has relied on strategies that create either guilt (Coote, Coulter & Moore, 2005) or fear (Witte, 1992). Recipients who are aware of the guilt and fear strategies are likely to resist the message (Coote et al., 2005). The arguments offered here suggest that religious communications, which have been found to contain appeals to both guilt (Duncan, 2002) and fear (Eckstein, 2005), may require specific rhetorical techniques to be effective.

The degree of personal relevance the message holds for the recipient is a powerful determinant of its success (Greenwald, 1965, 1968; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984). In fact, Greenwald (1965, 1968) has argued that if an intended recipient has no prior commitment to, or acceptance of, the content of the persuasion, behaviour change is improbable. Individuals exposed to persuasion tend to correlate all new information with existing knowledge and feelings, creating counter-arguments and ultimate resistance (Cacioppo & Petty, 1980). Highly motivated and engaged individuals may elaborate issue--relevant arguments which can prompt attitude change (Petty, Cacioppo & Schumann, 1983), but as Siero and Jan Doosje (1993) show, the success of any attempt at persuasion will depend on whether the messages fit with initial attitudes held by a recipient. Those scholars inclined to accept social judgement theory (Siero & Jan Doosje, 1993) contend that message reception by audiences will fall along a continuum of acceptance, rejection or non-commitment. Individuals who fail to commit to the persuasion, however, may be more likely than not to ultimately accept the tenets of a message, and those who have been persuaded are more likely than not to maintain their acceptance (Siero & Jan Doosje, 1993). Furthermore, Friestad and Wright (1994) and Sperber (2000) argue that persuasion is not a one-sided affair. Recipients are open to the persuasive efforts to a certain point, after which they realise that they are being manipulated and will either resist, or perhaps allow the persuasion to be successful.

People receiving relevant persuasive messages may be motivated to elaborate informative content presented (Bless, Bohner, Schwarz & Stark, 1990; Taillard, 2000). According to Petty et al. (1983) and Petty and Cacioppo (1984), information elaboration can follow two main routes: first central and second peripheral. Both routes of the elaboration likelihood model seek to change attitudes and behaviours, but they are distinct in how they create the change. The central route relies on recipients being highly motivated and possessing the ability to elaborate arguments to formulate cognitive understandings, while the peripheral route involves the analysis of simple cues to garner the "merits of the advocated position" (Petty et al., 1983, p. 135).

Individuals who follow the first of the two routes -- the central route -- evaluate persuasive messages by cognitive engagement with the material (Petty et al., 1983). Accordingly, for the persuasive communication to be interpreted centrally, the arguments presented need to be compelling and cogent to the audience (Petty &

Cacioppo, 1984). Attitude and behavioural change is likely to result if argument valence is accompanied by identifiable consequences and positive associations (Areni & Lutz, 1988; Bless, Bohner, Schwarz & Strack, 1990; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984; Taillard, 2000), a negative affective state in the recipient (Bless et al., 1990), and a high need for cognition (Cacioppo, Petty & Morris, 1983). The central route implies that message recipients will experience an attitude change that will be "strong, long-lasting, resistant to counter argumentation and predictive of future behaviour" (Taillard, 2000, p. 158). To construct desired identities in church members, authors of texts would ideally want members to follow the central route of interpretation, but according to Petty and Cacioppo (1984), developing communications along the central route is difficult. The persuasive capacity of communications to effect change is dependent on the recipient's interpretation (Cacioppo & Petty, 1980; Friestad & Wright, 1994; Sperber, 2000; Eckstein, 2005) and the salience of particular identities (Stets & Burke, 2000, Peek, 2005).

The second route of the elaboration likelihood model is the peripheral route. The peripheral route entails making simple inferences about the quality of the message by identifying such cues as the credibility and prestige of the communicator or the quantity rather than quality of arguments (Petty et al., 1983; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984; Taillard, 2000). However, these peripheral cues may not create personal relevance or build motivation, which tends to suggest that any attitude change will be short-lived and unreliable as a predictor of future behaviour (Petty et al., 1983). Furthermore, an attitude or behavioural change resulting from the peripheral route is unlikely to be strongly contextualised and, therefore, if individuals experienced criticism, they will find it difficult to defend themselves (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984). Thus, persuasive communications distributed by religious organisations that influence via peripheral cues need to also be accompanied by a degree of central processing for the identities constructed to be maintained. The creators of the elaboration likelihood model concede that it is possible for individuals to process messages on two levels. The credibility of the message source, for instance, can have an equally powerful impact for those processing along the central route as those processing along the peripheral. For example, in their analysis of advertisements, Petty et al. (1983) found that those analysing according to the central route, acknowledged strong arguments associated with positive celebrity endorsement increased brand name recognition.

The elaboration likelihood model does not account for the implications of cognitive dissonance in the processing of persuasive communications. Festinger (1957) argues that inconsistencies within a person's beliefs or between beliefs and behaviours will generate an internal tension that must be alleviated (Cooper & Worchel, 1970; Greenwald & Ronis, 1978; Elliot & Devine, 1994). For instance, when students were asked to write essays which were counter to their beliefs, they experienced discomfort and subsequently changed their attitudes to reduce their dissonance (Elliot & Devine, 1994; Linder, Cooper & Jones, 1967) and to maintain their self-esteem in the face of threat to their self-concepts (Greenwald & Ronis, 1978; Wicklund & Brehm, 1976). Overall, then, the broad concepts of persuasion outlined above provide a framework for understanding how rhetoric, taken as a genre of persuasive communication, is cognitively processed. A discussion of rhetoric, as a subset of persuasion, will now follow.

Developed as a concept during the 5th Century B.C. (Cheney, 1991; Corbett & Connors, 1999; Ehninger, 1968; Foss, Foss & Trapp, 2002; Hochmuth, 1952; Perelman 1968; Richards, 2008), rhetoric was originally taken as oral or written language that sought to shape audience perceptions (Ahmed, 2009; Bryant, 1953; Corbett & Connors, 1999). Scholars have since broadened the scope of rhetoric to include non-verbal communication, social movements and even architecture (Bitzer, 1968; Cheney, Christensen, Conrad & Lair, 2004; Corbett & Connors, 1999; Foss, 2004), as these aspects of communication too, can alter an audiences reality by using symbols that direct an audience to "seeing the world one way rather than another" (Foss et al., 2002, p. 2). For example, in employing rhetorical tools, churches can persuade audiences to abide by their preferences, by presenting alternative courses of action as humiliating (Corbett & Connors, 1999) or unlikely to lead to salvation (Irons, 1996). Thus, rhetoric can affect the way an audience feels and acts, making it a useful tool in the construction of identity (Bitzer, 1968; Bryant, 1953; Cheney et al., 2004).

In as much as rhetoric is patently and deliberately persuasive, it is also intrusive because it can be used manipulatively (Foss et al., 2002; Foss, 2004; Richards, 2008). Rhetoric is a tool but it has attracted criticism that should probably be levelled at the rhetoricians (Bryant, 1953; Corbett & Connors, 1999). Scholars have tended to regard rhetoric as a value-neutral tool (see for instance Bryant, 1953) but value-neutral or not, it can be found in cases of brainwashing, propaganda and

intentional exploitation of the audience (Bryant, 1953; Corbett & Connors, 1999). Although brainwashing is an extreme example of persuasion, rhetoric has always been viewed as an art and a tool for the effective management of society (Johnson, 1996). This 'effective management' is derived from the ability of the rhetorician to orally persuade mass audiences using Aristotle's theories of ethos, pathos and logos[25] (Cheney et al., 2004; Corbett & Connor's 1999; Richards, 2008). Rhetorical scholars believed that the effective management of society was achieved by using these persuasive techniques because audiences were perceived as passive and malleable. Consequently, rhetoricians of the classical period were accused of lacking a moral conscience (Richards, 2008).

Rhetorical scholarship has evolved over the two and a half thousand years since it was a named as a field of study (Aristotle, 1847), and consequently scholars have classified rhetoric into three main systems: the classical system, the Middle Ages system and 'new' rhetoric system. In the classical system of rhetoric, the scholarship was concerned with the speech act (Ehninger 1968), which was analysed to form the five cannons of rhetoric[26], and demonstrates an intertwined understanding of human relationships with language. Modern scholarship tends away from the view promulgated by the earliest scholars, instead supporting the notion that audiences actively participate in the speech act and the instances of persuasion (Cheney et al., 2004; Perelman, 1968; Richards, 2008). The rhetorical system of the Middle Ages, then, "moved beyond the grammar of the speech act, with its attendant pedagogical rules and cautions" (Ehninger, 1968, p. 19) to focus on the speaker-listener relationship. As Johnson (1996) explains, during the late 18th Century the concern of scholars shifted to understanding the nature of the audiences' mind, and how rhetorical techniques could influence cognition. Unlike the previous classical rhetorical system, the system of the Middle Ages was grounded in study and reflection, stressing an epistemological bias rather than the actual practice of rhetorical techniques (Crable, 1990; Johnson, 1996).

During the system of the Middle Ages the scope of rhetoric was broadened to include written language (Ehninger, 1968). As the importance of rhetoric declined in the

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[25] To clarify, ethos refers to ethics, pathos to emotions and logos to logic.
[26] These five cannons include 'inventio' (the discovery of ideas and arguments); 'disposition' (the focus is on the organisation of the ideas and arguments); 'elocution' (the style and linguistic choices of the speaker) 'memoria' (the memorising of the speech); and 'pronuntiatio' (the effective delivery of the speech act) (Corbett & Connors, 1999; Foss et al., 2002).

judicial and political systems, its presence became apparent in drama, satire, religion and the arts (Cockroft & Cockroft, 2005; Perelman, 1968). Of particular importance to my thesis is rhetoric's long association with Christianity. According to Perelman (1968, p. 17), "[R]hetoric in the Middle Ages remained essentially the art of presenting truths and values already established." In other words, the church, having established a monopoly on speaking for God, is using the persuasiveness of rhetoric to disseminate their orthodoxies. The presence of rhetoric in religious teachings and practices meant audiences were encouraged to pursue "…*spiritual* rather than political choice and action" (Cockroft & Cockroft, 2005, p. 8 emphasis in original). The presence of rhetoric in religion creates a partiality for believers that allows social reality to be shaped by Christian organisations who conceivably possess a myriad of agendas which may extend beyond salvation.

During the 'new' rhetoric system of the 1960's onwards, rhetoric was reinvented to rectify practices that had come to be seen as problems (Ehninger, 1968). 'New' rhetoric focuses on the speech act that emerged during the classical period, the audience that became focal in the Middle Ages, and their overall relationship to society (Crable, 1990). In achieving the objective of marrying previous rhetorical theories and exploring their influences to society, 'new' rhetoric saw the development of rhetorical perspectives from the likes of I.A. Richards, C. Pereleman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca and K. Burke, all of whom examined the impact of rhetoric on society (Cockroft & Cockroft, 2005). The previous material discussed the first three systems of rhetoric. However, in 1990, Crable proposed that there was actually a fourth system: organisational rhetoric.

For Crable (1990), the 'new' system of rhetoric has been surpassed by a fourth system, organisational rhetoric, which is distinguished from other systems by the fact that the rhetorician is an organisation. According to Cheney, Christensen, Conrad and Lair, (2004, p. 83) organisations use rhetoric "[T]o persuade members to identify with organizational goals and to adopt organizationally desired decision premises." The primary objective of organisational rhetoric is the continued survival of the organisation (Cheney & McMillian, 1990), a seemingly straight-forward goal which is, however, complicated by the fact that members possess overlapping and potentially conflicting organisational identities (Crable, 1990). Therefore, organisations will develop proactive, explicit and implicit communicative strategies that are simultaneously expressed and targeted at an array of audiences (Cheney, 1991;

Cheney, et al., 2004). The organisation is able to control its members if the members adopt the attitudinal and behavioural changes advocated in the communications (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). The potency of organisational rhetoric derives from not being easily attributable to one person (Crable, 1990; Cheney & McMillian, 1990; Cheney, 1991; Cheney, et al., 2004). Instead the rhetoric is perceived by members as originating from within the organisation creating a sense of ambiguity as individual voices become "anonymous and symbolically detached" (Cheney, 1991, p. 4), replaced by the collective voice of the organisation. In gaining its own 'voice,' the organisation gains power becoming the "individual's voice, source of authority, and resource for identity" (Cheney, & McMillian, 1990, p. 97). By responding to the organisation as they would to any other rhetorician, members are left open to the influences of organisational hierarchies because the ethos of the organisation is difficult to question (Cheney & McMillian, 1990).

Bitzer (1968) claims that organisational rhetoric can be situational, and like Cheney (1991), envisages many situations that derive from the need to manage the identities of members within an organisation. Bitzer's (1968) delineation of the rhetorical situation consists of three elements: exigence, audience and constraints. The exigence is an imperfection or "thing other than it should be" (Bitzer, 1968, p. 6). For example in terms of this research, an exigence might be that the identities of believers need to be modified to conform to church expectations. The audience "consists only of those persons who are capable of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change" (p. 8). In a rhetorical situation of the church, the members can be considered the audience, because through targeted messages (Bryant, 1953), they can be influenced into changing their identities (Cheney, 1991). Finally, the rhetorical situation includes constraints experienced by the rhetorician, such as personal beliefs and interests, which may impede how the audience responds to the message received. The need to construct religious identities for believers, then, can be a rhetorical situation that can be analysed to offer insight into the methods of identity construction evident in the communications of churches.

4.3 Kenneth Burke and George Cheney: Perceptions on rhetoric and identity

The close textual analysis that forms the empirical part of this research project relies heavily on George Cheney's (1983a, p. 148) "rhetorical identification typology",

which was developed from Kenneth Burke's (1969) theories of rhetoric and identification. The following section begins with an outline of Burke's theories drawn from his own writing and from the writings of many scholars who have interpreted and re-interpreted his work because of the "obscurity" in his writing (Hochmuth, 1952, p. 144). The section concludes with a detailed examination of Cheney's (1983a) typology.

Hochmuth (1952) and Foss, Foss and Trapp (2002) argue that Burke perceived rhetoric as an outcome of the natural human tendency to respond to symbols. Such symbols, when employed by rhetoricians, are able to produce predetermined specific attitudes and actions in audiences and can be used to create social order by bridging social divisions (Foss, Foss & Trapp, 2002; Hochmuth, 1952). Ironically, those very social divisions were created by rhetoric in the first place, for as Burke argues, rhetoric can be used to classify, divide and separate people from one another creating social hierarchies, which are imbued with rights, privileges and properties maintained by difference and unfamiliarity (Cheney, 1983a; Cheney, 1991; Foss et al. 2002; Tompkins, Fisher, Infante & Tompkins, 1975). In as much as rhetoric can be used to divide, it can also, according to Crable (1990), be used to create identification between the layers of social hierarchy in order to impart at least an illusion of stability, freedom, and solidarity.

Burke (1969) envisaged a condition he called "consubstantiality" (p. 21). When consubstantiality prevails, communication and cooperation can develop between the rhetorician and the audience, which improves the likelihood of the audience being successfully persuaded. Consubstantiality does not prevent individuals from retaining their uniqueness: it simply means that "in being identified with B, A is 'substantially one' with a person other than himself" (Burke, 1969, p. 21). Cheney (1983a, p. 146) defines consubstantiality as "[A]n area of 'overlap' -either real or perceived- between two individuals or between an individual and a group; it is a basis for common motives and for 'acting-together'." In his discussion of identification, Burke (1969, 1972) makes statements that allude to three 'techniques' a rhetorician can use to achieve consubstantiality; the rhetorician can encourage common ground with the audience, create antithesis and subtly marry the dissimilar interests of the audience and rhetorician using the transcendent 'we'.

The first of the three techniques of consubstantiality is the common ground technique. In referring to the common ground technique, Burke (1969, p. 55, emphasis in original) states "[Y]ou persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, *identifying* your ways with his." For example, Benoit (2000) found in the advertising campaigns of politicians Clinton and Dole that both candidates sought to create identification by associating with the people, policies and character traits they believed were perceived favourably by voters. Benoit's conclusion reflects Cheney's (1983a) perception that individuals will bridge divisions by associating with targets that hold similar values and beliefs, which assist in creating common ground and a sense of belonging for the individual. The second technique for achieving identification or consubstantiality is creating antithesis. Foss, Foss and Trapp (2002, p. 192) define antithesis as "[T]he creation of identification among opposing entities on the basis of a common enemy." The antithesis is exhibited by rhetoricians 'playing up' divisive trends (Burke, 1969), such as those exhibited in former Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's speech to the citizens of Dhaka, Bangladesh (Ahmed, 2009). Begum used antithesis by encouraging the nation to fight against bomb terrorism and religious extremism, explicitly constructing those involved in those practices as the enemy (Ahmed, 2009). And finally, the third technique of consubstantiality is the "transcendent we" (Burke, 1972, p. 28), a rhetorical tool that often goes unnoticed. Rhetoricians use the transcendent we in subtle ways to encourage unconscious identification in audiences (Foss, Foss & Trapp, 2002).

Cheney's (1983a) rhetorical identification typology

Burke's (1969) concept of consubstantiality provided a solid foundation for the development of Cheney's (1983a) rhetorical identification typology, which he used in a detailed study of internal communications from corporate organisations. Cheney included Burke's three techniques outlined above and extended the techniques of consubstantiality by identifying the use of unifying symbols. Additionally, Cheney conducted quantitative analysis of the strategies to determine their prevalence, but given the way I built on Cheney's typology, I have omitted such quantitative analysis, finding instead that prevalence was evidenced by lexical choices

and sentence construction[27]. The following material gives details of Cheney's (1983a) typology, which is the foundation for the research in this thesis.

Like Burke (1969, 1972) Cheney (1983a) established his typology with an analysis of the *common ground* technique, which refers to overt attempts by the rhetorician to create links with the audience (Cheney, 1983a). The common ground technique comprises six tactics: expression of concern for individuals, recognition of individual contributions, espousal of shared values, advocacy of benefits and activities, praise by outsiders, and testimonials. The first tactic Cheney outlines is the expression of concern for the individual, which emphasises the people who belong to the organisation rather than focusing "on the organization as a collection of people" (p. 150). In other words, the organisation expresses concern "for the individual as a member or as an integral part of the organization" (DiSanza & Bullis, 1999, p. 351).

Cheney's (1983a) research proposes only explicit recognition of concern for the individual even though some of his examples, "the people", "our people" and "the people factor", can be read as diverging from explicit concern. For instance, whereas "our people" with its use of the first person plural possessive pronoun appears to engage with at least some sense of individuals, "the people" and "the people factor" using the definite pronoun, appear to distance the rhetorician from the subject material. These lexical differences, so small, should perhaps be remarked on as offering a possibility of a differentiated reading. Concern for individuals is specific in "our people" but I contend that it is more implicit in "the people" and "the people factor" and they are presented as having equal rhetorical power. For the purpose of my research, then, I have taken it to be necessary to interrogate for expressions of concern both explicitly and implicitly. For example, the expression "mans' dark heart" (a lament about original sin by the church) found in a Greek Orthodox Bulletin (2010), insinuates that the church is concerned with their people, but the concern for individuals is shrouded by the use of the generalised "man". Implicit rather than explicit expressions of concern parallel Fairclough's (1992) notion of politeness. Politeness is a device used by rhetoricians to diffuse unpleasantness so

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[27] Among the modifications I made to Cheney's typology was that in the common ground strategy, the *expression of concern* could be both implicit and explicit in everyday communications. Additionally, I extended the common ground tactic of *recognition of individual contributions* to include accounts of group effort. Cheney (1983a) carried out quantitative analysis to indicate prevalence, but my use of prevalence is explained in my data and discussion chapters.

that audiences can maintain self-esteem in the face of what might otherwise seem like an attack.

The second common ground technique is the "recognition of individual contributions" (Cheney, 1983a, p. 151). In this technique the rhetorician emphasises "belongingness" and being part of an in-group (Billig & Tajfel, 1973; Stets & Burke, 2000; Tajfel, 1982), which according to Cheney (1983a), allows the organisation to highlight the values it hopes members will adopt. In the broad context of my research an example of recognition of individuals' contributions is exemplified by the Catholic Church who congratulate young church members for wearing "purity rings" that symbolise abstinence from sex before marriage (Catholic News Agency, 2007). In clumsy hands, this tactic could alienate members should they not exhibit desired and highly-praised behaviour. By adhering to Burke's (1969) understanding for creating common ground, Cheney's (1983a) typology, I feel, does not acknowledge that organisations are composed of group effort as well as individuals (McShane & Travaglione, 2003). Therefore, I have extended this tactic to include the contributions of collectives, such as specific church groups, as their contributions too, can still set a benchmark for what is considered ideal behaviour. For instance, the church youth group tidying up the neighbourhood playground entails group effort and sets an example for other members. Additionally, in my research, recognition of individual contributions also includes instances where the leader takes an "authoritative possession of the future" (Nelson, 2004, p. 161), referring to the expected contributions of the members.

The third tactic of the common ground technique is the "espousal of shared values," where organisations can explicitly state "that 'we' have the same interests as 'you'" (Cheney, 1983a, p. 151), to suggest similar values. There is, however, a danger in using this tactic: organisations may misjudge the values they promote and may publicly *espouse shared values* to which members are in fact, indifferent or opposed. For example, a church may teach that children honour their parents, but if members have been abused by their parents their values are likely to conflict with those of the church. A fundamental difference over such a core teaching might prevent the occurrence of identification.

The fourth common ground tactic is that of "advocacy of benefits and activities" (Cheney, 1983a, p. 152). Of all the tactics, advocacy of benefits is one of the most

overt attempts to win identification by promoting doing well by doing good. For instance, members who repent their sins gain 'salvation' (Johnstone, 1975; Ward, 2000). However, the church can also benefit from activities that it may not be directly responsible for. To account for this situation, I have extended Cheney's (1983a) typology to include benefits and activities that the church encourages but is not in charge of executing. For example, *St Matthews in the City* erected a billboard during the rugby world cup campaign in 2011. The tagline "Pray like it's 1987", drew on cultural capital by reminding New Zealand rugby fans of the first rugby world cup that New Zealand won. The slightly humorous call to intercede for divine intervention worked on a number of levels: first, it involved the traditional Christian God with the traditional New Zealand 'religion' of rugby and thus brought the church into the currency of everyday life; second, it reminded church members of the teaching that God responds to heartfelt intercessions (Psalms 125:4); and third, it builds identification with the audience by reminding them that prayer works for the mundane as much as for the sacred (Grenz, 1988). Additionally, the billboard insinuated that people need not go to church to pray for the All Blacks, but if the audience felt that praying aided the All Blacks in winning, they may be thankful and show their appreciation through church attendance. Advocacy of benefits and activities, then, may result in attitude and behaviour changes that can create identification between the organisation and their target audience.

The remaining two common ground tactics, "praise by outsiders" and "testimonials" (Cheney, 1983a, p. 152), differ from the previous tactics because they originate in the perceptions of the audience rather than from the organisation's hierarchy. Cheney defines praise by outsiders as the inclusion of outsider opinions of the organisation into internal communications to encourage organisational members to "hold the same positive view" (Cheney, 1983a, p. 152). For example, praise by outsiders could be the inclusion in the church bulletin of a letter from the local council congratulating the church for raising money for the community. In this case, the praise for the organisation comes from an external source and encourages people to want to associate with an organisation that is doing well for society. In contrast, testimonials originate from people inside the organisation. Testimonials, which are taken as expressions of dedication, commitment and affection from organisational members, can assist in constructing and maintaining members' identity, because such expressions from peers may prompt similar responses in other members (Cheney,

1983a). Each of the tactics comprises the common ground strategy and all involve creating a direct or indirect association between the organisation and its members.

The second of the identification strategies is *identification through antithesis* (Cheney, 1983a, p. 154). By using the identification through antithesis strategy, the organisation encourages members to unite against a common enemy who is usually external to the organisation. For example, churches who opposed the civil union bill in New Zealand united against the government, who were constructed as the enemy because of the perceived "anti-family" and liberal views (New Zealand Herald.co.nz, 2005). By encouraging members to unite against a common enemy the organisation can encourage members to explicitly disassociate from other targets, therefore, reaffirming the members' association with the organisation (Cheney, 1983a).

The third identification strategy is the "assumed" or *"transcendent we"*[28] (Cheney, 1983a, p. 154). For Cheney the transcendent we encourages association and disassociation to be subtly interwoven into the text because the organisation will use the pronoun 'we' or other surrogate forms to link parties together who may have little in common. As Cheney outlines "the assumed 'we' and the corresponding 'they' are found in statements where a common bond amongst members of an organisation is taken for granted, but the nature of the relationship is not well defined" (p. 154) to prevent recognition of differences between the organisation and its members. The strategy emphasises a commonality between the members and the organisation, and if accepted, members will unquestioningly identify with the organisation (Cheney, 1983a).

The fourth identification strategy of *unifying symbols* (Cheney, 1983a, p. 154) is not readily accommodated in Burke's theories of rhetoric and identification. Unifying symbols is where emphasis is placed on the name, logo or trademark of the organisation. These symbols are subsequently portrayed as objects of reverence that reflects the identity of the organisation and with which members can identify. These symbols often combine both spoken and visual elements that are a powerful means of uniting members and promoting the organisation's image (Cheney & McMillian, 1990). For example, the crucifix is a revered symbol that can identify committed churchgoers as Christian (Bobrova, 2004).

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[28] For the purpose of consistency, I have opted to refer to this strategy as the transcendent we for the remainder of this thesis.

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DiSanza and Bullis (1999) had success using Cheney's (1983a) typology, but they did in fact, modify his typology to include "invitation", "bragging" and "global recognition of individuals" (p. 357) into the common ground technique. Similarly, I have chosen to incorporate DiSanza and Bullis' (1999) invitation and bragging into the common ground technique, omitting global recognition of individuals on the grounds that the texts, for the most part, explore the national contributions of the churches. To clarify, invitation refers to "a request that a person become part of, remain involved with, or contact the organization or its members" (DiSanza & Bullis, 1999, p. 357). Bragging refers to the organisation boasting over achievements such as the amount of "time, money or effort" (p. 357) they have expended or recouped. These tactics aid in narrowing the researcher's focus to identity construction within communications, which is the intention of my research.

4.4 Limitations

Although textual analysis and Cheney's (1983a) typology have their advantages, there are recognisable limitations that can impact on the validity of my research. Public documentation is one avenue of rhetorical activity used by organisations in the construction of identities that members may ignore. There is little empirical evidence available to suggest that members care about the public documentation distributed by the organisation, suggesting that public documentation may have a limited impact on the construction of member identity (Cheney, Christensen, Conrad & Lair, 2004). However, Cheney (1983a) has argued previously that despite ambiguity over the relevance of public documentation in constructing identities, organisations still expend resources to develop public documentation. His assertion insinuates that there is at least the perception among organisational hierarchies that public documentation can influence identities, and will mean that the analysis will still prove insightful in understanding the identity constructing capacity of organisations.

DiSanza and Bullis (1999) claim that analysing public documentation is limiting in that it affirms identifications developed in other organisational contexts, rather than constructing identifications. They suggest that a member's identification with an organisation will already have been established upon reading the communications, therefore the identifications constructed with only be "minimally implied by the organizational document" (p. 390). The assumption of this research then, is that the

documents under analysis strive to maintain identifications as much as they attempt construction.

Cheney's (1983a) methodology has identifiable advantages. For example, it is flexible, as it can be applied to an array of different texts and as mentioned above, narrows the researchers' focus solely to identity construction apparent in texts (Adler, 1995; Ahmed, 2009; Chreim, 2002; DiSanza & Bullis, 1999; Turnage, 2010)[29]. However, his methodology does not propose how the findings should be contextualised. For example, the corporate house organs Cheney (1983a) himself analysed, yielded evidence of attempts at identity inducement, but failed to offer further insight into what the intentional and unintentional identity construction meant to the members targeted or to the organisations the texts were retrieved from. It seems to me that the researcher has to look elsewhere for the research outcomes to have meaning at a wider level. In this respect, I intend to locate my findings within 'case studies' of each of the religious denominations to address the significance of identity construction in the greater New Zealand context. To clarify, my intention is not to use case study methodology (Stake, 2005), but rather, to gauge the implications of any identity construction in the wider Christian religions contexts as they exist in New Zealand.

4.5 Method

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, my intention with this research developed out of a keen interest in what I saw as a growing ethos of managerialism in religious organisations and the impact of this practice on the identities of members and affiliates. The earlier textual analysis I had carried out on a liturgical text gave me the impetus to begin an analysis of the everyday communications of religious organisations. I assert that such an analysis will allow insight into the identity-constructing capacity of religious organisations. Furthermore, I perceived that the identity construction that took place

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[29] Cheney's typology has successfully been applied to the speech of a Prime Minister (Ahmed, 2009), communications distributed by two merging Lutheran churches (Adler, 1995), communications distributed to forestry workers (DiSanza & Bullis, 1999), articles originating from two Canadian banks enacting organisational change (Chreim, 2002), a website for Al Gore (Hunt, 2009) and emails between Enron employees (Turnage, 2010). Each of these studies points to the ability of Cheney's typology to recognise identification strategies in communication, whether intentional or unintentional, with many of the researchers also finding that the typology accounts for the potential for the messages in the communications to establish disidentification (Ahmed, 2009; Chreim, 2002; Hunt, 2010; Turnage, 2010). The typology has also been used in conjunction with interviews (DiSanza & Bullis, 1999) and cluster-agon analysis (Turnage, 2010), and assisted Driskill and Camp (2006, p. 445) in formulating their own identification strategies to account for the responses and communications of a "Nehemiah Group".

through organisational practices such as religious worship, would likely manifest in the published everyday communications of the organisation because sensemaking by an audience occurs through "*lived embodied everyday experiences*" (Cunliffe & Coupland, 2012, p. 64 their emphasis) which later are reflected in the forms of conversations, interactions and narratives, that comprise everyday communications. Such sensemaking can produce stability and consensus (Weick, 1995, 2001) among audiences, particularly as narratives circulating in organisations encourage sharing of experience and understanding, and highlight organisationally-approved values and behaviours (Cunliffe & Coupland, 2012; Weick, 1995, 2001) that can impact on members' identities.

In choosing to research the everyday communications of Christian organisations, I was greeted with an archive that encompassed, but was not limited to, sermons, bulletins, newsletters, liturgical texts, advertisements, church periodicals and social media[30]. Consequently, I needed a means to reduce my archive to a potential corpus and found the solution in Dryzek's (1997) method of discourse analysis. As a method, discourse analysis entails examining how language creates, shapes, and maintain social realities (Fairclough, 1992; Mumby & Stohl, 1991, Phillips & Hardy, 2002) and, therefore, offers insights into the dynamics of power permeating a social context (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Dryzek's (1997, p. 18) method of discourse analysis was originally developed for analysing environmental meta-discourses and proposes a method of text analysis that entails examining texts for "basic entities whose existence is recognised or constructed", "assumptions about natural relationships", "agents and their motives" and "key metaphors and other rhetorical devices". Analysing for these elements offers researchers the opportunity to be introduced to the power and identity construction embedded in texts.

In analysing for the basic entities whose existence is recognised or constructed, the researcher is able to discern to whom or what the text is referring and in what manner they are depicted, which meant that I could begin to exclude texts that did not refer to church members. In terms of the assumptions about natural

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[30] Unfortunately, during my data gathering most of the churches of this study did not have social media accounts. According to Wozniak (1987) because of the uncertain returns and risks associated with technology, people can be reluctant to initially adopt this new knowledge and equipment. Beatty, Shim and Jones (2001) concur outlining that the likelihood of organisations establishing online media accounts actually depends on perceived advantages, compatibility and complexity. Churches hold to traditional values and are disconcerted by change (Johnson, 1975), which might account for why they were part of the "late majority" (Beatty, et al., 2001, p. 339) to join the social media fold.

relationships, the researcher identifies the types of relationships between producers and consumers of the texts, which allows a view into the hierarchical structure dominating the organisation and provides an early indication of the types of identities constructed, mobilised and perpetuated by an organisation. Similarly, the dimension of analysis "agents and their motives" proposes justifications for the texts' production, which further reduced the archive and revealed texts suitable for my corpus. Investigating for this element revealed key themes within the text' and suggested the structure for chapters five and six according to the values the organisations were advocating (Dryzek, 1997).

It was in analysing for rhetorical devices (Dryzek, 1997) in my archive that it became apparent that what I wanted to do with my research was move away from examining the social realities that were taken as "how things might or could or should be " (Chiapello & Fairclough, 2002, p. 195) in the religious contexts. Instead, I wanted to analyse how the social rules accompanying these social realities were imposed on audiences by the use of particular rhetorical tools. Therefore, I found using a rhetorical analysis approach, with its emphasis on understanding the influence of persuasion on audiences (Bitzer, 1968; Bryant, 1953; Corbett & Connors, 1999), would allow for a concentrated focus on organisations' unintentional and intentional attempts at identity construction. That is not to say that Dryzek's (1997) method was altogether abandoned, but rather, that his macro approach to analysing texts assisted in whittling my seemingly insurmountable archive down to a corpus that was easily tackled using Cheney's (1983a) rhetorical identification typology. My choice to pursue Cheney's (1983a) typology stemmed, in part, from its utility as a form of close textual analysis. By operating at the micro-level, the typology can be used to distinguish specific strategies and tactics incorporated by text producers into their communications to persuade members to identify with their organisation, which fit exactly to my research agenda.

The research corpus or "large and principled collection of natural texts" (Biber, Conrad & Reppen, 1998, p. 4) comprised the primary methods of everyday communication used by the churches or the everyday communications that had garnered the church media attention, which coincidentally meant that a number of communication channels were also analysed. In conjunction with Dryzek's (1997) method, I also consulted with family or friends affiliated with particular churches to determine my research corpus, as Fairclough (1992) suggests that deciding on the

texts to analyse is dependent on having an adequate understanding of the archive. Fairclough posits that there are no 'right' texts for analysis, instead the choice is subjective[31]. However, a decision on the texts for analysis can be made easier through consultation with relevant people and by including cruces or critical moments. Although cruces are defined as "moments in the discourse where there is evidence that things are going wrong" (p. 230) they can also include key events that, crucially, bring people together for positive reasons. Therefore, the archive was further reduced to those publications or broadcasts that referred to or focussed on an important event for the church or wider society. The texts analysed ranged from professionally produced advertisements, glossy magazines and billboards, to the amateur weekly bulletins, and were part of a convenience sample collected between January 2010 and December 2011.

I was able to produce a corpus consisting of communications from 'traditional' or 'Establishment' churches, and communications distributed by 'non-Established' churches[32]. For the purposes of this research establishment churches are defined as those whose country and state adhere "to the teachings of a particular religion" (Papastathis, 1997, p. 108), with the prominence of the church often constitutionally determined (Alivizatos, 1999; Papastathis, 1997; Evans & Thomas, 2006). The establishment churches of this research are the Greek Orthodox Church, Anglican Church and Presbyterian Church[33]. The corpus derives from key communication channels used by these churches (Shannon 1949; Shannon, 2001). Interestingly, there were far fewer communications distributed by the establishment churches than the non-Establishment churches, perhaps because establishment churches with their traditional roots, years of membership and state protection (Hull & Bold, 1998; Lipford & Tollison, 2003) do not need to attempt to penetrate into the religious market the same way non-establishment churches do.

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[31]As Morgan (1980) argues, organisational theory and research is grounded in "a network of taken for granted assumptions" (p. 1) which can influence a researcher towards making certain decisions that favour their preferred understandings. The researcher may not be consciously aware of the taken for granted assumptions, but in adopting a critical perspective, they can widen their research scope to alternative choices, realities and viewpoints (Morgan, 1980). Similarly Deetz (1996) argues that no research can be completely objective, as research choices are value-laden and reflective of the preferences of the researcher.

[32] To clarify, a 'well-known' church is not to be confused with a church of the Establishment. Churches of the establishment are actually often embedded in the constitutional and political structures of their homeland (Modood, 1994; Papastathis, 1997).

[33] The Greek Orthodox is an establishment church in Greece because of constitutional entitlements (Alivizatos, 1999). The Anglican church has been entrenched in the establishment since its development in the 16th Century (Towle, 2007). Finally, since 1706, Presbyterianism or the Church of Scotland has been considered an establishment church (Munro, 1997). Obviously these churches do not maintain their establishment status in secular New Zealand (Kolig, 2000).

The key channel of communication for the Greek Orthodox Church, apart from the actual service of Divine Liturgy, was the church bulletin. Bulletins are written by the priest and emailed to members, and also distributed in print form at the entryway to the church for parishioners. The two bulletins that met Dryzek's (1997) and Fairclough's (1992) criteria referred to Easter, which is the crux of the faith year for members (personal communication, 22 February 2011), with the latter also referring to the pending visit of the church Archbishop. Continuing my examination of Establishment churches, I analysed billboards erected by churches within the Anglican and Presbyterian denominations. The Anglican billboards were semi-controversial whereas the Presbyterian billboards were topical.

Texts chosen from among the communications of non-Establishment churches, included television advertisements for the Salvation Army and the opening addresses in three magazines from two Pentecostal Churches. After analysing according to Dryzek's (1997) method the breadth of texts available from the Salvation Army, which included but was not limited to a website, newsletter and advertisements the focus of the research was narrowed to their national television advertisements for the Red Shield Appeal of 2010; a key event in accumulating donations to fund the organisation and specifically its social services (Salvation Army, n.d.a). The magazines that were eventually selected originated from the City Impact Church and Elim Church, with both attached to major church events (Global Impact for City Impact and the annual conference for Elim), increasing the likelihood that they would be consumed by committed members.

Once the corpus was defined, the texts were analysed for evidence of social and political markers and for relationships to topical issues. Such a holistic analysis allowed me to gather an understanding of the purposes of the texts and their structures, offering me an early indication of the church's identities. After the initial analysis, each of the texts was analysed multiple times for single strategies and tactics from Cheney's (1983a) typology. This fine-grained analysis meant that important details were not overlooked and that I could mine down into the texts for evidence of the intentional and unintentional attempts at identity construction. Consequently, a final analysis needed to take place to bring together the holistic appraisal and the detailed account to reach the overall conclusions presented in the final chapter of this thesis. In processing the Pentecostal letters and Greek Orthodox bulletins in this way, the themes of the publications became evident, leading to the structuring of the

chapters around how the typology emphasised these themes and the identity construction that accompanied the themes. For the television advertisements and billboards, I found that the repetitious nature of content would hinder the overall discussion. Therefore, these chapters were structured around the typology for ease of discussion and reception.

Summary

In chapter 4, I outlined my methodological approach, which entailed exploring scholarship associated with persuasive communication and rhetoric. Obviously, an exhaustive discussion of these overlapping fields of inquiry is not possible in the confines of this thesis, therefore, the focus of the chapter has been narrowed to those concepts and explanations most relevant to my research direction. Thus, after broadly surveying the literature associated with persuasion, the chapter moves towards examining the relationship between rhetoric and identification because they are interrelated, and driving forces of my research. Accordingly, Burke's (1969) perspective on these areas ensues, which is followed by a detailed account of Cheney's (1983a) rhetorical identification typology and its accompanying limitations. The chapter finishes with my research method.

Chapter 5

Pentecostal addresses: Positivity and purpose

Introduction

As I have already indicated in Chapter 4, my research texts originate in both non-establishment and establishment churches. The first non-establishment churches I studied may be loosely gathered into a group called Pentecostal. To clarify, churches of the establishment may be formally bound into the constitutional and political structures of their nation state (Modood, 1994; Papastathis, 1997)[34], as is the case of the Orthodox Church in Greece or the Church of England. Often churches of the establishment have a "well-developed liturgy, a trained ministry, and, most important of all, an intimate relationship to the secular centers of society" (Elinson, 1965, p. 404). Establishment churches maintain their strength and longevity through their ties with members of the upper and middle classes of society (Elinson, 1965). For instance, for much of the 19th century (and before), the Church of England was entrenched as a powerful institution among members of the aristocracy and gentry, but was estranged from working classes who had accepted the class distinctions of the Church of England as the natural order of things (Rayner, 1962). According to Elinson, (1965) and McCloud (2007), Pentecostalism appealed to the unchurched, lower classes who were seen as social pariahs in American society. These outcasts opposed the dominant place of the establishment churches, which left them longing for a form of worship that would meet their spiritual, emotional, psychological, and physical needs. They found their needs met in Pentecostalism, because the Church has traditionally spoken to those disaffected from the establishment, yet seeking the order of religion (Melton, n.d.).

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[34] To clarify, anti-establishment refers to a society's desire to see the separation of church and state, often to dilute the dominance establishment-churches have over citizens (Beckwith, 2005; Marshall, 1993).

5.1 Background

According to Case (2006, p. 126), "radical holiness revivals" marked the beginning of Pentecostalism, which differs from other Christian denominations in its treatment of the experience of Pentecost[35]. For establishment churches, Pentecost was a "one-time historical event" (Bilgrien, 2004, p. 25), whereas Pentecostals believe that the gifts of the Spirit have continued to manifest every day. According to Anderson (2006, p. 276), the establishment has traditionally disapproved of the "aggressive evangelistic techniques" of the Pentecostal denominations, particularly when they direct their efforts at proselytising towards needy, vulnerable and spiritually unfulfilled.

Pentecostalism is characterised by its focus on the personal experience of God as being more important than "dogma or doctrine," (Bilgrien, 2004, p. 25; Anderson, 2006) and this focus on experience makes it highly adaptable to the needs of any cultural grouping (Bilgrien, 2004). Given the historical roots of Pentecostalism in democratic movements, it is not surprising that the denomination encourages a sense of equality among adherents because any member's encounter with God is seen as equal to that of any other member. All members are encouraged to receive the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, which include speaking in tongues, prophesy, divine healing and seeing visions. Additionally, Bilgrien claims that the music played during Pentecostal services is an equaliser of class and status differences. The music usually sounds like modern pop-rock to create an enthusiastic and noisy environment (Anderson, 2006), whereas establishment denominations tend towards more traditional and staid music.

The City Impact Church text[36]

The first text I will analyse is the opening address of the City Impact Church magazine. The City Impact Church is a reasonably recent player on the evangelical field in New Zealand. It started as a small group in 1982 and experienced considerable growth in the

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[35] Pentecost is described in Acts of the Apostles 2:1-3 of the bible. The story retells how, fifty days after the Jewish holiday of Passover, when the "Holy Spirit filled them, tongues 'as of fire' crowned their heads, and to their amazement each began to understand what the other was saying even though they came from 'every nation under heaven' and spoke many different languages" (Cox, 1995, p. 3).

[36] See text 5.1 (Appendix 1) page 254 (*All images and texts have been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons*)

mid-2000s. It is a Pentecostal church with branches on Auckland's North Shore and Mount Wellington, and like a lot of rapidly-growing organisations, it appears hungry to brand itself. In fact, the glossiness of the magazine I chose my texts from supports Dyson's (2007) concept of brand extension. He asserts that new organisations seeking to brand themselves often do so by mimicking high-end magazines whose production values are such that the publications are materially robust and prestigious and the content is, therefore, likely to have a long life.

The City Impact magazine is a self-promotional publication that conforms to DiSanza and Bullis' (1999) delineation of documents that reinforce rather than construct identifications. In terms of reinforcing identifications, the content recaps specific religious teachings and reflects positively on the 'great things' the church is doing. The magazine as a whole expresses the organisation's identity, but this expression is exclusively derived from the opinions of the church leaders and so almost any part of it could have usefully been examined to determine the presence and the motivations, of rhetorical strategies. I chose to analyse the opening address because it is a direct 'speech' to the members by the leader, and I consider it was most likely composed to have maximum influence over members (Foucault, 1979; Hardy & Clegg, 1996; Reber, 2006), as it would offer insight into the sense-making of the leader, and likely the preferred understandings of the organisation that members were encouraged to hold (Fineman, Sims & Gabriel, 2005; Weick, 1995). I have, also, assumed that no voice was present in the address other than that of the church leader. The single voice was important to me because I hoped to isolate the leader as a user of rhetorical strategies which aimed at identity construction of members (Cheney, 1983a; Tompkins & Cheney, 1985).

The opening address is conversational both in tone and topic, implying a close-knit relationship between the leader and the congregation. The pastor does not appear to have any reservations about discussing his personal life: his ordeals and holiday plans are laid out for common consumption, and he has included personal photos of family and friends. Additionally, the informality of the address continues into the pictures that accompany it. They show the leader and his wife wearing biker jackets, suggesting youthfulness and 'cool', rather than 'stuffiness' and tradition. In retelling his own experiences, not only is he able to influence his congregation by creating a personal

connection and reflecting on memorable events they shared, but he also constructs his own identity (Gabriel, 2004a; 2004b), which emphasises to members that he is open and likeable. Despite being mass produced (Peters, 1994), the style of the address takes the form of interpersonal communication.

Although the informality may well be the chosen style of the City Impact Church, there is a sense in which the closeness of the relationship between the leader and members is synthetic, that it is a construct established so the congregation can be manipulated. For instance, the address opens with "Dear Church", which places in tension the objective of a collective address with the leader's attempts to establish intimacy akin to interpersonal communication. Similarly, the synthetic closeness that permeates the address is also noted in the closing remarks of "Your friend and Pastor". The leader has *capitalised* the first letter of his role, which elevates his organisational role over his interpersonal associations. Therefore, the address, while designed to be chatty and deliberately informal, establishes the members of the church as subordinate to their leader, particularly as he commands the communication space by choosing to express his own stories and exhibit his own family pictures. These inclusions question the authenticity of the leader's attempt to create equality between him and his congregation.

A less important point is that the readability of the address was compromised by the presentation style of white writing on a background of variegated shades of purple. The analysis that follows develops the purpose of my research which is to explore quotidian communications for attempts at identity construction. Using Cheney's (1983a) typology, I have analysed the address to show the use and probable outcomes of identification strategies.

5.2 At the heart of it: time passing by

It quickly becomes obvious that the key theme of the address is the passing of time. Even though the tone is jocular, the pastor leans into scripture with his question about whether time has:

> "…already been sped up by the good Lord as the book of Revelation declares."

Text 5.2: The clock is ticking…

The inclusion of scripture in an affable opening, sets up the efficient use of time as an expectation of the City Impact Church. The leader lays out his own busy schedule, fitting the message about time to Christian values. What comes to mind as his address unfolds is that the Protestant work ethic (Furnham, 1990) is still being taught as a moral obligation. Furnham points out that in a world-view based on the Protestant work ethic, the effective use of time is inextricably linked to the accumulation of monetary wealth, while the leader, by contrast, speaks of gaining social wealth in the form of personal development and stronger family ties. By writing of the members as though they are already time efficient, the leader gives them no choice in their Christian self-concept: his words make them compliant with an idealised expression of industrious and rational propriety. By conceptualising the members of the church in this way, the leader not only reinforces the Western perception that time needs to be maximised (Brodowsky & Anderson, 2000; Deetz & Mumby, 1985), but also subtly influences his congregation to be more active, to belong to, and to live up to, the expectations of the church and Christianity. The address is an example of what Greenwald (1968) and Petty and Cacioppo (1984) consider as an effort to induce attitudinal change. In this case, the desired effect is to induce a positive perspective on the use of time, and to align members with the needs of the organisation (Areni & Lutz, 1988; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Hogg & Terry, 2000).

One technique used to produce attitudinal change is the incorporation of *declarative statements*. An example of the authoritative voice in the text is the following sentence:

> "I know you will say, the older you get the faster it goes, and there is truth in that. But it is also true that *we* pack so much into *our* lives today from one thing to another." (my emphasis)

Text 5.3: Keeping busy

According to Fairclough (1992), *declarative statements* limit multiple interpretations of what is conveyed through the use of present tense verbs which assert authority. The statements above read as facts, and these 'facts' carry extra power of persuasion, given

that the pastor's role is vested with authority. If the elaboration likelihood model is applied here, the route that is most relevant is the peripheral because it centres on simple cues unlike the central route, which requires members to cognitively engage with the content (Petty, Cacioppo & Schumann, 1983). The pastor's perspective on time might be interpreted along the peripheral route simply because of the prestige (Petty et al., 1983; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984; Taillard, 2000) invoked by his role-identity (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007; Stets & Burke, 2000; Stryker & Burke, 2000).

Another strategy the leader has used is the unifying *transcendent we* (Cheney, 1983a). The quotation in text box 5.3 promotes attitudinal change: it imposes the appearance of consensus on people whose interests may be dissimilar, and here, constructs a view of time as a perspective collectively agreed and held by all church members. In fact, the members of the church may hold widely divergent views of time, but by presenting all of the members as time efficient, the pastor contraposes them with 'others' who are positioned, by contrast, as 'time wasters'. The *transcendent we,* in this way, assists in creating a distinction between church members and other groups in society, ultimately establishing in-groups and out-groups (Tajfel, 1982), and suggesting that belonging to the church (in-group), means accepting, appreciating, and even advocating the efficient use of time. To perceive time any other way means members are not fitting with the prototypical expectations (Hogg & Terry, 2000) that accompany identification with the church, to maintain feelings of belonging (Albert, Ashforth & Dutton, 2000; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Bullis & Bach, 1989; Parekh, 2009; Scott, Corman & Cheney, 1998) and to fulfil the need for self-validation and acceptance of identity (Swann Jr, 1987).

The homily about time is a strong thread that weaves throughout the address. However, after the opening paragraph, the leader moves from an overtly didactic view of time to more covert teaching, by giving a moderately detailed list of the ways he himself has recently used the time available to him. For instance, the address outlines that the pastor spent the year attending religious conferences and "… as usual, believing God" as he travelled up and down New Zealand, all the while recovering from two knee reconstructions. His commentary on his diary offers an insight into his identity and implies that efficient use of time should be accompanied by a conscious effort by

members to engage with their church, religion and family, and positions his own experiences as prototypical of 'ideal' members (Hogg & Terry, 2000). His example exhorts his readers to live life to the fullest and persevere through hardship and so captures the patience and coping which Thompson and Vardaman (1997) have identified as one of the social functions of religion. Therefore, by *recognising his own contributions* (Cheney, 1983a), the pastor not only dictates the preferred prototypical characteristics and values of the organisation (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Lammers & Barbour, 2006), but also embodies ideal behaviours for members. He thus leads by his own example and encourages members to re-evaluate their own contributions and self-concepts so that, as Hogg and Terry (2000) point out, they are more likely to fit with accepted organisational expectations.

According to Cheney's (1983a) typology, the *recognition of individual contributions* allows the rhetor to set a standard for other organisational members to aspire to, and at the same time, emphasises important organisational values. In this case, the leader recognises his contributions to the church which can prompt fellow members to imitate his behaviours and level of commitment. According to Hogg and Terry (2000), leaders use their own examples as they will embody the approved behaviours of the organisation and they can manipulate their own circumstances to define the ideal prototypical characteristics that members are expected to conform. Consequently, should members choose to think and act according to the leader's example, they become an asset to the organisation as they are considered loyal, non-cynical and inclined to maintain their membership with the organisation (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982). Therefore, the leader's own examples are considered a strategy for influencing member identity and are a tool for maintaining the church's existence in the increasingly competitive environment experienced by non-establishment churches (Hull & Bold, 1998; Lipford & Tollison, 2003).

That is not to say that only the pastor's contributions are recognised. He acknowledges the "wonderful team of people" behind the television show "Impact for Life" and refers to the involvement of Krista in the rehearsals and productions of the church. However, how those contributions are described subordinates members, which privileges the investment of the leader and sustains his hierarchical role in the church. For instance, he

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refers to how Krista travelled with him and Bev to the Atlanta Global Pastors Conference, jokingly referring to her as "the bag handler – yeah right". Here, the leader uses a common expression that has passed into colloquial New Zealand speech. The saying was made popular in the 'Tui' marketing campaigns, and the church message therefore draws on *cultural capital* (Bourdieu, 1986) to appear 'hip' and 'cool' to younger members. However, here the phrase seems imbued with sarcasm which militates against the surface joviality, and inevitably constructs an identity for Krista as a servant, subtly pointing to her subordinate position and undermining her contributions to the church. Bag handling, obviously, is not in the same league as the pastor's speaking engagement, his believing God up and down New Zealand and internationally, and his work on Sundays. For a church that stresses equality (Bilgrien, 2004), an effort is made to elevate the role of the pastor over his congregation, which sustains his power and controlling influence.

5.3 The importance of family

As the text progresses, the focus shifts slightly to the importance of family, particularly as time passes by. Accordingly, the *espoused shared value* (Cheney, 1983a) of family is identified as part of the church's organisational identity. The audience is introduced to the importance of family by the pastor's comment that grand parenting is "a joy and a blessing", which is followed up by the assertion that "those in the elitist [sic] club" will know what he means and that the church members are among "our extended family, all our 'non blood related grandkids'." At a later stage, he also points to how his immediate family and "sons and daughters in the Lord" make him a "blessed man," which further emphasises that family is a "glory" from God and needs to be valued. Albert and Whetten (2004, p. 91) argue that the "central," "distinctive," and "enduring" characteristics of an organisation offer insights into an organisation's identity. In this case, a central and enduring characteristic of The City Impact Church appears to be the value of the family, which implies that to really identify and belong to the church, members need to espouse this shared value. The rhetorical tactic of appealing to an organisational identity is not without risk: the adverse effect of alluding to the organisation's identity is that it can inadvertently construct in-group/out-group

distinctions, which could produce division within the organisation (Tajfel, 1982), prompting disidentification and negative reactions (Costas & Fleming, 2009; Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2002; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). However, a resistant reading on the importance of family is unlikely, given its varying iterations and because the pastor's comments are tailored for a receptive audience inclined towards holding similar perceptions of family.

An assumption of this research is that the intention of the rhetor is to remind the primary audience of their convictions as practising members of their church. Thus, it is expected that to some degree, members will be open to, and accepting of, the messages promulgated in the communications distributed. However, members are agents in the formation of their identity, and possess prior commitments or conflicting multiple identities (Ashforth, Harrison & Corley, 2008; Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Therefore, the members may oppose the pastor's views, particularly on grand parenting as they may have no children, and could perceive his comments on family as a perceived attack on their own understandings. *Espousing shared values*, which may not be universally accepted, can fail in encouraging identification with the church as people will endeavour to maintain consistency in their emotions, cognitions and actions (Areni & Lutz, 1988) and thus, will reject the communication.

In keeping with his message that his congregation should enjoy getting older and living life, the pastor emphasises how being a grand-parent affords individuals an elite position in society, suggesting privileges occur because of age and family ties. Again, in *recognising the contributions* (Cheney, 1983a) of a select few members, a privileging one group over another ensues, which can also create in-group and out-group divisions (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986) as the comment inadvertently creates hierarchical stratification. Hierarchical stratification is a product of the unfamiliarity that accompanies social divisions (Burke, 1969; Cheney, 1983a; Cheney, 1991; Foss, Foss & Trapp, 2002; Tompkins, Fisher, Infante & Tompkins, 1975). The purpose of identification techniques is to limit such divisions rather than to emphasise them (Burke, 1969), meaning that the comments of the pastor are unlikely to create wholesale consubstantiality. His comment "six and who's counting", to refer to the number of his grandchildren, also reflects what DiSanza and Bullis (1999, p. 357) refer to as the

rhetorical strategy of *bragging*, even though the pastor's intent might be to appear jovial and likeable. The *bragging* may reinforce for some members that they are not meeting the church and God's aim of procreation, creating internalised pressure, which Elsbach and Bhattacharya (2001) argue can eventuate in disidentification. Eliciting disidentification in members can lead them to oppose the views of the church and in extreme cases, leave to keep their self-concepts intact. That eventuality is particularly disadvantaging to the church as they rely on members for survival and to maintain the position of the church in society.

5.4 Getting involved: church activities and events

Throughout the address the pastor has recounted activities and events engaged in by church members. In discussing these events, the leader interprets their relevance, essentially sense-making on behalf of the members in order to influence their understandings of the organisation (Weick, 1995).

> "February Leadership weekend started with Israel Houghton/ New Breed live concert here at the City Impact Church and what a blast that was."

Text 5.4: Rocking out

In this process of sense-making, he also refers to other *espoused shared values* (Cheney, 1983a) that reflect the organisation's identity; equality through music and community. In the comment outlined in text 5.4, not only does the pastor recognise the contributions of members to a church event, but more importantly, acknowledges the part music played in the leadership weekend. Referring specifically to the concert fits with perceptions of Pentecostalism as a religion that values the role music can have in uniting members and creating equality (Anderson, 2006; Bilgrien, 2004). Thus, the reference to music not only emphasises to members that church can be fun, but that the organisation is inclusive of all, which scholars argue can promote feelings of belonging among members (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Albert, Ashforth & Dutton, 2000; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Bullis & Bach, 1989; Parekh, 2009; Scott, Corman & Cheney, 1998).

The pastor describes the concert as a "blast". The *colloquial* use of the word "blast" emphasises the fun experienced at the concert. For much of the address the pastor has

engaged with issues of ageism and family, which makes the use of the term "blast", with its connotations of youthful exuberance, an attempt to relate to younger members of the church who are necessary to the church's survival. The pastor acknowledges the pleasure and need of having youth in the church by stating that:

> "It sure is good though having them [grandchildren] all right here with us, Sunday by Sunday, in the House of the Lord…Sunday is full on all right in many ways as each kid demands and deserves attention."

Text 5.5: Looking after the kids

He then follows that up with the assertion that "Sunday is full on all right in many ways as each kid demands and deserves attention." In this way, he covertly stresses that the youth should be accepted and encouraged in church, because they are necessary for its continuance. Therefore, by directing his missive at both the older and younger generation, the pastor constructs an identity for the church that encompasses both age groups, who in turn, may engage and commit to the organisation. This is evidence of what Albert and Whetten (2004, p. 101) term a "dual identity" where the pastor caters to the needs of different members by exploiting aspects of the church's identity. In this way he is able to meet the church's need for survival, which can be further advantaging as it means the church can continue to hold an influence over people in society.

The *espoused shared values* (Cheney, 1983a) made apparent by the activities discussed include community and friendship.

> "…our good friends Bishop David Evans in New Jersey, Ps Frank Damazio in Portland and calling in at City Impact Church Canada."

Text 5.6: Fraternising with friends

The pastor outlines that Krista, Bev and he visited friends and fellow pastors during their travels (see text 5.6). His comment suggests that an expectation placed on members is that they should make a conscious effort to maintain friendships, particularly with members of their Church. According to Swann Jr (1987) and Swann Jr, Milton and Polzer (2000) people form relationships with others who are likely to share the same beliefs and values as it validates their preferred identities, but in this instance, it can also prove advantageous to the church because the members are advised to maintain

friendships with fellow attendees, solidifying the church as an in-group and increasing the separation between members and less favourable out-groups.

At the same time as he encourages members to develop ties to one another, the pastor also posits that the organisation can be identified by its openness towards people of different cultural groups. Whether he intended to or not, aspects of the address, such as encouraging the congregation to associate with like-minded members, have presented the church as an in-group. According to Tajfel (1982) and Tajfel and Turner (1979) in-group members will experience positive feelings of belonging by comparing their group to negatively-evaluated out-groups, so members may or may not be reluctant to embrace new additions to the City Impact Church. Thus, the pastor has emphasised the openness of the church by referring to other cultural groups to prevent such reluctance, particularly as he narrates how he and his wife travelled up and down New Zealand "believing God" in what can be presumed as an attempt to grow the church. Yet the seeming openness of the Church does not appear to extend to strangers, rather the people the church is open to are actually part of the wider City Impact Church community. The pastor's comments appear to be designed to emphasise to members just how big the church is and in being substantial, it is a wise decision to choose to identify with the church.

The experience-based nature of Pentecostalism is evident in the final activity referred to in the address: Global Impact 08. The pastor promotes Global Impact 08, as the key benefit to those who attended was the experience of God's blessing (see text 5.7).

> "God opened up the window of heaven and poured out such a blessing that I know will bear much, much fruit in the days to come."

Text 5.7: God's blessing

Not only is this an overt attempt to encourage future attendance, but it is presented as a blessing and opportunity to show gratitude to God for the gifts he has bestowed on the congregation, which reflects the tactic *advocacy of benefits and activities* (Cheney, 1983a). At this point the leader is using what Coote, Coulter and Moore (2005) consider a *guilt appeal* to persuade members to attend future Global Impact events. Such a tactic can be effective, because according to Ashforth and Mael (1989), Brewer and Gardener (2004), Pfeffer and Fong (2005), and Scott (2007) members enact

organisational behaviours for acceptance, self-enhancement and self-esteem. Therefore, they could be motivated to identify with and involve themselves more in the church and church events to purge feelings of guilt and to remain confident in their association with the church.

5.5 The contributions of God

Among the rhetorical tactics included in the address is *advocacy of benefits and activities* (Cheney, 1983a). The presence of this tactic is observed in the pastor's attempts to persuade members to "find God" because then God will find them.

> "Sunday is full on all right in many ways as each kid demands and deserves attention – and you have to find God in the midst of it all – wow! Just as well he finds me!"

Text 5.8: Finding God

To support his position the pastor emphasises his commitments (see text 5.8) to reinforce the point that he makes the effort despite his hectic schedule and is rewarded with God's attention. Hogg and Terry (2000, p. 128) assert that "prototypical leaders" embody the characteristics and behaviours to which members are expected to conform: in this case, the pastor uses his own example to instruct members to pursue a relationship with God, thereby emphasising the need for members' religious identities to be salient in all aspects of their lives. If members find salient religious identities, they will align with the premise of the church which is to live Pentecost all year round (Bilgrien, 2004), but it also leads members to elevate their religious identities up the hierarchy of identities (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Hecht, 1993). Dukerich, Golden and Shortell (2002) argue that salient identities produce behaviours in members that benefit organisations indicating a potential motivation for why the pastor encourages members to seek out God, as accordingly, members may also choose to identify with the church. Additionally, Festinger (1964) found a person will fall back on their core competencies weeks after being persuaded to amend cognition and action, so encouraging a member's religious identity to remain salient may ward off the likelihood of the member reverting back to the unfavourable attitudes and behaviours once held.

5.6 Reconsidering the contributions of the pastor

In the preceding discussion, the pastor *recognised his own contributions* (Cheney, 1983a) to the church such as "believing God" across the nation, which supported his belief that time passing is a positive because it permits work getting done, among other things. The fact that he drew on his own experiences is not unexpected as personal stories are considered authentic and assist the teller in creating a personal identity, which can have the added advantage of influencing people to learn from the storyteller's experiences (Gabriel, 2004a; Gephart Jr, 2007). However, along with the positive effects of using one's own stories –which are explored above -- there is an array of negative effects. Cheney (1983a) argues that the tactic *recognition of an individual's contributions* can actually prove disadvantageous because the behaviours of the leader cannot always be emulated by members.

> "…left on a plane the following Monday (with me still hobbling from my last few weeks on crutches- 1st knee) off to Atlanta to speak at the Global pastors 09 conference."

Text 5.9: Hobbling on

For instance, the pastor's covert praise of his own achievements, such as those in text 5.9 could lead members to perceive the pastor as boasting 'look at me- I'm a kiwi battler' rather than as a role model. Therefore, members might be less inclined to identify with the leader and the organisation, yielding instead to feelings of ambivalence or disidentification in order to maintain their own self-concepts (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2002; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004).

Similarly, the common ground tactic *recognising individual contributions* (Cheney, 1983a) constructs the pastor as a person concerned that his congregation does not respect his work.

> "I mean I only work one day a week right-as I often used to get ribbed in the early days."

Text 5.10: Working one day a week

For instance, he makes the comment (see text 5.10), which covertly reminds members how hard he works. The pastor's own role-identity (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007; Stets & Burke, 2000; Stryker & Burke, 2000) is emphasised in these sentiments, and subtly draws

attention to his position of power and the need for him to be respected, followed and even loved for his hard work. His decision to jokingly *recognise his own contribution* may have the adverse effect of members withholding respect, as like credibility, respect is not simply given on request, it needs to be won (Hill, 1991; Goodman, 2009). Such reactions in members could prove especially problematic for the organisation, because as the pastor of the congregation, he is the point of contact between individuals and their religious understanding, so a lack of respect may affect members' level of identification with the church.

To reinforce the theme that members should live life to the fullest, the pastor refers to his planned motorcycle trip around the South Island, a *picture* of him and his wife dressed in casual biker clothing, and *photos* that I have assumed are from the pastor's personal album. The *photos* depict the pastor in his younger years celebrating Christmas, boating, horse riding and patting a childhood dog. The reference to his holiday demonstrates that God's time can be used for leisurely as well as good works. In all, the *pictures* serve as aesthetic markers that support the overall message of the text, which can make his remarks seem credible and persuade members to interpret the content of the address favourably (Petty et al., 1983; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984; Taillard, 2000): he not only 'talks the talk' but according to the picture 'he walks the walk.' Additionally, the picture of the pastor and his wife in biker gear suggests they are 'hip and trendy', which may appeal to the younger members of the church and improve their receptivity to his message. However, his pictures and message of living the good life do not speak to the 'church poor' or lower classes as might be expected (Elinson, 1965; McCloud, 2007). The effort to be 'cool' has the unfortunate effect of emphasising his pricey possessions: motorbikes and leather jackets are expensive commodities which many people cannot afford. Their inclusion then, means that the pastor has publicised his superior socio-economic status. To do so can have the adverse effect of creating disidentification (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004) in members who may not be as financially secure and who could misconstrue the pastor's *pictures* as bragging.

Summary

Whether he intended it or not, the pastor's address is self-centred as it predominantly revolves around his position in the church and his personal experiences. The communication is an obvious effort to relate to his members, but there is a strong possibility that his use of rhetorical strategies may backfire and cause resistant readings among any members of the not fully committed. In fact, the pastor could even seem unskilled, insecure and unsure which would undermine both his authority and the potency of his message. Therefore, although, many of Cheney's (1983a) rhetorical strategies appear in the text, the way they are used does not mean identification will ensue. A lack of identification from members is problematic for the pastor, particularly as he wishes to grow the church because of his aging congregation.

5.7 Background to the Elim Church

The second and third letters analysed originate from the Elim Church. The Elim Church is a Pentecostal church that has over 40 local congregations nationally, and an international presence as well (Elim Church, 2008). The addresses in my corpus of texts come from Breakthrough magazines. Copies of the Breakthrough magazine are available on the church's national website and are published in conjunction with the annual Elim Church conference. The theme of the conference is reflected in the articles in the church magazine. The fact that the magazine is accessible on the Internet does mean that its potential audience could be non-members, non-Christians, and members interested in the activities of the church. However, church members appear to be the primary audience as the messages target them quite closely. For instance, one message is about how members can get more involved with their church. The first of the Elim Church addresses analysed was written by the church's national leader.

As with the leader's address analysed in the previous sections, the expectation is that the authority and power that accompany the title of the writer will imbue his messages, and provide a candid insight into direct attempts at identity construction (Foucault, 1979; Hardy & Clegg, 1996; Reber, 2006). This address also meets the criteria for analysis because it is associated with a key church event, the Breakthrough conference. The holistic analysis of the address also revealed key themes, which included the need to

build the church and the members within, offering early indications of overt construction of member identity. The motivations for this address appear to be, first, the need to maintain the church and second, to construct an image of 'ideal' church members. Both those motivations fit into the overarching theme of the conference which is "build." The analysis to follow has been structured to explore how rhetorical strategies (Cheney, 1983a) aid the development of the key theme.

Elim Church text one[37]

On the first reading of this address, I noted that the writer has adopted a conversational style that reflects an informal approach to addressing the congregation. As with the previous text analysed, the writer here attempts to create intimacy between himself and reader and the simple language used means the address could be understood by a broad audience of varying literacy. The interpersonal nature of what is essentially a mass distributed address, establishes an environment of openness, which may prompt members to willingly act in accordance with the instructions of the leader, because they experience a synthetic closeness. The subject of the address is 'God is a builder,' with a number of references made to God as a creator. The address is accompanied by pictures of building blocks on both the front and back pages to reinforce the overall theme of the text.

5.8 Building the church

The opening of the text fits Cheney's (1983a) tactic of *recognition of individual contributions* as it states "God is a builder" and is followed by references to how God created life and continues to create. The Elim Church leader implies that God's "tiresome work" should be appreciated and valued by the members and can function as a *guilt appeal* (Coote et al., 2005) for members who did not initially hold such a perception. Interestingly, the leader has referred to God's work as "tiresome" rather than to God working "tirelessly". "Tiresome" has negative connotations, implying that

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[37] See text 5.11 (Appendix 2) pp. 255-256 (*All images and texts have been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons*).

God undertook his work begrudgingly, which reinforces the sense of guilt because it suggests that God can be exhausted, but it also undermines his efforts and likelihood of willingly helping his members.

As the text progresses it becomes clearer that the intent of the address is to encourage members to do God's work and build --that is to acquire new members for the church. The leader's desire to have members "build" the church actually parallels the work of God, who created and populated the world, setting lofty expectations, but nevertheless, presenting the winning of new members as the least that they should do for their church. To support his belief that members should build the church, the leader stresses biblical examples of building: God created the Earth, Moses built a Tabernacle, Jesus built "things", and Simon Peter and Andrew built the church. Each of these examples presents an idealised member of the church that others should emulate. It is at this stage that Cheney's (1983a) tactic of *advocacy of benefits and activities* also becomes apparent because by reminding the readers of Simon Peter and Andrew's rewards for their building, the leader holds out the hope to the congregation that they too may benefit from joining efforts to build the church. What is not made as explicit, however, is that the church will benefit financially and in every other way if it acquires new members. A motivation for the theme of this address is certainly to spread Christianity, but it also presents the Elim Church as the place to attract converts. On the surface, the message is straight-forward, but a resistant reading is possible and the address may, in fact, create in readers a sense of being manipulated into activities that benefit the leader (Friestad & Wright, 1994; Sperber 2000).

A limitation to using God, Moses and Jesus as ideal church members is that their feats are outside the purview of regular church members. For instance, Jesus is described as the "master craftsman" who created the church that would protect Christians from Hell, and members who try to do as Jesus did are bound to fail: masters are presented as so good in their trade (Shulman, 1986) that others are unable to reach the quality of their work. Therefore, the church members persuaded by the text into feeling they should follow in Jesus' footsteps, will never reach that high standard. However, it can be beneficial to the church if members are persuaded to at least try to replicate the work of Jesus, because not only will they acknowledge their subordinate place in the church, it will

keep them following the pattern of sense-making and dream building that facilitates identification.

Pratt (2000) says *sense-breaking* entails breaking down members' meanings so that they perceive a void or deficiency in who they are or what they need, while *dream building* required members to marry their goals to those of the organisation. In this case, members are prompted to reconsider their self-concepts and link their material personal goals to the organisation to obtain the ideal identity, because they are taught that they need to do as Jesus did to get into Heaven. Of course, members trying to meet this obligation are likely to meet resistance from people who simply do not want to join the church. Failure to fulfil this organisational objective will lock members into what Burke (1969) refers to as a pursuit of an unattainable perfection, which also continues to tie them to the organisation.

The leader inspires the readers to seek the lost and encourage them with hopes of heaven:

> "Heaven is not full; there is still lots of room for lost people to come… In fact Heaven was built for all mankind because God is not willing that any should perish."

Text 5.12: Heaven is roomy

The comments of the leader attempt to establish common ground with members by referring to what is construed as a mutual concern. According to Cheney (1983a) to *express concern* is to demonstrate an understanding of the people in the organisation and in this case, what ails them. By declaring with authority that there is still room in Heaven, the leader implies that it is the responsibility of members to seek out these 'lost' people and steer them towards Christianity as it is accommodating; a point emphasised in text 5.12.   These comments promote the development or building of the religion and further encourage members to assist in growing the church's numbers should they be concerned with the unchurched in society. As mentioned previously, if members build the church, increased numbers ensure the church's survival and its position of influence in society.

Interestingly, in referring to how Heaven can accommodate 'lost' people, the leader creates in-groups and out-groups: Elim Church is the in-group and those with no religious path are the out-group. Tajfel (1982) and Tajfel and Turner (1979, 1986) argue that individuals will bind tightly to their own in-group as it can validate their self-concepts and provide security, which will also mean that members willingly accept prototypical characteristics that can favour the organisation (Hogg & Terry, 2000). In other words, the identity of the in-group is supported by the church, which can lead members to commit to the organisation to maintain a sense of belonging (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Brewer & Gardner, 2004; Scott, 2007; Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986).

By referring to how Jesus built His church, the leader is able to draw parallels with the Elim churches on Earth to construct a positive organisational identity. As Heaven is presented as a peaceful sanctuary in the after-life, referring to it as Jesus' version of a church, may construct Elim churches as having the same qualities. The leader's push for Elim as a pre-curser to Heaven may be intended to strengthen members' identification with the church through self-enhancement (Stets & Burke, 2000), which renders them susceptible to the identity construction and control by the organisation (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). Therefore, members will bind to the church, which may lead to longevity for the church as well as the opportunity to hold power over factions of society. Of course, constructing the Elim church identity as a sanctuary on Earth is also problematic if members do not accept the image presented. When the organisational identity presented in the text does not actually reflect the image and culture of the organisation that members are familiar with and understand as the organisation's 'true' identity (Hatch & Schultz, 2004), then members can question their association with an unauthentic organisation.

According to Cheney (1983a), the *espousal of shared values* is a means of emphasising that the organisation possesses the same values as its members. In constructing the organisation's identity the leader has espoused attractiveness as a value. The leader refers to God moulding man from clay, and shaping him into "A magnificent figure with big muscles...." The leader's overt sexism draws on a stereotypical male ideal which he imposes on male members of the church, implying that they must maintain a muscular

physique to fit in. It seems odd to find discussion of body type in an address in a church magazine, but the comment does reflect the preoccupation with body image permeating society (Cash, 1994; Cash & Fleming, 2002; Mazzeo, 1999). For some, the comments might result in disidentification (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004) with the church, but for others, the comments might be motivation to get fitter to epitomise the prototypical 'ideal' (Hogg & Terry, 2000) presented as necessary to belong to the church. Regardless of whether members embrace or resist the message conveyed, the church is still enacting appearance rules that accompany aesthetic labour (Pratt & Rafaeli, 1997; Scott, 2007; Van Maanen, 1991), which is an overt attempt to construct the physical identity of members to suit the organisation's desires.

Interestingly, the leader does not offer an ideal body image for women. In fact, the only reference made to their construction is when the leader jokingly refers to how God:

"…must have got tired after that, so He took a shortcut when He made woman and used Adam's rib."

Text 5.13: It's exhausting making people

Whether the limited discussion is intentional or not, the leader has undermined the worth of women in the church by treating them as auxiliary to men and by not giving their appearance the same level of consideration. An explanation for why he has chosen not to engage in a discussion of the female body type could be because he is satisfied with the overall appearance of the women in his congregation or he anticipates backlash from a gender already heavily scrutinised on their looks (Clarke & Griffin, 2007; Fairclough, 2012; Muller, 2009; Murray, 2008). However, the androcentrisim permeating this comment can reduce the likelihood that women will identify with the church. The address reaffirms the Christian tradition of considering women as subordinate (Børresen, 1995; Daly, 1973; Fiorenza, 1975; Ruethers, 1985; White, 1995), which can breed resentment among female members towards the church and religion. Readers not inclined to accept the leader's attempt at jokiness may feel that women have been reduced in status and they may, therefore, disidentify (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004) with the religion and the church. In this case, following the teaching of subordinating women could derail the leader's plans to grow the church rather than facilitating identification and commitment.

5.9 Building the individual

A marked shift in tone occurs in the text where the leader moves from discussing what members can do for the church to what God can do for them. For instance, borrowing unarguable authority from God himself, the leader claims that:

> "God says; [sic] 'I have an awesome plan for your life. If you will let Me 'make you' I will build your life into something that you would never imagine'."

Text 5.14: The awesome plan

By having the confidence to speak on behalf of God, the leader has reinforced his privileged position as God's representative on earth, but has also indicated a desire to construct identities of members along lines far superior to those already established. By suggesting God will improve members' lives, the leader binds members to the organisation through what Pratt (2000) calls *sense-making* and *dream building* processes. That is to say, members may come to fear that their lives may be unfulfilled without God's presence, but the obverse eventuality could be hope for a brighter future should they accept the meanings formed and disseminated by the church. However, the strength of the church's *sense-making* is undermined by the use of "awesome" to describe God's plan for members' lives, as the term has become hyperbolic and essentially meaningless because of the position it occupies in individuals vernacular.

Furthermore, the leader presents the inclusion of God-as-builder in members' lives as the kind of opportunity that matches DiSanza and Bullis' (1999) rhetorical strategy of *invitation*. The leader encourages members to choose the best possible, or "awesome", life, by accepting God, Christianity and by extension the church, all of which maintain the church's survival and influence. It is possible that the survival of the church is an incidental but happy outcome of member identification, but in fact it is an exercise of authority. No alternative locations for living the "awesome" life are offered: rather, in an authoritative claim over members' futures, the church points out the opportunity for awesome living and at the same time, it places its boundaries around the style and content of awesomeness.

> "You are not alone in having a dream for your life; God has a dream for you. It is much bigger than any dream we can come up with... If we look at the amazing creating God has done to date we can submit to His creative hands."

Text 5.15: You are not alone

In a further example of offering good things and making conditional promises, the above quotation (text 5.15) is perhaps the most direct enticement in the whole address. No matter how much an individual may desire prosperity and good fortune, the rhetor suggests that God is able to outdo all those human dreams, although it is strongly implied that the good things are delivered as a result of 'submission'. This is a *quid pro quo,* not a free gift: good things are conditional on submission, which creates dependence on the church and the wisdom of the leader. It is as an example of *sense-breaking* (Pratt, 2000) as it shows members that they cannot even dream adequately or, in terms of identity theory, conceptualise their own sense of *self* (Brown & Humphreys, 2006; Pfeffer & Fong, 2005; Swann Jr, Milton & Polzer 2000).

> "And then God calls us to be builders. We are made in His image, so being a builder is part of who we are."

Text 5.16: The call to build

The address has two themes: building the church and building the individual. In the last part of the address, the leader ties the two themes together and simultaneously ties the individuals to the church. In other words, members build themselves by building the church. Essentially, the leader is constructing both the social and role identities of members by referring to them as builders and likening their building to the work that God does for the church. The role that is created for members in this way is likely to strengthen their self-worth and give meaning (Stets & Burke, 2000) to their membership of the church, even if they do not have an official position. Furthermore, the extended metaphor of building allows the leader to *recognise the individual contributions* (Cheney, 1983a) of Paul and Cain, and also both encourages modern day members to emulate their efforts and lends biblical credibility to the assertion of the leader. The choice of Cain to carry the weight of the building metaphor may have been a perilous strategy, because Cain is recorded as the first known murderer (Genesis 4:8) and his building career began after he was exiled for his sins. Despite the selection of Cain,

however, the construction of a 'builder identity' for church members can, nevertheless, be fruitful for the church in maintaining its survival.

Although the address has thus far sought to encourage members to grow the church by seeking out lost souls, the text proceeds to sound a cautionary note about processes and standards:

> "The problem with builders coming onto a job is that the standard may slip. The high quality of the previous builders may not be maintained. Paul was concerned about this so he said; 'Each one should be careful how he builds'."

Text 5.17: Quality building

The leader powerfully warns that the church will not accept any random building programmes: rather, a previously established but unarticulated standard prevails. The church, therefore, is an exclusive organisation and operates according to Tajfel's (1982) definition of an in-group. Again, the leader *borrows credibility* from the bible by drawing on the words of Paul, unconsciously using the credibility of a reference group as a persuasive cue (Petty et al., 1983; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984; Taillard, 2000). Although Pentecostal denominations claim to foster equality, it seems to be the leader who is able to articulate the links to the bible, and thus by using the authority of the bible, bolsters his own position.

> "Conference is a time to sharpen our skills, look again at the plans that the Great Architect has written, and link with fellow builders as we build the church of Jesus Christ."

Text 5.18: Build One08 conference

The last part of the address is an indirect exhortation to church members to attend the upcoming "Build One08" conference organised by the church. The paragraph opens with a presumption of familiarity between writer and reader. "Conference" is mentioned without the benefit of the definite article or demonstrative adjective "this". For example, the use of the articles "the" or "this" would specify an artefact which needed pointing out and was so unknown to the audience. Starting the sentence with "Conference" suggests that the reader is already warmly engaged and understands what conference, at what time and for what purpose. The familiarity established at the beginning of the sentence is continued with the use of the first person plural pronouns

and possessive pronouns: "our skills", "we build". The *transcendent we* (Cheney, 1983a) here constructs a collective identity of all church members including the leader being equalised by looking at the plans of the "Great Architect" and being all in it together. Additionally, encouraging members to actively attend continues the theme of building as it promotes identification and commitment that will engender the members towards the church, and open them up to the persuasive influences of the organisation.

Summary

Unlike the previous address from The City Impact Church, the national leader of the Elim church has been much more direct in his attempts to construct member identity. He has referred to how people should look, outlined the position of the sexes in the church and drawn from doctrine to support his belief that members should be building their church. Yet, I feel that he runs the risk of polarising members rather than binding them to the church in-group, because his assertions are less open to interpretation and instead instructive to the point that members could feel subordinated, excluded and dissatisfied with their affiliation. Again, this address incorporates many of Cheney's (1983a) rhetorical strategies and tactics, but the style of their use may not always lead to identification and could, in fact, prevent the church from meeting its goal of survival. As Eckstein (2005) has pointed out, church communications can contain *fear appeals*. In this case, the subtext of fear is based on the possibility that members may see themselves slipping out of God's grace. Fear may, therefore, breed disidentification. Sutton and Hallett (1988) point out that *fear appeals* motivate people to find ways of reducing the fear and Witte (1992) argues that they may simply deny the fear's existence.

This examination of the leader's address shows the way he has used a range of persuasive tools to present his message in such a way that the role and social identities of members are constructed to suit the purposes of the church. In other words, members are likely to build the Church because they have 'evidence' that it is possible and desirable for them to do so and strengthens their sense of belonging to the organisation. That said, the leader makes a number of truth assertions that go unsubstantiated. For persuasive attempts to be successful and long-lasting, members need to cognitively interpret the messages promulgated (Areni & Lutz, 1988; Bless, Bohner, Schwarz &

Strack, 1990; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984; Taillard, 2000). However, the continued use of peripheral cues by the leader suggests that members may adopt the identity of builder constructed, but its acceptance may only be temporary.

Elim Church text two[38]

The last text from the Elim Church is another of the church leader's addresses, published in the Breakthrough Magazine. The overriding theme of the address is "enjoy the ride" and the written message is accompanied by a picture of a rollercoaster. The rollercoaster is used as a metaphor for life and symbolises non-linear life experiences. The leader's message suggests that the twists and turns of life should be perceived positively by readers, which sets a standard for positive attitude that actively constructs members' personal identities. For instance, this kind of message makes it difficult for individuals to express frustration, anger, dissatisfaction or any other response that could be labelled negative. Instead, in the context of a leader's message, "enjoy the ride" positions all life experience as exciting and stimulating.

The way the Elim Church conceptualises living life to the fullest is markedly different from the City Impact Church, despite both being Pentecostal churches. The City Impact Church presented a full life as one where members keep busy, including through leisurely pursuits. However, this address presents a full life as one where the members ignore the negative perceptions they have developed through comparing themselves to others. The intention of the analysis to follow is to see how identification strategies are employed to construct the 'happy *self*' identity.

5.10 Enjoy the ride

The address establishes common ground with the reader by using *expression of concern for the individual* (Cheney, 1983a).

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[38] See text 5.19 (Appendix 3) pp. 257-258 *(All images and texts have been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons)*

"We beat ourselves up by comparing our gift with someone else's gift. We don't enjoy the journey of life and the successes we have because we are busy measuring ourselves against another person."

Text 5.20: Measuring ourselves, gift for gift

Text 5.20 shows the leader diagnosing the cause of unhappiness as comparing the *self* with others. Inevitably the comparison makes individuals aware, not of their gifts but of their deficiencies. In the process of preaching acceptance, the leader is inadvertently preventing what scholars Burke and Reitzes (1991) and Stets and Burke (2000) consider an essential part of the process of identity formation, which has at its heart the need to develop self-distinctiveness by comparing the *self* to others. Uncritical acceptance of the *self* implies a concomitant acceptance of the status quo, and engenders an orthodoxy that may well be beneficial to maintaining an organisation (Luke, 1974). His teaching hits at the foundations of a process that is inherent in social interaction (Mead, 2004), and idealises a behaviour that may not be easily attained. In other words, his comments reflect a *guilt appeal* (Coote et al., 2005) that can encourage members into changing their attitudes to life, but only temporarily.

This sentence is also an exhortation aimed at raising members' self-worth. The leader encourages members to cease dwelling on their deficiencies by pushing them to re-evaluate how they conceptualise their personal identities. In so doing, the members may adopt a positive perspective on life that frames their cognition and action as they interact within the world. Of course, prolonged attitudinal and behavioural change is contingent on members acknowledging self-worth as a favourable consequence, thereby interpreting the message of the leader according to the central route of the elaboration likelihood model (Areni & Lutz, 1988; Bless, Bohner, Schwarz & Strack, 1990; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984; Taillard, 2000). When members interpret persuasive communication along the central route, the changes they adopt may last longer as they expend more cognitive effort interpreting the messages disseminated (Petty, Cacioppo & Schumann, 1983; Taillard, 2000), and can mean continued identification and commitment to the source of the communication. Scholars have argued that when members experience improved feelings of self-esteem from their membership with an organisation, the likelihood of identification happening increases (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Pratt, 2000; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007; Stets & Burke, 2000).

Part of the effort to construct identity in this text depends on the use of the "*transcendent we*" (Cheney, 1983a), as this technique is designed to present the interests of members and the organisation as one in the same. In this instance, the *transcendent we* is used to acknowledge that the leader has also been guilty of drawing comparisons and not appreciating God's gift of life. He follows the comment in text box 5.18 with his belief that there was a mix-up at the time of his birth because he believed that he should have been "…born as an only child into a family with a millionaire father", but instead, he ended up going home with a father "who didn't even own a car." Aside from attempting *humour* to encourage members to positively evaluate his intended message (Bless, Bohner, Schwarz, & Strack, 1990), the leader's comments also construct his identity as a member of the church who has questioned his position in life, but who has, nevertheless, managed to move beyond his personal circumstances.

At the same time, the leader's use of the "*transcendent we*" (Cheney, 1983a) can be read as false humility. His homily makes it clear that, although he was once like the members of his congregation in comparing himself with others, he is now in a position to preach because he learnt his lesson and amended his attitude. By including himself in the "we" of the wider church community, the leader ostensibly reduces his own status in the relationship. However, he uses his power and retains the right to preach and teach, which raises questions about the sincerity of the *transcendent we* tactic. Accordingly, the *transcendent we* functions to establish a synthetic democracy between the leader and members that may encourage the members to be receptive to the leader's teaching on "enjoying the ride." Part of the persuasiveness of the *transcendent we* is that it is also a *politeness marker*. Fairclough (1992) refers to acts of politeness as efforts to protect individuals' self-esteem. In this case, the act of *politeness* is designed to subtly chide church members whose behaviour is inappropriate when measured against the ideals of the leader. The leader, however, avoids the possibility of alienating the members, for to directly attack their behaviour would lower their self-esteem (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Pratt, 2000; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007; Stets & Burke, 2000) and could result in disidentification (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004).

By referring to his want for a millionaire father, the leader is able to *express his concern* (Cheney, 1983a) that people evaluate others according to material means. Focussing on the material reflects Adorno and Horkheimer's (1977) theory of the one-dimensional self. They argue that people are driven to consume culture to the point that they develop narcissistic tendencies and so fail to engage with the world because their focus is on the *self* only. For a church leader, this may be particularly concerning as the normative identity of the church is less concerned with profits (Albert & Whetten, 2004) and more concerned, at least in public, with giving back to society (Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001). The leader raises and then immediately dismisses a materialistic point of view insinuating that wealth and prosperity are not essential to "enjoying the ride." This overt construction of identity lays out for members what their actions and cognitions should be if they wish to incorporate Elim as a defining characteristic of their own self-concept.

> "[W]e are among the most blessed people on earth today…live in an amazing country, serve an awesome God, belong to great churches and have a divine calling."

Text 5.21: The blessings of life

This part of the leader's address is imbued with truth, because *declarative statements* such as the one in text 5.21 deny the possibility of alternatives. However, perhaps more importantly, the "*transcendent we*" (Cheney, 1983a) at the beginning of the sentence constructs in-groups and out-groups (Tajfel, 1982) that increase the prestige of the Elim church. The in-group/ out-group distinction is reinforced by the leader's assertion that members are blessed because they receive the benefits that come from belonging, unlike outsiders who are not blessed in the same way. Of course, members align with favoured in-groups to distinguish themselves from others and to increase self-esteem(Allen & Wilder, 1975; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Billig & Tajfel, 1973; Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Pfeffer & Fong, 2005; Pratt, 2000; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007; Stets & Burke, 2000). Inasmuch as individual identity is boosted, the church benefits by identification, commitment (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Carroll, 1995; Farrell & Oczkowski, 2012; Treadwell & Harrison, 1994) and citizenship behaviours including conscientiousness and altruism that Bergami and Bagozzi

(2000) and Podasakoff, MacKenzie, Paine and Bachrach (2000) have identified as being beneficial to organisations.

The blessings experienced by members are further emphasised by the *lexical and structural choices* of the leader.

> "[L]ive in an *amazing* country, serve an *awesome* God, belong to *great* churches and have a *divine* calling" (my emphasis).

Text 5.22: God terms

Each of the adjectives in text 5.22 above surpasses it predecessor in the sense that awesome is arguably 'more superlative'[39] than amazing and so on. Church members are, therefore, guided towards the ultimate benefit of a "divine calling." By using *superlative adjectives* such as "amazing" and "divine", the leader is drawing on what Burke (1972, p. 25) has described in his theory of logology as "God-terms", which are essentially "supreme terms" (Carter, 1992, p. 4) that cannot be surpassed. Therefore, of the four blessings listed in ascending order, the "divine calling" is the paramount blessing to be valued above the others. The identity that is constructed in this list suggests autonomy and power in that individuals may borrow the qualities of being "amazing" "awesome" "great" and "divine" from their church membership. Again, only one possible identity is offered, despite evidence in the work of Ashforth and Mael (1989) and Ashforth, Harrison and Corley (2008) that identity is fluid, and that individuals may in fact hold multiple conflicting identities.

Burke's (1972, p. 25) position on the concept of "Title of Titles", is that once the term is used, the rhetor can assign no higher expression. In text 5.22, the term "divine calling" matches Burke's "Title of Titles" concept and now the rhetor cannot resile from the intensity of the expression, for to do so, would diminish its standing as the most important blessing, the one that allows church members to align themselves with God. The use of a "Title of Titles" can create problems for a rhetor because other benefits cannot be treated in a similar fashion without diminishing the potency of the referent. The difficulty of God terms in persuasive language is shown in this address by the leader's use of the adjective "awesome" to describe first God and then later rugby player

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[39] Logically something cannot be 'more superlative', but here it has been used to illustrate the increasing precedence afforded the adjectives used by the leader.

Stephen Donald. The hyperbole of the God terms (Carter, 1992) is shown as essentially without meaning because the rhetor is unlikely to deliberately equate an All Black with God. Carelessly using God-terms for different referents could result in a confused religious identity, or at very least, a degree of cynicism amongst members who realise that God and a rugby player have been afforded the same degree of adulation.

5.11 Recognising individual contributions: Stephen Donald

This next section explores the potential issues that accompany comparing the *self* to others and includes a forensic analysis of how the leader has used the example of All Black, Stephen Donald, to emphasise this overriding message.

The text shows evidence of the tactic *recognition of individual contributions* (Cheney, 1983a) as the leader discusses the plight of All Black Stephen Donald. He constructs a fabula (Bal, 1997; Fairclough, 2003) to focus the members' attention to the overarching message of the address which is "enjoy the ride" and do not dwell on deficiencies. A fabula is a story that establishes distinct traits for a character and a specific point of view (Fairclough, 2003). In this case, the leader relates a *fabula* about Donald, who was second in line to the five-eighth position in the absence of preferred five-eighth Daniel Carter[40]. Unfortunately for Donald, his taking control of the team actually coincided with a series of losses for the All Blacks, and critics levelled the blame at him (Stuff.co.nz, 2008). By capitalising on the plight of Donald, the leader is able to stress how negative perceptions and problems in life can make people feel inadequate, but, nevertheless, that opportunities in life should be valued.

The leader attempts to encourage members to not only sympathise with Donald, but to relate his adversity to their own experiences. He asks:

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[40] The leader is recounting the experiences of Stephen Donald prior to his All Black resurgence during the Rugby World Cup 2011 (Paul, 2011).

> "How would you like to be in the shoes of All Black Stephen Donald as Daniel Carter gets rushed back into the team as the saviour of the Rugby hopes of a nation."

Text 5.23: Walking in an All Black's boots

Such a comment can make members feel a commonality with Donald, particularly if they have experienced criticism and failure, and this may make them more receptive to the message of the church presenting in the address. At the heart of the identity formation process is a person's need to compare who they are and what they do to outsiders (Burke & Reitzes, 1991; Stets & Burke, 2000). The address encourages members to consider whether Donald's example reflects their own experiences of comparing themselves to others and finding they do not conform to desired expectations and standards. Donald's example may prompt members to re-evaluate their own circumstances, which produces attitudinal and behavioural change, because as Greenwald (1965; 1968) and Petty and Cacioppo (1984) argue, if the persuasive communication holds personal relevance, cognitive engagement and acceptance can ensue. Additionally, members who relate to Donald and see the value in changing their views to enjoying life could acknowledge the positive role the church played in improving their self-worth, which can lead to identification.

However, the *fabula* on Donald sends mixed messages to the audience. They are led to believe that they will enjoy life if they do not compare who they are to others, but this message is contradicted: firstly when members relate their own experiences to Donald's, and secondly, when the leader states that Donald is "an awesome player with a playing record that any one of us would love to have." Petty and Cacioppo (1984) argue that cogent and compelling arguments influence whether a person is persuaded, so the contradictions here may limit the potency and validity of the message and hinder the likelihood of members accepting and aligning with the church's perspective. Additionally, members are inadvertently pushed to compare their achievements to an All Black whose feats they are unlikely to replicate. Instead of improving their own feelings of self-esteem by reflecting on their achievements, the members may feel disheartened, attributing the feelings to the church and disidentifying to validate their own self-conceptions.

Donald is described as:

> "...an awesome player with a playing record that any one of us would love to have."

Text 5.24: Awesome player

Text 5.24 actually works against creating identification as only men in the congregation can be All Blacks. Granted, there is a female equivalent in the Black Ferns (allblacks.com, n.d.), but rugby is socially and culturally constructed as a masculine sport (Phillips & Nauright, 1996) and can lead to the polarising of members along gender lines. By only referring to the contributions of men (Donald, Carter, Jonathan and Barnabas), the church continues the Christian tradition of discriminating according to gender (Børresen, 1995;Daly, 1973; Fiorenza, 1975; Ruethers, 1985; White, 1995) and also brings into question whether the church truly embraces equality as Bilgrien (2004) suggests. The inclusion of masculine examples can lead to a polarisation of members who will either relate to, or oppose, what is presented by the leader.

Referring to the All Blacks can be seen as the leader exploiting New Zealand's *cultural capital* to advance the church's position. According to Bourdieu (1986), people can exploit economic, cultural and social resources to gain status within society. Cultural capital in particular, refers to the "socially rare and distinctive tastes, skills, knowledge and practices" (Holt, 1998, p. 3) that are embodied, objectified and institutionalised (Bourdieu, 1986) to prompt collective understanding. Referring to players in the All Blacks is useful because the team is part of the cultural fabric of New Zealand and the leader can expect that members will likely know who they are and perhaps even relate to them. Accordingly, members can draw on any pre-existing information that they may hold (Cacioppo & Petty, 1980) about the All Blacks to interpret, and possibly accept, the message of the leader.

In the address the leader also *recognises the contributions* (Cheney, 1983a) of Daniel Carter, who is described as the "saviour" of New Zealand rugby. By referring to Carter as a "saviour," the leader perpetuates the subordinate position of Donald, which continues to contradict his message that people should not be compared. However, what is perhaps more interesting here, is that by describing Carter as a "saviour", the leader has inadvertently compared the feats of a rugby player with the ultimate saviour,

Jesus Christ. Again, the leader has invoked a God term (Carter, 1992) that can be construed as hyperbolic or meaningless, as it either elevates Carter to supernatural status or, diminishes the importance of Jesus' sacrifices. Therefore, the members may experience confusion over their religious identities, or they may choose to reject the message and church, because as Siero and Jan Doosje (1993) assert, acceptance of a message is contingent on it fitting with members' initial attitudes.

5.12 Religious figures

Later in the text, the leader shifts to *recognising the contributions* (Cheney, 1983a) of religious figures: Jonathan and Barnabas. In discussing Jonathan, the leader points out that at:

> "Any other time this man would have been a stand-out. He would have been selected as captain of the first team. He wouldn't have been sitting on the side-lines; 'automatic first choice'."

Text 5.25: Timing is everything

Aside from developing a rugby metaphor that fits with the preceding discussion, the leader also counsels members into accepting that they may have to play 'second fiddle' in life. It is almost as if the church *espouses the shared value* (Cheney, 1983a) of mediocrity, which can become a prototypical characteristic (Hogg & Terry, 2000) that members adopt in identifying with the church. However, suggesting members espouse mediocrity can diminish their self-esteem and likelihood of continuing to identify with the organisation (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Pratt, 2000; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007; Stets & Burke, 2000).

Similarly, in *recognising the contributions* (Cheney, 1983a) of Barnabas, the leader asserts that members should be content in the shadows of greater people.

> "The anointing to reach the Gentiles was so clearly on Paul that Barnabas had stepped back and allowed Paul to become the leader. Barnabas still continued to be an outstanding man of God who excelled in encouraging others."

Text 5.26: Following the leader

However, the text 5.26 also indicates that leaders need followers, which covertly constructs identities for members as followers in the church. Barnabas' example is used to acknowledge that there are asymmetrical power relationships in the church, which subtly reaffirms the leader's positional power and strengthens the legitimacy of his messages. However, individuals may not willingly accept their subordinate positions in a hierarchy (Chomsky, 1998), so the leader has attempted to gain the members consent by presenting acceptance of lesser positions in life as a blessing from God. In other words, the leader puts the onus on members to be subordinate by citing biblical examples that present such a position as divinely sanctioned. Therefore, members might not resist the leader's attempts to construct their identity, even if that identity reduces their self-worth. Alternatively, members experiencing low self-esteem on reading the persuasive messages of the communication, may in fact, reduce identification with the organisation (Ethier & Deaux, 1994), or adopt cynical responses to the messages to protect personal identities (Frandsen, 2012).

Summary

Although the previous address from the Elim Church was relatively straight-forward in its message of build the church, this address is limited by contradictions that weaken the leader's convictions. In fact, his message can be unclear, potentially producing resistant readings that are accompanied by disidentification (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). What the leader set out to do was to make members feel good about themselves; first by destabilising their own understandings and pointing to their deficiencies, and then secondly, offering excuses for their behaviour and building them up so that they would attribute their positive evaluations to the church. However, the execution can be polarising with examples enforcing negative values and assessments of members that can limit self-esteem and identification. Embedded throughout the text

are the rhetorical strategies referred to by Cheney (1983a) but how they are used can push members into disagreeing as much as agreeing with the leader.

In all, the second address from the Elim church preaches that members should "enjoy the ride", but to do so requires that they show humility and accept subordination. These are unlikely to improve members' self-esteem, which can adversely affect the strength of their identification with the church, and may have flow on effects to the church's survival, should members' dissatisfaction with the messages disseminated turn to disidentification.

Conclusion

The use of rhetorical strategies to construct member identification, and adversely produce disidentification, although common in the communications of secular communications (Ahmed, 2009; DiSazna & Bullis, 1999; Turnage, 2010), also emerged in my analysis of three addresses from two Pentecostal churches. A commonality across both the City Impact Church and Elim Church texts is the desire to have members adopt a positive perspective on life as alternative views are deemed unacceptable. It can pressure members into rejecting the negative parts of who they are, given that the leaders assert that how they respond to life is a reflection on how much they appreciate God's gifts. In taking such a stance, the writers fail to take an holistic view of their members and adopt an authoritative position over their identities, which is consistent with the traditional role that churches once held in society.

As mentioned in the literature reviewed, an individual is characterised as having a myriad of identities, each of which is invoked in different circumstances, for different purposes (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Scott, Corman & Cheney, 1998; Stets & Burke, 2000). However, more importantly, each of the identities has with it a series of beliefs, actions and feelings (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Ashforth, Harrison & Corley, 2008) that may or may not fit with the 'seeing life as positive' view proposed by the churches. It is almost as if the leaders' not only want the members' religious identity to take precedence -- because it values the positive -- but also for them to re-evaluate their other

identities through a similar lens. Members have and need other identities, as they are a part of what makes them unique and they allow for personal growth (Parekh, 2009). Therefore, to suggest that these other identities are amended or ignored, could affect the degree of identification members feel towards their church.

Chapter 6

Preaching Orthodoxy: Identity in a diaspora church

Introduction

Although Eastern Orthodoxy encompasses Greek, Russian, Albanian and Georgian churches (Bakacsi, Sándor, András, & Viktor, 2002; Pollis, 1993), my research focuses on the Greek Orthodox Church which, in its native land, is firmly part of the Greek establishment. In 1975 when the present constitution came into effect, the nation declared that "the prevailing religion of Greece is that of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ" (Alivizatos, 1999, p. 25). As part of its privileged position as the "approved" church in Greece, the church is afforded certain advantages which include, but are not limited to, the power to be the prime administrator of state organisations, freedom from taxation, a strong presence in public and private education, and exemption from military participation for its clergy. These dispensations indicate the power possessed by the Eastern Orthodox Church in its motherland and the potential dominance the Church has over the religious identities of the citizens of Greece (Alivizatos, 1999). Although an Auckland branch of the church has been chosen for analysis, it is largely made up of members who have migrated to New Zealand from Greece, or first generation descendants of immigrants. These people will likely have been socialised toward accepting the prevalence and power of the Church in their lives, extending the power and reach of the Church across geographical boundaries.

6.1 Background

Traditional beliefs have it that the Eastern Orthodox Church came into being on the day of Pentecost 33AD, at the beginning of Christianity (Callinikos, 1957) and that it holds firm to the original apostolic faith spread through the world in late antiquity (McGuckin,

2011). The orthodox religion promulgates belief in one God[41] and self-proclaims a position as the original church from which all others broke away (Hale, 1998). As is suggested by the word "orthodox" in the name, the denomination resists change to its dogma and practice (Oppenheim, 1990; Pollis, 1993). Oppenheim (1990, p. 48) describes orthodox religious traditions as "elaborate", "artistic" and "time-consuming." However, by contrast with the inflexibility of the liturgy, an obvious feature of orthodox services is the way in which the congregation can "tune in and turn on" at will (Oppenheim, 1990, p. 48), sometimes engaging deeply with elements of the liturgy, such as the veneration of the icons, and at other times, feeling comfortable to talk amongst themselves, smoke and come and go throughout the ceremony (Hale, 1998; Oppenheim, 1990).

Although the honouring of religious imagery is common in many denominations, the Greek Orthodox Church places icons in a particular place of veneration. Icons are treated as windows to the sacred, opening two-way communication between the divine and the worshipper (Kenna, 1985). Reverence of the icon denotes a traditional, conservative approach to religious practice, as Greek Orthodoxy teaches communicating with God at the individual's discretion. The Church's religious practices, then, reflect orthodox and sensory[42] roots: strict guidelines govern (for instance) representation of the divine, the act of chanting[43] and the design of the sanctuary (Kenna, 1985; Oppenheim, 1990; Yiannias, 2003). The makers of icons are not permitted any individual creativity in their design, which for many centuries, has been highly stylised and relatively unchanging (Benz, 2009; Ouspensky, 1992). The conservative approach to religious practices observed in the Greek Orthodox Church is in direct contrast to Pentecostalism referred to previously, where pursuits akin to popular culture occur, including the use of audio-visual technology, concerts of religious rock music and

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[41] This might seem obvious but in Ancient times, Greece held to practices of polytheism (Bryant, 1986; Mattingly, 1942; Osborne, 2006).

[42] Eastern Orthodox religious practice is described as *sensory*, as it is understood that it is "the whole world, and not only man's soul that will be transfigured – 'saved' – when Christ establishes His Kingdom at the end of time" (Yiannias, 2003, p. 1). The church encourages the immersion of the senses through the smell of incense, beauty of the icons, chanting of hymns and ritual movements of the priest.

[43] Orthodox chanting is developed according to precise syllabic patterns (Takis, n.d.; Stathis, 2006) and even the tempo is predetermined, with books such as *Triodion* functioning as a guide for understanding the oral tradition of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (Lapidaki & Alexandru, 2008).

theatrical performances that emphasise-religious messages (The City Impact Church, n.d.).

Unlike the Pentecostal and Salvation Army organisations of this study, the Greek Orthodox Church differs in that the members identify with the church to preserve not only their religious identities but also their ethnicity. The Church's assistance in preserving both identities is particularly useful for members who have relocated to a new country, but the communications are also sent to members of the second and third generations on the assumption that they also want to develop and reaffirm their religious and ethnic identities. According to Cadge and Ecklund (2007), Ng (2002), Peek (2005) and Yang (1999), religion assists in adjusting immigrants to their new location by reducing feelings of isolation and alienation and providing the necessary connections for acquiring housing, food and employment. However, perhaps more importantly, religion offers an outlet for members to express and maintain their cultural and ethnic orientations (Cadge & Ecklund, 2007; Ng, 2002; Peek, 2005; Yang, 1999; Yang & Ebaugh, 2001)[44]. For those considered Greek Orthodox, there is an inextricable link between their religion and ethnicity which has led to Hammond and Warner (1993) defining this denomination as an "ethnic religion." Unlike religions that are "ethnic fusions[45]" or "religious ethnicities[46]" (p. 59), Greek Orthodoxy allows members to claim ethnic identification "without claiming the religious identification, but the reverse is rare" (Yang & Ebaugh, 2001, p. 369).

Yet, in an effort to overcome these distinctions, religious organisations can combine religious and ethnic rituals (Cadge & Ecklund, 2007) inevitably making religious and ethnic activities synonymous, or at the very least mutually reinforcing (Yang & Ebaugh, 2001). In the case of the Greek Orthodox church of this study, I have observed the priest of the Auckland parish offering blessings in Greek before these uniquely Greek celebrations and festivals take place in the church community hall. In other words, attempts are made not only to conserve the language, customs and shared

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[44] A cautionary note: that is not to suggest that peoples' religious identities are more salient than their ethnic or national identities. In fact, people may be devoid of religious identities but are compelled to engage with religious diaspora to preserve ethnic understandings (Cadge & Ecklund, 2007; Yang & Ebaugh, 2001).
[45] Ethnic fusions are considered to have religion as the foundation for ethnicity (as is the case of the Amish).
[46] Religious ethnicities are those "where an ethnic group is linked to a religious tradition that is shared by other ethnic groups" (Yang & Ebaugh, 2001, p. 369), which is the case for Irish and Polish Catholics.

understandings of members, but also to make members' religious and ethnic identities indistinguishable. This is not unlike the situation experienced in the homeland of the members, where, Roudometof (2008, p. 71), argues Orthodoxy has become "an integral, indispensable element of Greek identity."

However, in 2001, Archbishop Christodoulous accused Greek diasporic communities of failing to emulate the church-nation link, which is necessary for forming and maintaining the "modern Greek identity", because 'true' Greek orthodoxy cannot be experienced in "alien lands" (Roudometof, 2008, p. 74). The critique offered by Christodoulous is not without merit. According to Peek (2005), a role of these religious diaspora is to bring diverse people together in the new country, and requires the church aid members in acculturating within their new host environment. Cadge and Ecklund (2007) and Vertovec (2000) acknowledge that religious diaspora are much more lenient in the religious behaviours as these churches need to build, adapt and remodel, to not only merge two separate worlds, but to cater to the needs of first, second and eventually third generation affiliates. For example, Greek American branches of the Orthodox Church have created controversy by circumventing cannons. Because the Church of Greece has chosen to disassociate from their American counterparts, the Greek American churches have petitioned the Patriarchate of Constantinople to become a Universalist Orthodox church who are free to have laity elect clergy, women to occupy positions of power and become evangelists (to name but a few), all to the chagrin of the church back 'home' (Roudometof, 2000). Although not as severe, the Greek Orthodox church of this study makes concessions by incorporating the English language into liturgical services to cater to a diverse audience who are not all bilingual. In other words, leaders of religious diaspora are charged with constructing and maintaining an array of identities and identifications for members grappling with the need to assimilate to a new world, while retaining a sense of *self*.

Transnational narratives assist churches and members in constructing and preserving religious and ethnic identities upon migrating to a new country by reminding people that they belong to larger constituencies (Vertovec, 2000). New media, in particular, have led to an increased self-awareness for individuals as "…the flow of ideologies, access to information on organizational tactics, and the transformation of formerly elite

movements to mass movements" (Eickleman, 2007, p. 27) is possible because of the removal of geographical boundaries. Eickleman's argument suggests that despite relocating, members of religious diaspora are, nevertheless, still forced to negotiate their religious and ethnic identities according to the confines of the meta-discourses of the church hierarchies they left behind. In that respect, the advantage to both the churches and members is that they are pushed to hold to traditions, which sustain the defining characteristics of the religion and ethnicity, such as music, language, dress, liturgy (to name but a few), despite members migrating elsewhere. Accordingly, media supports the efforts of diaspora religious groups to retain a sense of *self* in the face of upheaval (Christou, 2006; Panagakos, 2003), but as producers of the religious media content sought, the church elite influence the identities negotiated and developed by members, particularly immigrants (Stowlow, 2005; White, 2004).

The Eastern Orthodox Church is hierarchical, as it is headed by the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the nine Patriarchs of the national churches, yet power over the congregation is at its most potent at the level of the local church priest. The priest's power derives from his office as an intermediary with the divine, which permits him to control worshippers' access to confession and communion (Lucas, 2003; McGuckin, 2011). Consequently, the church comprises asymmetrical power relationships that can allow the priest to intentionally and unintentionally construct members' identities.

The texts[47]

The texts from the Auckland-based Greek Orthodox church began as emails written by the priest and were subsequently printed and distributed in the entryway of the church[48]. The first bulletin, distributed on February 18th 2010, centred on the subject of stewardship and was accompanied by an example pledge card[49]. The second bulletin was distributed on March 26th 2010, and although the focus has changed from stewardship to the church's preparation for Easter, the theme of giving is brought

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[47] See texts 6.1 and 6.2 (Appendix 4 and Appendix 5) (pp. 259-264). *All images and texts have been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons*

[48] I analysed the bulletins I collected from the entryway, and later was informed that they had originally been distributed via email.

[49] Due to repeated reproduction, much of the top portion of the pledge card has become illegible. However, the remainder of the pledge card offers insights into the activities of the church and has been analysed.

forward from the previous bulletin[50]. Unlike the professionally-produced glossy magazines of the Pentecostal church, the bulletins of the Greek Orthodox church are simple black and white photocopies. The 'home-grown' production may be in part because the messages began as emails, but could also reflect the relatively cash-poor status of the Greek Orthodox church in Auckland. Much like the addresses distributed by the Pentecostal churches analysed in Chapter 5, these bulletins are direct communications from the priest to his congregation and would likely provide an insight into the leader's attempts at identity construction (Foucault, 1979; Hardy & Clegg, 1996; Reber, 2006). Additionally, the texts were chosen because they centred on cruces (Fairclough, 1992). In this case, the bulletins were pointing to a possible lack of commitment from members, prompting the leader to emphasise the need for stewardship.

The first readings of the bulletins of the Greek Orthodox church revealed two key messages: first, that members should contribute financially to the church, and second, that members should prepare in a particular way for Holy Week. The tone of the two bulletins is conversational, but the overall impression of the texts is that they read as printed sermons. For instance, the priest describes, with emotion and enthusiasm, Jesus' pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and constructs the text as if he is talking directly to members without the mediating presence of a computer or the written word. His conversational tone and direct approach implies that he, at least, feels an intimate relationship with his parishioners, and, in an imitation of the rapid shifts of mood that can take place in conversational exchanges, he alters the emotional tone of his message, sometimes sounding rather jovial and other times chiding or even disappointed. The emotional variations within the text reinforce the notion that he is writing his messages within the margins of a personal relationship.

In style, then, the bulletins display informal, personal touches that are akin to face-to-face interpersonal communication where there is an expectation of familiarity (Cathcart & Gumpert, 1983; Peters, 1994), although these bulletins have the same goals as mass media: that is, communicating the same idea to many people without interaction (Peters, 1994). Computer-mediated communication such as these bulletins may lack

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[50] Because the two bulletins intersect, I have chosen to treat them as one text. The extracts in the text boxes throughout this chapter may, therefore, be drawn from either bulletin.

spoken interactions, but nevertheless, do equate to interpersonal communication because the exchange still affords the expression of personal information to meet personal needs and the maintenance of personal relationships (Barnes, 2003; Romiszowski & Mason, 1996; Tidwell & Walther, 2002). My intention is to explore the different identification tactics used in expressing these messages and in constructing the identities of the church members.

Both bulletins open with:

> "Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ- This is the day the Lord has made! Let us rejoice in it and be glad."

Text 6.3: When saying "hello" just isn't enough

Although the opening is rather long compared with most greetings, this functions as *phatic communion* (Malinowski, 1923), which is a highly specialised form of communication most readily identified in greetings and farewells. *Phatic communion* is an instrument for smooth social operating (Žegarac & Clark, 1999) and consists of those more or less 'throwaway' expressions that are important in relationships because they acknowledge the presence of other people. *Phatic communion* is often not literally meaningful, and sometimes not even literally sensible, but all *phatic communion* expressions are markers of politeness. The words of the priest's greeting, therefore, can be considered irrelevant, but the mood they establish is not (Žegarac & Clark, 1999). In the two lines of the opening, the priest has established the form of social relations that will prevail between him and his readers: cordial and focused on his concerns as a priest charged with the cure of souls and the running of church business. This particular priest used the same opening in every bulletin he circulated, perhaps with the intention of binding members together and engendering a sense of belonging to the in-group of the church. The identity constructed here for members is that of family, and not just of family, but family of a particularly high order: the family of Christ. There are clear benefits to the church in referring to members as family, because the presumption of the relationship imposes responsibilities and levels of connection far beyond what might be expected of comparative strangers who happen to encounter one another at a church service.

The greeting is followed by words from Psalm 118:24: "This is the day the Lord has made! Let us rejoice in it and be glad!" Here I assert, that the use of the quotation is designed to work in a similar-way to the *"transcendent we"* (Cheney, 1983a) by creating inclusiveness within the church in-group, and prompting those feelings of belonging that start the process of identification (Albert, Ashforth & Dutton, 2000; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Bullis & Bach, 1989; Parekh, 2009; Scott, Corman & Cheney, 1998). Furthermore, overt identity construction occurs with an exhortation to find an unqualified joy in the day by accepting it as their Lord has made it. This is a strongly normative position for the priest to adopt: it argues a passivity towards the world and events that does not suggest, for instance, a militant church that recognises social injustice and fights for the weak and disempowered.

In the preceding section, I introduced some key ideas about the Greek Orthodox church and situated it as a diaspora church in New Zealand society. In the three sections that follow, I will discuss the texts, drawing holistically from both bulletins to establish key subject themes. The discussion in sections 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 is organised around the three main themes that I have identified. These themes are value building, religion as ethnicity, and growing the church.

6.2 Building values

One notable feature of the bulletins is story telling. For instance, the priest recounts his childhood, making much of the fact that he comes from Illinois, a place he points out was "Abraham Lincoln's first home". Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann (1983) and Petty and Cacioppo (1984) argue that persuasive tools such as *narratives* encourage recipients to interpret the persuasive communication according to the central route of the elaboration likelihood model, as they respond to the characters in the narrative (Slater & Rouner, 2002), which entails a degree of cognitive processing (Petty et al., 1983). The *narrative* is adopted here to draw attention not only to the priest himself as a central figure in the story, but also, and probably primarily, to allow a homily to develop with Lincoln as an exemplar of desirable qualities. The priest's story is intended to edify his

audience by showing how Lincoln's words and actions inspired and shaped the lives of the priest's family and his fellow countrymen.

There is, perhaps, a degree of ethnocentrism (Oetzel, 2009) underpinning this story, in that the priest does not detail the achievements of the former U.S president, proceeding instead on the assumption that a congregation in Aotearoa-New Zealand will be sufficiently familiar with Lincoln's pursuit of equality and human rights (Fredrickson, 1975; Fredrickson, 2008) that they will get the point of his teaching. Perhaps his instructive purpose might have been better achieved had he found a local model of a great man to hold up for admiration and emulation, but the values the priest wants to instil into his congregation are of unassailable probity. In some respects, therefore, the discussion of Lincoln reflects Cheney's (1983a) *recognition of individual contributions* tactic, except such recognition is usually in reference to fellow church members and their contributions are often explored in detail. Instead of promoting identification with Lincoln, and by extension the leader and the church, the bulletin can create cultural divides and ambivalence.

Additionally, the priest has depicted Lincoln as a 'regular guy' with whom the congregation can readily identify, describing Lincoln as a person who was never formally educated and as someone who failed yet persevered, to make Lincoln an appealing person who church members can imitate in their day to day lives. The priest asks his parishioners to reflect on Lincoln's words (text 6.4 below) about being ready for opportunities, perhaps as a model of Christian endeavour and patience:

"I shall prepare myself, and then perhaps my chance will come"   (emphasis in the original)

Text 6.4: Be prepared, then seize the opportunity

However, despite the admirable nature of the sentiments in the quotation, when the priest encourages the members to take a 'Lincoln approach' to the development of the church, there is a chance it will backfire because it might not be sufficiently personally relevant to make members receptive to the message (Greenwald, 1965, 1968; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984). Furthermore, the priest is engaged in a subtle attempt to construct the members' identities in a way that conforms to the organisation's expectations (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). Should members incorporate the preferred values of the church into

their self-concepts, they are subtly controlled by the church, which may mean that in times of decision-making, they will make choices that best serve the interests of the church. Therefore, the church is able to maintain control over members' activities and choices, which sustains its power and influence over people in society.

The priest *espouses* Christian *values* (Cheney, 1983a) that he presents as universal aspirations not just for Holy Week, but all the time. They are, as text 6.5 shows:

> "…the virtues that Paul reminds us of, that we so often invoke and never tire of: **whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report….**" (emphasis in the original)

Text 6.5: Virtue speaks for itself

Here, the use of the *transcendent we* (Cheney, 1983a) connects the congregation and the priest as candidates for holiness and true membership of the church. Members who internalise these virtues may experience depersonalisation as acceptance of universal norms limits member uniqueness (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Brewer & Gardner, 2004; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Hogg & Terry, 2000; Stets & Burke, 2000). The reference to Paul does two things: first, it shows the priest's learning, and second, it *borrows Paul's credibility* as (arguably) the best-known, most active Christian of ancient times. By *borrowing Paul's credibility*, the priest is able to imbue his message with authority that will mean that, in the moment of reading the bulletin, the members may be persuaded to incorporate these religiously *espoused shared values* into their self-concepts, but such persuasion is often temporary as it does not require cognitive effort that would build motivation (Petty et al., 1983). Using *Paul's credibility* could push the congregation to follow the peripheral cue of the elaboration likelihood model (Petty, Cacioppo & Schumann, 1983; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984; Taillard, 2000), which can produce temporary attitude change, but may not generate the kind of long-term alteration of attitude and behaviour the priest clearly desires.

Text 6.6 (below) displays the priest's certainty that the congregation's religious identities should take precedence in all other facets of life. Much like the Pentecostal leaders, the Greek Orthodox priest has *espoused shared values* (Cheney, 1983a) that have 'universal' application to encourage the members to possess a salient religious identity and to

consider it important in the hierarchy of their identities (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Hecht, 1993; Peek, 2005).   The priest puts his opinion like this:

> "Make these peaceful days, full of all the best you have to offer, to yourselves, to your families, to your souls, to your fellow man, to the Lord".

Text 6.6: Come, let me preach to you

In text 6.7, the priest uses the *transcendent we* tactic to encompass the church and create an in-group that 'should' and 'must' enact the Christian values of humility and repentance. The *transcendent we* (Cheney, 1983a) is, in this case, a leveller: the priest makes himself just like his congregation to create a common cause with the readers.

> "And finally, let us embrace the fullness of the faith. That especially means the Sacraments…We should, we must, prepare for these gifts with humble repentance."

Text 6.7: We're all in this together…

The elevation of the sacraments to the focal position in the "fullness of the faith" is another tie binding the congregation together as an in-group. The sacraments are likely to be well understood by all Orthodox congregations and they cause individuals to turn their gaze in one direction, towards a form of worship that not only expresses personal faith, but also maintains the in-group's 'otherness' in a strange land where being Christian is 'done' differently. 'Embracing the fullness of the faith', therefore, is an invitation to manifest an ethnic identity and cultural heritage that *sets* the congregation apart and positions them as a diaspora church, and 'being Greek' in the matter of religion becomes a value that is promulgated in the bulletin.

Not only is the leader continuing to emphasise the importance of members' religious identities, he is also setting a standard for their behaviour because 'true' members are those who are willing to experience 'the fullness of the faith' by actively participating in all aspects of the church, particularly the Sacraments. The *transcendent we* (Cheney, 1983a) puts words into the mouths of the congregation, for how is it possible to be against something as wholesome as 'fullness of the faith'? The priest is able with this rhetorical tactic of speaking on behalf of the whole group to imply a general agreement with his words, and in this way, he creates a prototypical characteristic (Hogg & Terry,

2000) that members need to possess in order to belong. Acceptance of the prototypical characteristic by the congregation allows the priest to construct identity around it, an identity that is made more transparent in text 6.8. Using *straightforward assertion* as a device to convince, text 6.8 presents confession as beneficial to members' self-concepts, and strengthens the identity of an ideal church member as someone who embraces the sacraments, and finds the same pleasure in confession as in a gift:

> "The Sacrament of Confession is the best gift you can give to yourself, to your immortal soul, in these holy days."

Text 6.8: Be good to yourself by following the precepts of the church

In text 6.8 the rhetorical tactic shifts from the *transcendent we* to the *advocacy of activities and benefits* (Cheney, 1983a). The shift in tactic entails a shift in pronouns from the first person plural to the second person singular, so that the actors in the text are no longer 'we' but 'you'. In this tactical move the priest re-establishes his authority as the person who can take confessions, and in doing so, positions his congregations as the people who depend on him and his authority to receive the 'best gift'. The *shift from the collective voice* to that of the individual is likely to have been made because the priest wanted to build a sense of personal obligation among individual members to follow the collectively-agreed expectations of the church. Furthermore, this sacrament can make members feel better about themselves, which leads to improved self-esteem and self-enhancement (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Brewer & Gardner, 2004; Pfeffer & Fong, 2005; Scott, 2007) and creates a virtuous cycle of belonging and serving, leading to satisfaction with the in—group, which in turn leads to longevity of identification with the organisation.

The effort put into persuading members to participate in the sacraments could also be a purposeful move to socialise members into the church. According to Trice and Beyer (1984), enacting rites and ceremonies requires members to adhere to organisationally endorsed behaviours that are embedded in the organisation's culture. These rites and ceremonies function as guidelines for acting and thinking, with the sacraments proposed as necessary to be an accepted member of the church. Thus, the priest is socialising the members towards the organisation, constructing frames of reference that the members can choose to adhere to if they seek identification and belonging to the church.

6.3 Material religion & ethnic identity

The bulletins call the congregation to the practice of material religion, at church and under the aegis of the priest, and in doing so, offer church members the opportunity to connect to the Greek identity. This section will explore the way the priest envisages the practice of Greek Orthodox religion for his congregation, and at the same time, will examine the practice of the religion-as-Greek-identity.

Although the priest constructs identity through religion-as-ethnicity in several places throughout the bulletins, it is perhaps most obvious where he encourages his congregation to prepare for the season of Easter in ways that go beyond being *merely* religious towards practising specifically Greek forms of material religion (King, 2010). The message that the priest builds here asks the congregation to commit to two forms of labour: first, they will labour *literally*, as supporters of the local branch of the church, giving time and money to the maintenance of the church as an organisation; and second, they will labour *ethnically*, as Greek Christians in New Zealand. Both forms of labour require the congregation to match their attitudes and behaviour to those the priest offers as a prototypical model, and in order to prompt assimilation into the prototype (Hogg & Terry, 2000), the priest incorporates a range of rhetorical devices into the bulletin. He uses *emotive language, declarative statements, repetition* and *imagery*, all aimed at altering the affective state of the congregation so that they are open to the message, because as Bless, Bohner, Schwarz, and Strack (1990) point out, a positive mood can temporarily increase receptivity to persuasion.

Text 6.9 is a deliberately positive portrayal of the time leading up to Easter. The text appears to be straightforwardly descriptive, but it is also prescriptive, setting out in story form how members should be thinking and feeling about Easter. By using Cheney's (1983a) *transcendent we,* the priest allows the presence of no opinion other than his. The words "the last fully joyous moments," "they are bright indeed" and "joyous" are strong indications of how the congregation should respond to the story of Palm Sunday.

> "Saturday and Palm Sunday morning are the last fully joyous moments before Easter, and they are bright indeed, as we celebrate Lazarus' rebirth and Jesus' joyous entry into Jerusalem."

Text 6.9: Easter for beginners?

The *transcendent we,* therefore, presents joy as something that church members should universally demonstrate as a standard of both belonging and *feeling* belonging (Albert, Ashforth & Dutton, 2000; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Bullis & Bach, 1989; Parekh, 2009; Scott, Corman & Cheney, 1998). In this text, the theology connected with celebrating the re-birth of Lazarus is particularly Greek Orthodox (Barrois, 1998; Miller, 2002; Velkovska, 1989): the Lazarus story is certainly taught to Christians as one of the miracles that Jesus performed, but it is not one that is commonly celebrated in New Zealand as part of Easter.

The bulletin moves to the excitement that 'we' feel on Palm Sunday and the priest here translocates his 21st century congregation to Roman-occupied Jerusalem: in his story, 'we' are there with the 'cheering throng', knowing the full crucifixion story, yet also waiting with the crowd to find out the ending:

> "As Jesus enters the city on a humble donkey, only He really knows what is in store the rest of the week; the rest of us are caught up in the enthusiasm of the cheering throngs, waving palms and full of hope. We just don't understand yet what form that hope will take, and how it will be fulfilled."

Text 6.10: Join the cheering crowds...

The excitement and hopeful expectation that the priest builds into his story are, on one level, simple narrative devices for developing identification with the story. On another level, however, by encouraging the members to exhibit these emotions, the priest seems to expect members to conform to organisationally determined display rules (Hochschild, 1983), which constructs their identities by setting standards of acceptable behaviour. Of course the members may not be feeling jovial at Easter time, so placing such an expectation on the members could have the effect of making them resent the exhortation rather than embrace it. According to Hochschild (1983), changing felt emotions to conform to display rules can lead people to develop emotional dissonance because of the strain of conforming. In extreme cases, members can lose touch with their authentic *selves* (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). The expectation of particular

display rules (joy, excitement, enthusiasm) creates prototypical characteristics (Hogg & Terry, 2000) for members that can fuel emotional dissonance and disidentification if members cannot genuinely feel the emotions they are acting out (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Costas & Fleming, 2009; Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2002; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004), although for the display rules to have truly adverse effects on members, they would need to be continually enforced and the members would have to have a strong religious identity (Tittle & Welch, 1983).

The priest uses *vivid imagery*, *re-telling the story* of Easter to make members recall the significance of Jesus and his actions, blending his present-day expectations with the traditional story into and inspirational, and (from his point of view) an aspirational narrative. According to Green and Brock (2000) and Escalas (2004), *narratives* stimulate reflection in audiences, leading members to navigate the central route of the elaboration likelihood model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984; Petty, Cacioppo & Schumann, 1983). The rhetorical devices here are calculated to persuade members to consider the relevance of Easter and evaluate their religious identities at a time when the commercial imperatives, such as the sales with 'Easter specials' that have nothing to do with the religious commemoration, for instance, can diminish the importance of the religious festival (Barnett, 1949; Schmidt, 1994).

As well as *re-telling the story* of Easter with heavy emphasis on the *transcendent we* (Cheney, 1983a), the priest employs *recognition of individual contribution,* another rhetorical tactic in Cheney's (1983a) typology. He mentions with approval, for instance, the twelve ladies of the parish who baked more than 300 koulourakia[51i], and were also prepared to dye eggs red on Thursday morning[52]. Here the priest is not only thanking the baking ladies, but is also calling up, with the use of Greek words, a collective memory of 'doing religion the Greek way', which he revisits and strengthens when he talks later of including 'retired papous and yiayias'[53] in the growing church. By *recognising their contribution* (Cheney, 1983a) and emphasising their ability to draw on

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[51] Koulorakia are 'sesame cookies' baked in circular or twist shapes, by women on Holy Tuesday to celebrate Jesus' rebirth (Karayanis & Karayanis, 2008).

[52] A Greek Orthodox tradition is to dye boiled eggs red. The red-eggs are symbolic of the "blood of Christ, the sealed tomb and the life inside" (Vrame, 2009, p. 255). These eggs are then used as part of a game, where the objective is to break the eggs of others to proclaim that 'Christ has risen'.

[53] Translated, popau is Greek for grandfather and yiayia is Greek for grandmother.

their Greek heritage, the priest is presenting these women as ideal member prototypes (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Their example, and particularly their willingness to dedicate time and effort to the church, might motivate other members to get involved and do religion the Greek way too, especially as the priest issues an invitation which would allow others to join in and learn how to match ideal behaviour:

> "Anyone interested in coming to help is most welcome."

Text 6.11: All help gratefully received

Here the priest is using DiSanza and Bullis' (1999) rhetorical technique of *invitation*, which might make members feel guilty as their lack of contribution can be perceived as violating a cultural norm (Basil, Ridgway, & Basil, 2006).

On the other hand, by referring to the dozen baking ladies, the priest is also maintaining gender stereotypes. A prominent perception that still permeates advertising and popular culture is that women belong in the kitchen, especially if the task is making cakes rather than cooking main courses (Courtney & Whipple, 1974; Dominick & Rauch, 1972; Kang, 1977). The priest's appreciation, sadly, reinforces the common perception that Christianity teaches that women serve and men command, fixing the position of the women in society overall as servants to the needs of others, and particularly, illustrates the subordinate place women occupy within the church (Børresen, 1995; Daly, 1973; Fiorenza, 1975; Ruethers, 1985; White, 1995).

6.4: Growing the Church

Another of the themes identified in the bulletins is growing the church. The bulletins incorporate Cheney's (1983a) *advocacy of benefits and activities* tactic because the members are growing the church and in so doing, will benefit from "a community of full Christian witness." Much like the pastors who wrote the Pentecostal Church letters, the priest of the Greek Orthodox Church preaches the importance of growing the church community, and although his concern for the church community is not in dispute, another much more subtle concern is his concern for the survival of the church as an organisation in a competitive market-place.

Text 6.12 combines *advocacy of benefits* with another tactic from Cheney's (1983a) typology. The *transcendent we* unites the priest with his congregation in receiving the benefits of "full Christian witness,s, but in fact, the benefit favours the church as an institution more than individual members, as it sustains the church's presence in society and secures the opportunity for it to exercise influence.

> "We are getting ourselves ready, growing every week and month, to take the next step, and to grow into a community of full Christian witness, where we build a church life that attracts all generations of us equally- immigrants and Kiwis, lifelong Orthodox and converts, young professionals and retired pappous [sic] and yiayias."

Text 6.12: A glorious future?

In his push to grow the church, the priest uses *recognition of individual contributions* (Cheney, 1983a) to persuade members to get involved and contribute time and other resources. He holds himself up as an example of work for the church, announcing that he has "bought 20 Holy Week books from the United States" to ensure the necessary resources are available for participation in church services. He also declares that he intends to conduct adult baptisms. Baptism, of course, is a symbol of Christian belief, and it is a sacrament that is necessary for full church membership (Fiddes, 2002). It is no light thing to be baptised as an adult: there are classes and other forms of preparation for the public ceremony of the sacrament, and the priest's willingness to conduct the classes and the baptisms may be tempered by a finely-judged wish to have positive figures to send to head office that are evidence of church growth.

Doing the work to grow the church is probably part of the priest's job description, but it is also, indisputably, something that he advertises to his congregation. By using the rhetorical tactic of *recognising his own contributions* (Cheney, 1983a), the priest is able to assert his role-identity (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007; Stets & Burke, 2000; Stryker & Burke, 2000) as the leader of the parish, the person with the ability to conduct religious ceremonies, with expert power and position authority (Klucharev, Smidts, & Fernández, 2008; McShane & Travaglione, 2003; Reed, 1996; Richardson, Dugan, Gray, & Mayhew Jr, 1973). One reading of this publicising of individual contributions makes it possible to observe the priest subtly subordinating the members of the church, but another reading

is that the priest is simply acting as a "prototypical leader" (Hogg & Terry, 2000, p. 128) bringing new members to the church.

I have already identified that the use of the tactic of *recognition of contribution* (Cheney 1983a) can be self-promotional in terms of establishing role-identity (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007; Stets & Burke, 2000; Stryker & Burke, 2000), but so also is the sustained use of the *transcendent we* (Cheney, 1983a), which likewise, fashions the priest's role-identity as the guide and mentor of the congregation; an identity that allows exhortation and through that, the exercise of power. On the surface, the *transcendent we* tactic gives the appearance of levelling power, but in fact, the tactic conceals the asymmetric power relationship between the priest and his people because the priest is able to define the future for his congregation, asserting as a truth the need for courage to undertake a journey.

> "We have to have the courage now to make the commitment for the next steps of that journey."

Text 6.13: "Courage!" he said...

Here, the word 'courage' is calculated to make the priest's wishes hard to oppose: no one can easily resist a path that has been designated as needing courage without looking cowardly, and in fact, the identity the priest constructs for those who step out on the journey is most attractive, because it allows church members to see themselves as people battling against strong odds for a higher good, as Lincoln did in a distant place and time. In text 6.13, the *transcendent we* is juxtaposed to the word 'courage' to unite the people of the church and motivate them to conform to prototypical characteristics of the in-group (Hogg & Terry, 2000) as styled by the priest. Certainly, the rhetorical tactic creates the warmth of belonging and working towards a common goal, (Albert, Ashforth & Dutton, 2000; Ashforth & Mael, 1989 Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Bullis & Bach, 1989; Parekh, 2009; Scott, Corman & Cheney, 1998), but it is doubly useful in that it prolongs the existence of the church as an organisation, which is particularly useful to the priest in his identity as the 'manager' of the church-as-organisation.

Text 6.14 (below) shows the priest continuing to press the congregation towards an ideal of Christian identity based on giving and obedience, using the tactic of *expression of*

concern (Cheney, 1983a) to persuade the people towards his point of view. Telling people that they are failing God could engender immediate disidentification but, in fact, conveying the message through the *expression of concern* tactic is a safe and clever way of delivering veiled disapproval. The *expression of concern* emphasises the people of the church and the priest's worry about whether a fear about insufficient money to carry out his plan "reflects a lack of faith in ourselves and in God." Text 6.14 also depends on the *transcendent we,* including the priest (who in fact is about to leave the church and return to America) in the plight that the church will be in if his plan to appoint a "full-time professional priest" is not followed.

> "'...How can we afford to risk going backwards; how can we afford not to take the next step?' The next step has to be a full-time, professional priest, who grew up in and understands an immigrant church in the middle of a diverse, multi-cultural place like Auckland."

Text 6.14: Follow me, I know where we should be going.

The priest's argument to advance the position of the ordained clergy allows no possibility that the Greek Orthodox church could enter a phase of being where, perhaps, a post-Christendom model of 'doing church'[54] might prevail (Murray, 2004; Ward, 2002). The priest, perhaps understandably, is concerned to maintain a normative identity for the church (Albert & Whetten, 2004), that is, one that emphasises the traditional and cultural functions of the church, with the priests as the active arbiters of spiritual life, and the congregation as passive receivers. Although this priest was due to leave, it is obvious that he had plans to establish full-time employment for his successor, emphasising his belief in the necessity and importance of such a role. Achieving the priest's normative view of the congregation in relation to the institution of the church and the role of the priest within that institution, depends entirely on the congregation's need to elevate the salience of their religious identity over that of their everyday identity as members of a wider, secular society (Mulgan, 2004) that is largely indifferent to – perhaps even opposed to – the heavy financial burden that would be incurred by supporting a full-time priest.

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[54] According to Murray (2004), the post-Christendom church is one where the laity is empowered and spiritual development is encouraged, rather than forced upon members by dominating groups. In other words, the church is established for the people, by the people to meet their prevailing need for increased freedom (Ward, 2002).

However, Albert and Whetten (2004) argue that holding to a purely normative identity is unrealistic because utilitarian needs that accompany internal and external pressures will eventually dominate the organisation's activity. In other words, the church will look more like a business over time as it grows. The practice of Christian stewardship promoted by the priest reinforces the utilitarian identity of the church. According to Zaleski and Zech (1992, 1995), the economic objective of churches is to seek financial contributions[55], but the priest does not just implore members to pledge their "Treasure", but their "Time", and "Talent" as well. To pledge is viewed as a sign that members are working towards meeting the objective "that God helps those who help themselves," which, much like the Pentecostal churches, presents God's assistance as conditional. So while the priest's comment reflects Cheney's (1983a) *advocacy of benefits and activities* in that members gain God's help by contributing, it also points to how a relationship with God comes at a price. Whether it was the priest's intention or not, he has presented religion as a commodity that is not, perhaps, directly bought and sold in the marketplace, but which is, nevertheless, inextricably involved with a one-way flow of money from the congregation to the church. Thus, the priest's teaching that church members should not be overly concerned with money is a thinly-disguised hope that they will not care about money for themselves and will care about money for the church, and strongly reinforces the utilitarian motivations of the church (Albert & Whetten, 2004).

The priest is also able to use the activity of stewardship to establish an identity and financial future for the church while simultaneously increasing members' feelings of belonging, by appealing to their better feelings and creating a sense of virtue:

> "The members of a good parish share everything, each member contributing when they can. And this is a good parish, a very good parish…"

Text 6.15: *A good parish, a very good parish, but still not good enough?*

Text 6.15 shows Cheney's (1983a) *espoused shared values* tactic at work, coupled with the simple figure of speech, repetition. In 24 words, the priest uses "good" three times,

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[55] According to Iannaccone (1992, 1994), churches provide a collective good that can breed a 'free-rider' problem. By expecting financial contributions, or imposing other constraints such as fees on members, Iannaccone (1992) believes churches can screen out "marginal members" (p. 285). This belief perhaps accounts for the emphasis the Greek Orthodox priest places on stewardship.

creating both a *sense* of obligation to be good (the nature of 'goodness' is, of course, the priest's to define), and also presenting goodness as a defining, valuable characteristic of the church. Thus, the priest has constructed a favourable identity for the church and its members, which Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail (1994) argue, can inspire identification in members who believe association with the organisation will mean they are perceived positively as well.

Of course, members can develop positive self-esteem from contributing to their organisation (Pfeffer & Fong, 2005), but in this case, those gains are intangible, long-term and possibly based on the fear of not attaining heaven. On the other hand, stewardship is primarily and immediately beneficial to the church. By establishing an ideal behaviour for church members, stewardship commits members to doing work for the church, to the financial gain of the church. Similarly, the commitment forged through stewardship may motivate members to enact other useful citizenship behaviours[56] to maintain their positive feelings of association (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004). Perhaps, most importantly, commitment leads to the internalising of organisational values and goals (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) meaning members can be open to other attempts at identity construction, and can amend their cognition and behaviour to fit the decisional premises of the organisation (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). Thus, benefits of stewardship are numerous, but they tend to favour the church.

Text 6.16 removes any option for the congregation in the decision to give or not:

> "We all must look into ourselves to see what we are capable of giving… We can do this! You can do this!"

Text 6.16: Giving is all

Exclamations such as "We can do this! You can do this!" exert very direct pressure on the congregation to give, and furthermore, to give as part of their identity, because the giving will come from an examination of the inner *self.* The *transcendent we* (Cheney, 1983a) at work here places the priest in the same situation as the congregation, yet there is a subtle lexical shift here from the "we" of the first exclamation to the "you" of the

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[56] For instance, members might be conscientiousness and altruistic in their interactions with fellow members.

second. This identity construction is interesting: at first, the giving is something that the priest shares with the congregation, but the distance established by the shift from first to second person puts both the effort, and also the glory of achievement, onto the members of the church. In other words, their religious identity is to be considered salient, but as Cheney (1983b) found, the salient identity only holds precedence provided it fits with the personal needs of members. So if the demands of other identities are considered more important by members (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008; Burke, 1937), then they may resent the priest's efforts to create an obligation to the church choosing to disidentify to remove feelings of emotional dissonance that Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) believe accompany identity conflicts.

The ideal religious identity that the priest constructs at this point of the bulletin leans on the authority of the Holy Spirit to assist the congregation with their stewardship decisions. Not giving to the church is constructed as a slight to God, and giving is made to appear divinely ordained. This is a *fear appeal* (Sutton & Hallett, 1988) used by the priest to push members into committing resources to the church and conforming to its normative position on the roles of parishioners and priests. Accordingly, parishioners who identify with the church and fear exclusion from the in-group may pledge to remain in the good graces of both God and the priest.

Additionally, in text 6.17, the priest reminds the congregation that the Archbishop intends to visit the church on the Sunday after Easter and that:

> "... we will be telling him of our success more than asking for his help."

Text 6.17: I don't want to blow my own trumpet, but....

Although Text 6.17 offers a surface of pride in achievement, it is also a subtle form of blackmail. The certainty of the Archbishop's visit is juxtaposed against the still undetermined gains from the stewardship campaign, and so the intention of the priest is to push members into their commitment so that he can later show the Archbishop that this congregation has done much to meet church goals for giving. On the surface, the sentence is a straightforward expression of the rhetorical tactic of *espousing shared values* (Cheney, 1983a) in that generosity to others is a Christian principle and

acknowledging it, even if its accomplishment is still in the future, is giving glory where it belongs. However, less obviously, if the tactic is successful in jolting the congregation into giving, the priest will clearly benefit, because he will presumably have met a key performance indicator of his job. *Espousing sharedvalues*, in this case, may bring about a situation that allows the priest to *brag* (DiSanza & Bullis, 1999) although *bragging* is not a behaviour that is favoured in Christian circles, because Matthew 6:1 teaches Christians to be grateful and not boastful.

The words of the priest should encourage pride among members of the congregation, but they may also create mixed feelings about the identity of the organisation: on the one hand, it may cultivate a *sense of satisfaction* about belonging to an organisation about which the priest can boast to an important visitor like the Archbishop, but on the other hand, it may foster resentment that the church's promises of love, forgiveness and salvation have to be 'bought' with pledges of service and money. This can create a misalignment between the image of the church and its identity, and a serious disjoin between the organisation's perceived purpose and its activities. Thus, even the possibility of a resistant reading (Hall, 1980; Siero & Jan Doosje, 1993) among the congregation could result in a sense of loss and disaffection from the culture of the organisation, negatively affecting the levels of identification (Dutton, et al., 1994; Hatch & Schultz, 2004).

The bulletin continues with a discussion of specific giving in which the priest introduces himself and his situation in order to display his understanding of the congregation:

> "Many of you are on fixed incomes, and could never afford what my family can. I could probably afford to give more, and maybe I should."

Text 6.18: Self-deprecation to attract attention

Text 6.18 occurs in the bulletin alongside a copy of the priest's pledge card. The inclusion of the priest's pledge acts as a marker of both his generosity and his pensive modesty, although applying the rhetorical tactic of *recognising individual contributions* Cheney's (1983a) to himself could be a hazardous course of action that could lead to disidentification if church members react cynically to the priest's self-promotion as a generous man. Nevertheless, the amount the priest gives shows him as a "prototypical

leader", enacting forms of ideal behaviour that (Hogg & Terry, 2000, p. 128) his followers should emulate.

A negative outcome of the priest's tactic, however, could be the generation of simple jealousy, and a feeling of 'Well it's all very well for him…' among the congregation. His comparative wealth could make members feel inadequate, and as comparing the *self* with others is a known part of identity development (Burke & Reitzes, 1991; Mead, 2004; Stets & Burke, 2000), producing negative self-esteem is likely to diminish feelings of belonging (Ethier & Deaux, 1994), and with it, any likelihood that the members will accede to the priest's stewardship campaign. Granted, the priest suggests other ways that people can contribute, such as cleaning, ushering, chanting, cooking and maintaining the church grounds, and although he declares that he considers these "other contributions" to be "as valuable as our financial ones", there is a sense that "other contributions" do not equal his own example of giving money. Those that do take up 'serving' jobs may be more committed members, given that they are expending effort (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) towards the church rather than simply writing a monthly cheque, but they can resent their commitment if they feel that their contribution is not treated with the same level of appreciation as a considerable financial donation. Therefore, by including his pledge in the bulletin, the priest has been boastful and can prompt members to disidentify with the church if they feel they cannot contribute as much (Costas & Fleming, 2009; Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2002; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004).

The bulletin continues to exhort the parishioners to give:

> "…we must all play our part, according to our abilities and our means."

Text 6.19: All are equal, but are some more equal than others?

The bulletin is *openly instructive* here, and the priest steps into his authoritative role as the person in the church who can tell people what to do. Text 6.19 presents contributing as a collectively —agreed behaviour that might motivate members to give to the church in order to fit in with the in—group. The bulletin here constructs an identity for the church as an open organisation considerate of people's different circumstances, imparting a positive distinctiveness that can appeal to a broad audience

(Tajfel, 1982). At the same time, however, the text also alludes to key differences between members that can produce division rather than binding members together. Overall, the text is likely to establish small factions within the church as individuals seek out others with similar social and economic standing (Tajfel, 1982). It may make less wealthy people seem to be a financial burden because they cannot contribute so much money, especially since the differences in stewardship commitment – donations of money against service – will make the striations in the composition of the congregation very obvious. The stewardship message, therefore, offers potential for conflict and disidentification (Costas & Fleming, 2009; Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001, 2002; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004) within the church, particularly given that throughout the bulletins, the priest continues to pressure his flock to give time and money to the church.

In his continuing appeal to the congregation to donate to the church, the priest uses the *advocacy of benefits and activities* tactic (Cheney, 1983a), presenting giving as personally beneficial. He states:

"There is strength in numbers, and far greater strength in a parish of committed people than in any amount of money. With every written pledge, our church's strength grows. That strength is good for you, your children, and all the new Orthodox believers that we are constantly attracting."

Text 6.20: Do well by doing good...

Here, the objective is to make members feel that strength derives from acting collectively, and that group strength can produce individual benefits. Although it is not explicit to members what form the strength might take, nor how it might be that valuable to them, it is very clear that by linking contributions to comradeship, members are made to feel accountable to one another, and so are likely to conform to the organisation's expectations. The priest's words so position members that they are more likely to comply, and moreover, to *continue* to comply, because defaulting from an established role as a contributor will let down others in the community. This form of managing a group resonates with Barker's (1993) definition of concertive control. As Barker points out, concertive control breeds a culture in which team members are likely to monitor one another to detect deviation from team-assigned tasks, or, in this case, undertakings to give time and money. When concertive control behaviours go to the bad, they weaken rather than strengthen community, creating division and reducing

cohesion. The priest's comments in Text 6.21 (below) continue to undo the likelihood of unity (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Michel & Jehn, 2003). The priest's message, then, well-intentioned though it is, goes against the received wisdom in the identity literature. Peek (2005) argued that the intention of organisations is to bind members together, but this message, though likely to have positive short-term effects, could well produce disidentification in the long term.

Additionally, tying the members to the church through written pledges seems to create a contractual obligation to the church, far different from the story of the widow's mite, which is referenced in text 6.21 (below), when the priest asks people to give what they can, no matter how great or little. The pledging principle calls to mind the issue of cash flow, something that exercises all business ventures, and although it is not sinister in and of itself, it does seem that growing the church depends on creating an identity for the congregation as givers and toilers as well as believers and worshippers. Read as a quasi-legal agreement, the pledge complicates and troubles the identity that the organisation constructs for its members.

In the bulletins, the priest speaks of collective and individual responsibility but he inadvertently sets up the antecedents for creating *guilt*. Text 6.21 places responsibility for the future on the members, and not for their own spiritual welfare, but rather for "our beloved church". In this way, "doing religion" is not just a matter of casually attending church, or even choosing to worship as a Christian, but is also a decision to support the continuation of Greek Orthodoxy, the beloved church, in its particular form of Christian expression.

> "The future depends completely upon you, the parishioners of our beloved church. Irrespective of many of the details of that future is the reality that we must all play our part, according to our abilities and our means."

Text 6.21: No pressure, then…

The priest's words immediately construct in-groups (those who are Greek Orthodox) and out-groups (Tajfel, 1982) (those who are not), either because they do not believe or because they follow forms of belief that lie beyond the ambit of "the beloved church." The priest brings church and religion to the central position in the lives of the parishioners and associates membership with ownership to make members feel

personally responsible for the survival of the church. Thus, the message calls heavily on the parishioners' sense of self-efficacy (Basil, Ridgway & Basil, 2008) and social responsibility (Miceli, 1992) and insinuates that they will be to blame if the church collapses. The pressure and covert use of *guilt* can lead to prosocial behaviours (Basil et al., 2006; Basil et al., 2008) such as completing the pledge, and so is advantageous to the organisation given that it is competing in the open market for members and their disposable 'spend' of time, service and money (Finke & Stark, 1998; Gruber & Hungerman, 2008; Land, Deane, & Blau, 1991; Zaleski & Zech, 1995). Thus, if creating *guilt* turns out to be an effective tool in the priest's rhetorical repertoire, members may increase their identification and produce the citizenship behaviours the priest desires (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Organ, 1988; Podasakoff, MacKenzie, Paine & Bachrach, 2000). However, Coote, Coulter and Moore (2005) found that *guilt appeals* are successful in changing attitudes and behaviour only when members are unaware that guilt is being induced. In fact, in this case, the priest has gone beyond guilt and has used a *fear appeal* (Sutton & Hallett, 1988; Witte, 1992) as well:

> "…only you and God will know what pledge your conscience guided you."

Text 6.22: Only you and God will know.

The matter of the pledge is made an issue of conscience, but since God is watching, conscience is not exactly making the decision uninfluenced by a second party.

In text 6.23 (below) the priest has written as though the members 'will', 'should' and 'must' unite in their support of the future he depicts, stating that 'we' are working together, playing 'our part' in the growth and development of the church. Text 6.23 is the priest's only indication that church members may be not unanimous in their views about the future of church. The acknowledgement of individual opinions here does not, however, relinquish the priest's grasp on the future, but rather is yet another opportunity for the priest to exhort, and by doing so, to delineate the future for church members:

> "No matter what is your personal view about the best future of the church, you are not doing your share if you do not make a personal commitment of some kind.... <u>There is no good reason for every single churchgoer not to make a written commitment of some kind. No one will ever say to you, 'it is not enough'. But please, for your sake and that of the Holy Trinity Parish, don't put yourself in the unhappy position of someday looking back with disappointment. And asking yourself, '*Why* didn't I do my share?'"</u> (underlining emphasis in the original).

Text 6.23: And the guilt continues...

In text 6.23, the pronoun has moved from 'we' to 'you', reflecting the necessity for individual effort and action if members, who are now directly targeted, want to possess a clear conscience.

Additionally, the priest dismisses excuses in the *declarative statement* that "…you are not doing your share if you do not make a personal commitment of some kind"; an authoritative truth statement that limits alternative positions (Fairclough, 1992). Accordingly, members may produce oppositional readings to his forceful message. Resistance emerges when members perceive organisational values as unjust or discriminatory (Hardy & Phillips, 2004) and when the messages promulgated do not fit the initial attitudes held by members (Siero & Jan Doosje 1993). In this case, members may feel that the priest has exceeded the content and style of what might be expected in a quotidian communication that purports to be about faith, which has the potential to push them to disidentify with the organisation (Costas & Fleming, 2009; Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2002; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Ethier & Deaux, 1994).

Finally, the possibility of members feeling 'disappointment' is another *fear appeal* (Sutton & Hallett, 1988), based on the idea that a failure to act in the present will have consequences in the future. The text also shows how the priest feels about his congregation: he fears that their religious identities are not salient and so his efforts to persuade are firmly centred in the creation of an ideal identity that 'does' religion the Greek Orthodox way in the 'beloved church', acquiescing to forms of individual control for the good of the church community.

Conclusion

Overall, the bulletins construct members as subordinate to the priest and to the needs of the church organisation. The message places the priest as leader and motivator in a relationship with a congregation in need of guidance towards a proper Greek Orthodox path. Therefore, although the rhetorical strategies of Cheney's (1983a) typology are present within the texts, the messages, nonetheless, are church-centric rather than audience-centric as the priest draws on his privileged knowledge to regularly exert his authority over members, which reflects the traditional or 'orthodox' roots of the church.

Several key messages are present in the bulletins, but it is evident that the overarching value emphasised is participation. Whether it is in reliving and preparing for the events of Easter, or contributing to the church's development and growth potential, the key point is that, for any of this to occur, the participation of the parishioners is necessary. The texts, then, point to the survival of the church as intertwined with that of its members' essential 'Greek-ness', which is transmuted into a form of religiosity that creates strong in-groups based on the idea that not just anyone can be Greek Orthodox. The forceful way that the priest has urged people to participate may suggest that the on-going survival of the church is in jeopardy in a crowded religious marketplace (Gruber & Hungerman, 2008; Land, Deane, & Blau, 1991; Zaleski & Zech, 1995), but it may also be accounted for simply by the priest's personality. Regardless of the reason underpinning the style of the bulletins, they stress the importance of membership to the church, and multiple rhetorical tactics (Basil et al., 2006; Basil et al., 2008; Cheney, 1983a; Coote, et al., 2005) have been used to construct a prototypical member identity (Hogg & Terry, 2000) for the congregation to assume.

After analysing the texts from the Greek Orthodox Church, my feeling is that the direct, and often forceful nature of the communications, would be inclined to create dissent and, at the very least, resistance to the messages promulgated. Admittedly, the church is very traditional and resistant to change in its practice of material religion (King, 2010), which perhaps accounts for the highly authoritative nature of the bulletins. As a tentative member of the church, my initial reaction was one of shock at the way members are subordinated to the priest and situated in the texts less as a faithful flock, and more as a financial resource. Of course, members who strongly identify with the

church can be socialised towards such communication and could become receptive to it, but equally, some new or unconvinced members of the congregation might rapidly disidentify. In many respects the church copies the rhetorical strategies of secular organisations who also compete for survival, yet the shift to an authoritative tone continued to enforce the normative identity of the church, in the face of its growing utilitarian motivations.

Chapter 7

Advertising altruism: Identifying with the Salvation Army

Introduction

Although the Salvation Army is now classed as a Christian denomination and is respected and even loved[57], it began in controversy, when William and Catherine Booth began a mission among the destitute in the East End of London. The Booths' idea was to rescue the needy, unchurched lower classes, turn them from alcohol and in fact, from all forms of 'immorality', teach them Christian principles, and then return them to their own churches where they would form an army of 'saved' and repentant agents for social change (Brown, 1990; Hay, 2004). By 1878, however, as a non-establishment church, the Salvation Army has become a denomination in its own right (Murdoch, 1996), and is now so well known that almost everyone in New Zealand would recognise the punning tag-line in its advertisements, "Thank God for the Sallies".

The Salvation Army was founded and organised around an extended military metaphor drawn from Ephesians 6:10-18[58]. In contrast to the 'liturgy churches' which use traditional vestments, the Salvation Army dressed its personnel in quasi-military uniforms

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[57] It is my own personal opinion formed by interactions with others, that the Salvation Army is perceived favourably in contemporary New Zealand society as they have a visible presence and are seen actively contributing to the community, particularly in times of national crises (such as the Christchurch Earthquakes).

[58] "Finally, grow strong in the Lord, with the strength of his power. Put on the full armour of God so as to be able to resist the devil's tactics. For it is not against human enemies that we have to struggle, but against the principalities and the ruling forces who are masters of the darkness in this world, the spirits of evil in the heavens. That is why you must take up all of God's armour, or you will not be able to put up any resistance on the evil day, or stand your ground even though you exert yourselves to the full. So stand your ground, with *truth a belt around your waist*, and *uprightness a breastplate*, wearing for shoes on your feet *the eagerness to spread the gospel of peace* and always carrying the shield of faith so that you can use it to quench the burning arrows of the Evil one. And then you must take *salvation as your helmet* and the sword of Spirit, that is, the word of God" (emphasis in original).

and assigned them ranks such as 'General': William Booth, in fact, was self-appointed as the first general (Hay, 2004, p. 113). The military metaphor still pervades the Salvation Army, and is reflected in the organisation's logo, which depicts a red shield on a white background, more symbolism from Ephesians 6:10-18. The shield emblem was initially worn by Salvationists as early as 1880, but gained prominence as the identifying symbol of the organisation during the First World War. Colonel Walter Peacock placed the shield on the Canadian servicemen's hut and shortly afterwards, the British, Australian and New Zealand troops followed suit, over time, developing the shield into a symbol that identified the organisation and its aim of providing caring work in the community (The Salvation Army, n.d.a.). The use of a shield is in direct contrast to other Christian denominations whose unifying symbol is often the crucifix.

In March 1883, members of the Salvation Army arrived in New Zealand in response to a plea from an Auckland couple concerned about wide-spread lawlessness, drunkenness and ignorance. The Salvation Army conducted public meetings and quickly established a following in the four main cities, particularly as the sermons "were delivered in simple enthusiastic language" (Hay, 2004, p. 144), which increased the accessibility of the message and oddly, given the strongly hierarchical structure of the organisation, allowed some equality through the democratisation of the services. Throughout its history, the Salvation Army has tried to maintain class and gender equality, mainly because of Catherine Booth's early assertion that she would play an equal part in the development and maintenance of the church (Hay, 2004). Traditionally, women preached, contributed to the musical life of the church and occupied leadership positions (Brown, 1990).

Despite equal opportunities in some areas of the life of the church, however, the church structure is a rigid hierarchy working on a command-and-control model (Murdoch, 1996). The 'soldiers' – ordinary church goers - are subordinate to the church 'officers', and that model of superior officer-subordinate has inevitably established asymmetrical power relationships that can privilege the leaders (Brown, 1990; Murdoch, 1996). The church hierarchy was developed and imposed in the 19th century, when it was not so noteworthy that the 'officers' took strongly authoritative positions in relation to the congregation. The unyielding hierarchy may, in fact, be a relic of an old and largely

defunct class system (Cannadine, 1999) operationalised by well-meaning people for the benefit of the hapless poor, but it is certainly a strong contrast to the public persona of Salvation Army, which is to show the caring face of Christian care towards the most unfortunate members of society (Salvation Army, n.d.b).

Although the churches of the Establishment initially opposed the arrival of the evangelical and seemingly democratic Salvation Army, the Salvationists were generally accepted by the New Zealand public as they were seen as "furthering the cause of temperance and reaching people who were beyond church influences" (Hay, 2004, p. 114). Today, the Salvation Army has a national presence in New Zealand and its aims are to fight poverty and all forms of social and spiritual distress using "God's love" as a weapon (Salvation Army, n.d.b). The organisation relies on donations to provide its community services which include addiction recovery programmes, employment training, age care services, children and youth activities, supportive accommodation, chaplaincy, and disaster relief (Salvation Army, n.d.b). The identity of the church exemplifies Albert and Whetten's (2004) perception that, invariably, the church as a normative institution will eventually strive to meet utilitarian needs, which, in this case, is the acquisition of donations to maintain church services.

To encourage the public to donate the money needed to run their charitable services, every May, the Salvation Army holds an annual Red Shield Appeal, which is promoted in television advertisements, online, and by collectors. The advertisements use the compassion reflex (Boltanski, 1999; Littler, 2008) to prompt people to give, and to raise awareness of the services the Salvation Army performs for society. My intention in this chapter is to explore the identity construction of church members in the television advertisements broadcast on national television in 2010. The organisation of my analysis is different from the previous two data chapters in which I located the rhetor's themes in each text. Here, I have four texts and each advertisement is a variation of a single theme and format. For this reason, I intend to treat the four advertisements collectively in terms of their theme, and will examine them according to the strategies and tactics that comprise Cheney's (1983a) rhetorical identification typology.

7.1 The advertisements[59]

The first of the four advertisements focuses on the plight of a young woman who struggled to provide for her children. It opens with pictures of her children, depicts the woman interacting with members of the Salvation Army and gives the impression that she is being interviewed about her experiences with the "Sallies". The advertisement closes with the young mother playing happily with her children, and the Salvation Army logo with information about how to donate.

The second advertisement explores the value of Addington Supportive Accommodation for men suffering with mental illness and addictions that have left them homeless. The advertisement switches between interviews with an employee of the institute who explains about the condition of the men and how the organisation provides a safe environment, and an interview with a man disclosing his positive feelings about the Salvation Army and the help it has given him. Shots of the building and other men reading newspapers and interacting positively with staff are interwoven with the interviews. As with the previous advertisement, it concludes with information about how to donate.

The third advertisement focuses on Rachel, a middle-aged woman who is struggling to cope financially. Much like advertisement two, this advertisement offers two perspectives: that of Rachel and her despair, and that of the Salvation Army employee helping Rachel learn to budget and stay on top of her accumulating bills. Additionally, the advertisement promotes a course of cooking classes offered by the Salvation Army to teach people how to cook tasty low-budget meals. The advertisement finishes with information for those interested in donating.

Finally, the fourth advertisement draws the audiences' attention to one of the services provided by the Salvation Army. It focuses on the "Street Outreach Service" bus drivers, who give hot meals and support to people living on the streets. The advertisement contains an interview with one driver and shadows her through her day. The

[59] The advertisements are available on the DVD in the pocket on the back cover of this thesis. For pictures of the advertisements see Figures 7.1-7.4 (Appendix 6) pp. 265-266. *(All images and texts have been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons)*

advertisement includes footage of the driver mingling with people served by the bus staff. Again, it finishes with the donation information.

Target audience

The texts in the previous chapters were aimed primarily at people who were already church members, but the Salvation Army advertisements, obviously, are designed for a wide audience and aim to encourage donations from the general public. The content of the advertisements presents the activities and services of the Salvation Army in a positive light, mostly for the benefit of outsiders, as members would most likely already hold the views and have the information disseminated by the advertisements. These quotidian communications, then, build an unvaryingly positive image of the Salvation Army by emphasising its socially desirable characteristics (Gioia, Schultz & Corley, 2000), and are intended to affect outsiders' perceptions so that they develop positive understandings of the organisation (Hatch & Schultz, 2004). When members feel outsiders are viewing their organisation positively, it tends to strengthen their identification with the organisation (Dukerich, Golden, Shortell, 2002) because they assume that by association, they too will assessed favourably (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Dutton et al., 2002). Inasmuch as the advertisements encourage the external audience to give money to the Salvation Army cause, to the internal audience, they stress the importance of the organisation and its uniqueness in order to instil the feelings of pride that will maintain member identification (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Dutton et al., 1994; Gioia et al., 2000).

It is a characteristic of mass-mediated messages that they are designed to project impersonal, institutionalised messages to a large number of recipients (Peters, 1994) whose personal frames of reference will determine whether they decode the messages in a positive, neutral or oppositional way (Hall, 1980). Consequently, the messages of these advertisements will not have uniformly persuasive effects on the audience (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1948; McQuail, 1979) and those already affiliated with the church, whether as members or as beneficiaries, are likely to be most positively affected.

The effort to persuade the widest possible audience is clear in the unambiguous and rather information-based messages (McQuail, 1979) that have been developed in this

campaign, although the information has been 'softened' by the addition of human interest angles based on the stories of real people. The *stories*, moreover, are not told just from the point of view of the organisation, but also from the perspective of the storytellers. According to Gabriel (2004a; 2004b) *stories* make sense of people's experiences, as they infuse facts with meaning. In the case of these advertisements, the stories establish immediately sympathetic identities for the recipients of the Sallies' services: a struggling solo mother (advertisement one), a frail, recovering, old man (advertisement two) and a financially insecure woman (advertisement three). In turn, these *stories* act as a vehicle that carry the 'facts' of the Sallies' assistance, and the organisation thereby emerges as the 'hero' for saving the recipients from their unfortunate circumstances. The *stories* in the four advertisements, therefore, relate the recipients' positive experience of the Salvation Army, and the storytellers' appeal and appearance of trustworthiness will encourage audiences to identify with the organisation, or at the very least, to choose to donate. The *inclusion of 'real' people* is a persuasive tool that lends the advertisements credibility, because it is assumed that these storytellers are drawing from true, first-hand experiences. Thus, audiences evaluating the communication along the peripheral route of the elaboration likelihood model may adopt a favourable view (Greenwald, 1965; Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983) of the Sallies, at least in the short-term.

Featuring *real people* rather than actors suggests that the organisation is conscious of giving the appearance of thrift and saving money (or at least, not spending money) where it can, and this is congruent with the objective of the advertisements. Expensive advertisements could easily provoke both members and the public to disidentify with the organisation (Costas & Fleming, 2009; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004) because the internal decision about production values (Ambler & Hollier, 2004) would contradict the external message about the need for money donated by the public. Moreover, *stories of real people* carrying out their real lives lends credibility to the organisation so that potential donors may perceive authenticity because the Sallies are showing situations that are not obviously scripted. Viewer response to these consistent and coherent messages about offering genuine help to the needy is likely to be positive, especially if compassion fatigue is not provoked (Epstein, 1994; Moeller, 1999). The emphasis on 'the authentic' is clever, because viewers will not be in a position to know

how heavily the footage has been edited to find 45 seconds of usable story that builds a unified image of organisational image and identity (Hatch & Schultz, 2004).

The breadth of the audience to which the Salvation Army wishes to appeal is evident in the absence of specific Christian references in the advertisements: only the fourth advertisement mentions Christianity, and that quite obliquely, in the sense that one of the services provided is community ministries, but it is not made clear what "community ministries" are. Here, then, are quotidian messages from a Christian organisation that avoid emphasising Christianity, suggesting that the Salvation Army wanted to build identification for itself as an organisation that does good works rather than as a whole church. Perhaps the motivation for this decision is that New Zealand is strongly secular, if former Prime Minister Helen Clark is to be believed (Wishart, 2003). If she is right, then an overtly 'religious' message may have been a deterrent to donations. The consistent messages that emerge from the advertisements is that the Salvation Army produces help more than it produces religion, and that its main product – help – is freely available to everyone, regardless of faith.

Of course, people who are already members of the Salvation Army may react badly to a partial truth that seems, perhaps, to downplay faith and salvation and to elevate good works, which is only part of the Christian message. In this case, if members experience confusion about the image of the organisation, they may experience stress caused by hyper-adaption (Hatch & Schultz, 2004) and reduce their identification with the organisation. There is a counter—argument to be made, however, that the emphasis on good works in these quotidian advertisements is strongly about the church militant, and carries the Christian message by way of example (Carlson-Thies, 2001; Sherman, 1995). Each of the advertisements emphasises the long-term services that are provided, from budgeting advice to distributing food to street people. Overall, then, it is likely that most members, unless they are particularly critically inclined, would continue to identify with the organisation as its 'religiousness' is obvious in its deeds and the expression of the overarching military metaphor that characterises the church.

In section 7.1, I have sketched out the distinguishing features of the Salvation Army and given a brief reflexive reading (Monin, 2004) of its televised quotidian messages about donating to support the good works the organisation carries out. The following sections contain my close analysis of the advertisements using the strategies in Cheney's (1983a) rhetorical identification typology.

7.2 Strategy 1: Common ground technique

The strategy *common ground technique* comprises several tactics aimed at creating strong identification with the organisation. Of the six tactics that make up the *common ground technique* (Cheney, 1983a), it is perhaps unsurprising, given the subject matter of the advertisements, that all six tactics are present in the advertisement. *Expressions of concern,* and other tactics like the *advocacy of benefits and activities, espoused shared values, praise by outsiders, testimonials* and *recognition of individual contribution* are designed to engage compassion and engender action because the viewers are invited to enter the world of the advertisements on common ground with the storytellers. The common ground on which viewers are invited to stand is, moreover, quite near to most viewers: the story of need that is told could be that of neighbours, and so the common ground that is created is possibly right next door. The tactics in this strategy, then, speak in a New Zealand accent, in a vernacular that is immediately recognisable to New Zealand viewers.

That said, however, it is worth noting that multi-cultural New Zealand is represented by those helped, not those helping. In an odd twist, those who serve, and whose work, therefore, deserves support through donations, are also in control: it is true that they give the help, but they can also, presumably, withhold it. The common ground that is established and shown by the tactics in this strategy, then, has another aspect: it is also the place that the helped enter to benefit from the good that the Salvation Army produces.

Expression of concern

According to Cheney (1983a, p. 150), the *expression of concern* tactic places attention on "the people" or the "people factor" of the organisation, often depicting internal concerns that the organisation's hierarchy has for their members. This tactic is most obvious in advertisement four. The advertisement shadows the work of one of the bus drivers who give out food parcels to people living homeless. However, it is obvious in the advertisements that the members are aware of their value to the organisation: they understand their place and recognise the worth they hold at both the organisational and societal levels, and this is evident in the bus driver's remark that she interacts with people living on the streets "…and we become their family." Additionally, the advertisement is targeted at a diverse audience of members and non-members which is perhaps not the best channel for acknowledging internal concerns that may be held by the organisation.

Accordingly, a slight variation emerges in Cheney's (1983a) *expression of concern* tactic. Instead of acknowledging internal concerns, rather, the advertisement traces the connections between the organisation of the Salvation Army and its employee, the bus driver, and also between the helper and the helped, building the message that without the specific service that the Salvation Army performs, street people would suffer even more because the church is the last bastion of care for these people. In other words, the members interviewed in the advertisements express concern about the state of New Zealand society, which subtly indicates that members need to be less concerned with themselves and more about others. Here, the *expression of concern* reflects on society rather badly: people are living homeless and hungry in a land of plenty. At the same time, the tactic reflects on the organisation rather well: here come the Sallies, accompanied by their good works. Church members may well feel that as the organisation shines with altruism, so too do they, and thus their belonging may boost their feelings of self-esteem (Pfeffer & Fong, 2005). The primary motivation of the organisation's *expressions of concern* for society was, obviously, to create a favourable impression of itself, but a secondary benefit is that the *expressions of concern* construct a prototypical identity (Hogg & Terry, 2000) for its members. A perpetual virtuous cycle is thereby generated: members are admired for being associated with doing good, so

they are likely to be inclined to get involved more with the organisation (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000), and so will receive more approbation, and so on.

In the previous chapters, the *expression of concern* tactics were visibly disseminated by organisational leaders in the form of little homilies, and functioned as much as expressions of authority as expressions of concern. In the Salvation Army's advertisements, by contrast, the concern is expressed by followers, not leaders, and although it can be argued that, like the other churches, the Salvation Army is still aiming for forms of authority (that is, be a good citizen the Salvation Army way), the authority is somewhat diluted by the appearance of kindliness in the message. The *expressions of concern* work this way in all the advertisements. For instance, in advertisement two, the worker from the Salvation Army speaks of the need for a safe place for men with mental health issues, and although the words are her own, the message is that of the organisation. Through the unscripted (but not, of course, unedited) words of the employees, the Salvation Army advertises its social value, and the stories told about caring helpfulness, which is the central and distinctive characteristic of the organisation (Albert & Whetten, 2004), display in-group preferences (Allen & Wilder, 1975; Billig & Tajfel, 1973), praising the work of one organisation, while subtly pointing out where other organisations fall short.

The positive style and content of the employees' impromptu work stories seems to derive from deep identification with the Salvation Army and its social goals. DiSanza and Bullis (1999) argue such identification is built slowly, through prolonged exposure to communicative behaviour that members find congruent with organisational goals. The communicative practices of the Salvation Army, then, have allowed the members to develop and internalise the feelings of being valued by the organisation that lead to successful identification with organisations (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) to the point that the members can be trusted not to need a script in order to act as spokespeople in circumstances such as making promotional advertisements. This follows the enthymeme process delineated by Tompkins and Cheney (1985). Enthymemes are implanted in organisational members during socialisation into the organisation and incline members towards accepting the beliefs, values and expectations of the organisation as their own. The socialisation process embeds organisational norms so completely that overt control

is unnecessary, because the premises on which members make decisions are so aligned with organisational wishes that deviation is unlikely. The enthymeme process is naturalised into individuals' thought processes to the point that their personal and role identities correspond to those of the organisation (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985).

There is an element in the advertisements suggesting that the member identity constructed through the *expression of concern* (Cheney, 1983a) tactic is one of 'knowing best' and helping from a position of self-conscious awareness that no one else is doing for the disadvantaged what the Salvation Army is doing. In advertisement three, the Salvation Army member tells of how Rachel can access the organisation's "budget cooking classes, so she can learn how to cook low cost meals for her family". The concern for Rachel and her family is there, but so is an implication that 'we' need to provide Rachel with these classes, as she has not learnt basic budgeting, is not completely capable of caring for herself, and no one else has stepped in to assist her. This advertisement combines *expression of concern* with a *guilt appeal* (Coote, Coulter & Moore, 2005) because the advertisement proposes that what the organisation is giving cannot be achieved without public donations.

Miceli (1992) argues that for *guilt-inducement* strategies to be successful, the message has to make the recipient feel responsible and able to help, otherwise prosocial behaviours will not eventuate and the recipient will produce defence mechanisms (Coote et al., 2005; Basil, Ridgway & Basil, 2006). The advertisement ignores the social welfare tax vote (Hope, 1996; Obinger, Leibfried, Bogedan, Gindulis, Moser & Starke, 2005) and concentrates on making people feel they need to contribute to causes such as budget cooking classes for Rachel and others like her. The advertisement also promotes the feeling that if members can use their basic skills to help the 'Rachels' in New Zealand society, specifically through the route that the Salvation Army offers, they are then altruistic, which will reflect a positive self-appraisal that can improve feelings of self-esteem. Therefore, the *expression of concern* might motivate people to donate or even become members of the Salvation Army in order to alleviate feelings of guilt.

Recognition of individual contributions

The *recognition of individual contributions* tactic is intended to highlight shared values between the organisation and its members. Individuals from the organisation are singled out for praise, highlighting how these individuals conform to organisational perspectives of what is good and right, with the intention of fostering similar attitudes and behaviours in other members (Cheney, 1983a). In the case of the Salvation Army advertisements, the *recognition of individual contributions* does not issue from the leaders of the organisation, but instead, comes from among the members. For example, in advertisement three, the spokeswoman for the Salvation Army *recognises the contribution* of the organisation to society, giving as an example the budget cooking classes that are so helpful. The contribution of the organisation is emphasised in a way that draws attention to the organisation's work and how it gives ways that others in society – both organisations and individuals – do not. Again, as with the *expressions of* concern, the sentiments in the story reinforce the central and distinctive characteristics of the organisation (Albert & Whetten, 2004) that might appeal to members, potential members and donors. Certainly, the positive portrayal of the organisation can extend the same favourable assessment of the organisation to all members (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000), so that even if it seen as 'uncool' in New Zealand's secular society (Wishart, 2003), it might be seen as perfectly acceptable to be a Sallie.

Additionally, the members also *recognise contributions* by explaining what their jobs entail, which defines their role-identities and develops exemplars of the prototypical behaviours that 'true' members are expected to conform to (Hogg & Terry, 2000) in order to have their identities accepted and validated by their peers (Swann Jr, 1987). For instance, in advertisement four, the bus driver says:

> "We're meeting people…and we become their family, someone they can talk to."

Text 7.1: It doesn't take much to become family.

Her comment emphasises the identity that the Salvation Army builds for its members as being warm, ordinary and helpful, showing that participating and supporting the community are essential behaviours for members. People looking to form close ties with others may well identify with this aspect of the organisation's life and become involved.

By presenting active participation as integral to identification with the organisation, the bus driver can also positively influence other members' level of commitment, and this contributes to the virtuous cycle I mentioned earlier. In expending effort towards meeting organisational objectives, committed members develop a stable and enduring degree of identification that is obviously advantageous to the organisation (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Burke & Reitzes, 1991) and feeds approval back to the members. At an extreme level, however, high commitment can produce depersonalisation, leading members to lose their personal distinctiveness by adhering so rigidly the prototypical expectations of the organisation (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Brewer & Gardner, 2004; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2006; Hogg & Terry, 2000) that individual identity is lost.

The bus driver's intention in telling the *stories* connected with her role-identity was to stress the importance of the organisation to society at large. However, her attempt to gain the appreciation of her peers and society could have the adverse effect of isolating her, if her attempts at recognition are perceived as bragging or self-importance. As Cheney (1983a) points out, in singling someone out for praise there is the risk of divisiveness, which means that recognising individual contributions needs to be enacted in a way that presents membership in the organisation as a realistic goal for everyone and not as a means of self-promotion. Should the comments of the bus driver be perceived as simply self-promotional, members of the organisation and public may choose not to identify with her, and by extension with the organisation, as playing down involvement is a valued part of the New Zealand culture (Kirkwood, 2007; Mouly & Sankaran, 2000), to which the audience subscribe.

Advocacy of benefits and activities

Advocacy of benefits and activities refers to those aspects of organisational life that are constructed as advantageous to members (Cheney, 1983a). In the advertisements, the key organisational activity promoted is good works, and the organisation's story around its good works is that it needs donations. Donating is presented as self-rewarding and donors as people who should feel good about themselves as they are helping to restore "hope to people and families in need," and is, therefore, an activity which advances feelings of self-esteem. The self-esteem engendered by donating can also develop

identification with the organisation even when the positive feelings occur by association rather than by direct engagement (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Pratt, 2000; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007; Stets & Burke, 2000).

The advertisements certainly promote donating as the primary activity that will benefit everyone, but it is clear that the members can offer direct service that is also beneficial and rewarding. For instance the bus driver states that:

> "...to touch somebody's life in that way is very special and very rewarding..."

Text 7.2: It's not what I can do for you, but what you do for me...

Text 7.2 suggests that active involvement in the organisation's good works can lead to feeling the same way. The advertisement is a hybrid text (Fairclough, 1992): for its public audience, it is primarily informative; for its organisational audience, however, it is constructive. 'True' members should not merely donate, but should conform to organisational expectations or prototypical characteristics (Hogg & Terry, 2000) and do more by touching people's lives, for instance. Members may avoid feelings of exclusion by participating in providing services, which binds them more closely to the organisation's virtuous cycle of active participation and reward (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Burke & Reitzes, 1991).

Espoused shared values

Cheney (1983a) states that the *espousal of shared values* tactic occurs when an organisation implies that it shares the same values as its members. In the Salvation Army advertisements, the members tell stories that contain universally acceptable values such as positivity, safety, support and family. The values that the storytellers espouse are, in a seamless imbrication, those already espoused by the organisation, so that it is impossible to separate the organisation's and the individuals' values. For instance, advertisement two includes a comment from a recipient of Salvation Army support, describing how the Sallies are responsible for the positive outlook on life he now holds. Whose value was it to start with? If he sought the value, and found it modelled by the Sallies in their good works, it was still his value, lost and then found. In this case, involvement with and socialisation into the church has led the organisational affiliate to amend his identity by

re-evaluating his perspective on life. Promoting the value of positivity can encourage members to continue their association with the organisation because it improves feelings of self-esteem (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Pratt, 2000; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007; Stets & Burke, 2000). Positivity, however, will only be operant if the identity offered by the church is more salient than those offered by other in-groups (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008; Burke, 1937; Stets & Burke, 2000), so if members feel pressure to hold to positivity, they can begin to feel the identity conflict that produces disidentification (Costas & Fleming, 2009; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004) rather than finding the common ground that precedes identification (Burke, 1969; Cheney, 1983a).

Safety, support and family are also values that saturate three of the advertisements. For example, the first advertisement stresses the value of the support that gave the young mother "a second chance at a family I never had," while the second advertisement underscores the importance of the safe place offered by Addington Supportive Accommodation and by the wider organisation. In advertisement four, the bus driver says that the Sallies become family for street people. Each of these examples indicates how corporate image makers have understood the underlying characteristics that comprise the organisation's identity (Albert & Whetten, 2004; Hatch & Schultz, 2004) and shadows, but does not explicitly name, the overarching Christian source of the values. However, espousing the value of family does reflect the Salvation Army's religious identity. According to Zimmerman (1974), major religious traditions all focus on family systems, which are earthly representations of divinely-ordained orthodoxy. Here, safety, support and family are presented as equally important values around which members should orient their actions and cognition.

Interestingly, the advertisements offer differing interpretations of what constitutes family. In advertisement one, the young mother is discussing the help Sallies gave to her as a solo mother raising three young children, while the fourth advertisement shows the family as an environment created by the intermingling of members and strangers. Neither advertisement constructs family as the stereotypical nuclear family comprising a father, mother, and children (Bartlett, 1984). Instead the family is, in one case, presented as the social relationships that form between strangers in the support they

provide one another. The varied representations of family accurately reflects New Zealand society, which Shirley, Koopman-Boyden, Pool and St John (1997) argue includes of sole-parent families and families with extended households, as well as two-parent families. Therefore, by offering a number of suggestions as to what constitutes family, the Salvation Army relates to a wider viewing audience, which can increase acceptance of their message and can increase the likelihood of people investing in the organisation.

In opting not to define family explicitly, the Salvation Army epitomises Albert and Whetten's (2004) argument that ambiguous classification should be preferred as it prevents typecasting that may make the organisational identity less desirable to existing and potential members. According to Albert and Whetten, precision in identity definition is not only generally disadvantageous, it is also not expected, because organisations are complex and ever-changing, which makes simple statements about their identity near impossible. However, an open organisational identity can create problems if the images presented to audiences are not congruent with the audience's evaluation of the organisation's values, norms and beliefs (Hatch & Schultz, 2004). The options offered in the conceptualisation of family target a broad understanding based on idealised feelings of connection and belonging rather than on objective blood or marriage ties, and the story told about family here is so warmly told that it is unlikely to cause offence, even among the portion of the population that holds a very traditional view of what constitutes 'a family'.

Praise by outsiders

Another of the tactics in the *common ground strategy* is that of *praise by outsiders*, which, according to Cheney (1983a, p. 152), entails the organisation "representing the views of outsiders" to show members that even people in the out-group think that the organisation is one worth identifying with. *Praise by outsiders* is prominent in advertisements one and three. The young mother praises the organisation for giving her hope, while the gentleman in advertisement three states that being with the Sallies and using their facilities saved his life. These comments of praise, juxtaposed with images of these people experiencing the services first-hand, not only construct the 'improved' identities of recipients, but they project credibility that can lead members to interpret the

messages according to the peripheral route of the elaboration likelihood model and may mean members are persuaded to perceive the organisation even more favourably (Petty, Cacioppo & Schumann, 1983; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984). It can prompt members to feel proud of the organisation, with a consequent strengthening of identification (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Dukerich et al., 2002; Mael, 1988). As outlined in the literature, *praise by outsiders* encourages members to perceive the organisation positively, strengthening their ties, as the members reflect on outsiders' understandings as indicators of their organisation's uniqueness and status (Dukerich, et al., 2003). A positive construed external image, such as that implied in the praise from people experiencing the services of the Salvation Army, will potentially bind members more closely to the organisation, as they strive to have such positive portrayals extended to them by association (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000).

The potential benefit that may ensue from members identifying with an organisation, based on the praise from outsiders, is that it could prompt citizenship behaviours (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Organ, 1988; Podasakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000). Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) argue that when a person feels positive about an organisation, it leads to the member enacting ideal citizenship behaviours, including being altruistic. Should the positively construed external image strengthen the members' identification (Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994), it may make them more inclined to contribute financially, which is one of the key objectives of the advertisements, for members as well as for the wider public audience. Attempts at building identification, then, mobilise members to act in accordance with the needs of the organisation. Those who are not members of the organisation can still exhibit citizenship behaviours should they see the praise as credible and the organisation as a worthy object of support.

7.3 Strategy 2: Testimonials and the transcendent 'we'

Although Cheney (1983a) handles this rhetorical tactic and strategy separately, for the purposes of this analysis, I have chosen to apply them at the same time because the text I want to analyse (see advertisement four) discusses what 'we', the organisation, are doing that makes 'us' great. The driver's story is effectively a *testimonial* to the organisation. Her story not only emphasises how she has conceptualised her role and social identity in

relation to the Salvation Army, but also stresses the value of the organisation's services to society. She outlines how these services allow members to give to the disadvantaged and in return, to receive the reward of appreciation. She effectively 'talks up' the organisation, perhaps to make other members feel pride in their association (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Dukerich et al., 2003), or simply to show her own feelings of satisfaction derived through belonging. In advertisement four, she says:

> "With the Sallies bus we are often the first point of contact. But it's more than that. We're meeting with people who are working on the streets and we become their family, someone who they can talk to. There's lots of support services that we can refer people to, like our hostel and our community ministries where they'll get food parcels. To touch somebody's life in that way is very special and very rewarding."

Text 7.3: Sallies rule!

Her dedication becomes a frame of reference or prototypical expectation (Hogg & Terry, 2000) for members to use to determine their level of commitment to the organisation. Members who are inspired by the bus driver's sincerity and achievements may adopt her viewpoint and work ethic, thereby entering the virtuous cycle of identification with the Salvation Army. Cheney (1983a, p. 153) argues that *testimonials* are an organisation's way to get members to "listen to what 'others like them' have to say" about the organisation, because peers are familiar and likeminded and, therefore, more inclined to be believed.

The bus driver speaks of how 'we' are offering support, and 'we' are becoming family to those in need. The use of *collective pronouns* here as representative of all members of the organisation speaks with a universal voice for the whole organisation and indirectly suggests that belonging depends on attaining similar positive feelings about being of service. Those wanting to feel included and to take pride in the organisation or in-group (Tajfel, 1982) are encouraged to think and act in line with the bus driver, whose testimony has been singled out, perhaps because her perspective is best in line with what the organisation wants members to be like. However, even though the "we" and "us" creates an inclusive group, the wider audience is welcome to share the positive feelings created by service, even if it is vicariously.

7.4 Strategy 3: Unifying symbols

For Cheney (1983a), the *unifying symbol* strategy is evidence of the assumed or
transcendent 'we' as it displays a commonality between identifying members. In other
words, by wearing the organisation's uniform or displaying the organisation's crest,
members acknowledge their social identity, or at the very least, their association with the
organisation. Wearing the unifying symbols of belonging, such as a uniform, shows that
members have been socialised into, and to a degree 'branded' by the organisation
(Cheney, 1983b). In the advertisements the unifying symbols include the Salvation Army
buildings, vans and staff uniforms, but more prominently, the red shield that is the
Salvation Army logo. The reasons for the shield's prominence are two-fold. Firstly, the
logo is well known in society, and the branding encourages recognition of the Salvation
Army as the correct recipient of donations, although in theory, money donated to any
do-good organisation would be well-received. Such obvious brand placement is, in fact,
less about doing good and more about market share (Kim & Chung, 1997; Smith & Park,
1992).

The second objective is to brand the members as people who identify with the
organisation and are proud to wear the shield and what it stands for. The wearing of
shield pins and uniforms emphasise that the members are united in their attachment to
the Salvation Army as they have taken "…up all God's armour" so that they may "be
able to put up any resistance on the evil day, or stand your ground" (Ephesians 6:13).
Wearing these unifying symbols indicates that members perceive their organisational
identity as salient (Pratt & Rafaeli, 1997) and shows that that they have embraced the
prototypical characteristics attached to their identification (Ashforth & Mael, 1989;
Brewer & Gardner, 2004; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Hogg & Terry, 2000; Sluss &
Ashforth, 2007; Stets & Burke, 2000), thus privileging the organisation at the expense of
their authentic selves.   A critical reading suggests that the identification expressed in
wearing the uniform and the shield pin causes members to lose a sense of their
uniqueness (Pfeffer & Fong, 2005; Swann Jr, Milton & Polzer, 2000), but that loss of
individuality is unlikely to be seen as undesirable by the Salvation Army, given, first, the
military metaphor that overarches the organisation, and second, the orthodoxy that
Christian organisations, broadly, promote (Johnson, 1975; Knowles, 1969).

Interestingly, the *unifying symbol* that is representative of the organisation is the shield rather than the crucifix. Obviously, the shield has biblical connections, but it is not the Christian statement that the crucifix is to other churches of this study (see for instance section 8.4). Again, the decision to emphasise the shield is perhaps evidence of the organisation 'playing up' its brand identity, but 'playing down' its religious affiliation so as not to divide its target audience.

7.5 Strategy 4: other rhetorical devices

Although not specifically accounted for in Cheney's (1983a) typology, *other rhetorical devices* were present that could influence members' identification. Of the rhetorical devices found in the advertisements, possibly the most evocative and influential is the *visual imagery*. Blair (2004) argues that visual imagery presents a sense of realism in which those consuming the visuals can be persuaded to think and act in a certain way because as Messaris (1998) found, the visuals draw on predisposed understandings that audiences may hold. For instance, the sight of the young mother playing with her children in advertisement one will be familiar to viewers.

Additionally, the audience can be persuaded to donate or identify because the overall construction of the advertisements is geared towards *evoking emotional responses* (Blair, 2004; Messaris, 1998). According to the elaboration likelihood model, invoking emotional responses can make recipients interpret the messages favourably, depending on the mood instilled (Bless, Bohner, Schwarz & Strack, 1990; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984). In advertisement three the camera purposely cuts to a shoe box filled with letters from 'Debt Collection Services', 'Work and Income', and 'Telecom' which is headed up "Arrangement Default", to illustrate to viewers the financial plight of the woman and to emphasise the need for budgeting assistance. For the advertisement to give the appearance of an unscripted, impromptu conversation is somewhat disingenuous: the use of devices such as camera angles and close-ups affect the emotions and attitudes of audiences and can prove successful because the audience conceives of the 'paraproxemic' devices (Meyrowitz, 1986) as "simple extensions of our everyday, real-world perpetual habits" (Messaris, 1998, p. 74). Therefore, audiences interpret the *visual cues* without any careful scrutiny (Messaris, 1998), suggesting that they are manipulated into

understanding the messages of the advertisement in organisationally approved ways. The *visual imagery* in the advertisements has been deliberately chosen for its capacity to engage the audience easily on subjects that they can relate to, which will quickly gain attention and elicit the emotional responses that persuade the audience to donate to the Salvation Army.

Another of the rhetorical devices that presents in both the texts and imagery of the advertisements is *repetition*. *Repetition* can lead to positive attitudes and recall (Zajonic, 1968), but more specifically, moderate levels of repeated exposure to messages can "…enhance people's ability to attend to the appeal" and "to access relevant associations, images and experiences from memory" (Cacioppo & Petty, 1989, p. 9), particularly if the material repeated gives the impression of being new (McCullough & Ostrom, 1974). However, continued exposure limits the positive effect of *repetition*, so *repetition* should be, according to Cacioppo and Petty (1989) and McCullough and Ostrom (1974), used moderately and limited to the most important messages and symbols. Such repetition is evident in all four advertisements. The logo of the organisation is a symbol that is made apparent across camera shots. For instance, in the bus driver advertisement the logo on the front of the bus is interlaced with shots of the bus driver on the job. In all four advertisements the logo and message, "Please donate to the Red Shield Appeal (May 3-9)," is also repeated, drawing attention to the relationship among the advertisements (The Red Shield Appeal). The *repetition* of visuals and messages reinforces the identity of the organisation and the importance of its request.

The voice in the advertisements is that of New Zealand, and the *vernacular* is used as a device to situate the audience in the text. All of the advertisements are characterised by their informal language, using the abbreviation 'the Sallies' for 'Salvation Army', and including hesitations, stuttering and contractions. The informality and the use of the first person make the advertisements appear unscripted, which adds to their authenticity. According to Winterbottom, Bekker, Conner and Mooney (2008), *first person narration* has a persuasive effect on audiences' decisions because it both vividly depicts the product and also lends credibility. Both of these factors stimulate the emotional interest of the audience because the 'actors' are perceived as open and honest giving their own opinion rather than being told what to say (Petty et al., 1983; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984). The

informality is a rhetorical device in this respect, because those watching the advertisements can easily understand the message (which is necessary targeting a diverse audience) and the content is justified by the realistic way that the messages are communicated. It could mean that members and society alike feel more inclined to donate and identify.

Conclusion

In response to my research question, "How do religious organisations use rhetorical tools to construct identities for current and potential members and produce identification and disidentification?", it appears that unlike the previous texts analysed, the advertisements of the Salvation Army are very straight-forward and safe. The message is obvious and lacks the didactic 'preachiness' of the texts analysed in chapters 5 and 6, and although a number of rhetorical tools are incorporated to convey the need for members and the public to donate, the advertisements are essentially formulaic and executed to effectively limit possible interpretations. The people interviewed do not exert authority over members: instead, the emphasis is placed on creating common ground and being informative, and the information expressed is designed to persuade members and the public to get involved in the organisation. On one level, only a limited commitment is expected from the audience - please give money to allow us to continue our good works - and this can prove disadvantaging to the organisation as it might cause people to give the bare minimum. On the flip-side, it means the chance of members and the public disidentifying is also limited as the messages are not controversial or isolating. In other words, the advertisements get the message across, but the likelihood that they will be highly persuasive may be undone by a certain minimalism, on the one hand, and on the other, an over-stated faith in the organisation's all-round efficacy and worthiness.

Additionally, the advertisements of the Salvation Army do not overtly construct the identities of members, rather, the communications develop the organisation's identity, which subtly sets standards of behaviour for identifying members. The advertisements

emphasise that the Sallies now provide what the fourth Labour government terminated in their restructuring of social welfare (Evans, Grimes, Wilkinson & Teece, 1996), which constructs the organisation as worthwhile because it is engaged in 'good works'. By proxy, those who choose to identify with the organisation, are therefore expected to maintain that positive organisational identity by amending their attitudes and behaviours in line with those disseminated in order to receive benefits such as self-esteem. In other words, the members are to personify the ideal attributes of the organisation as its representatives to the public.

Chapter 8

The Everyday in the Public Eye

Introduction

Much like the analysis presented in the previous chapters, chapter 8 explores the potential for identity construction in everyday church communications. In this chapter, the messages are those found on billboards erected in highly public spaces, beside the motorway, at busy intersections and so on. Everyday religious messages on billboards, then, compete for attention with advertising of a more commercial nature, and so the messages have to have immediate appeal and memorability, and to this end, the messages on billboards are typically brief and catchy (Donthu, Cherian, & Bhargava, 1993; Bhargava, Donthu, & Caron, 1994). Billboards often capitalise on matters of topical interest or reference widely-recognised figures in popular culture to capture attention (Tisdell, 2007), and those that are examined in this chapter are no exception.

Like the television advertisements in the previous chapter, the billboards are not aimed at an audience that is internal to the religious organisation, although of course, existing members are not excluded from the target audience. One of the expected characteristics of religious messages to such a diverse target audience is that they will be 'religion lite', and that rhetorical tactics used will have been selected to create a winsome image that will appeal to all and offend none. The discussion to follow examines five billboards erected by three churches within the Anglican and Presbyterian denominations[60].

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[60] My selection of billboards was limited to the wider Auckland area and Tauranga due to geographical constraints.

8.1 Background to Anglicanism and Presbyterianism

The decision to explore the communications of the Anglican and Presbyterian denominations occurred because, as a colonised country, New Zealand has been subject to British rule since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 (Brooking, 2004; Liu, Wilson, McClure, & Higgins, 1999), and these denominations (especially the Anglican denomination) have traditionally been part of the Establishment of England and its colonies. Missionaries from Anglican and Presbyterian backgrounds were responsible for a lot of the 'shape' of early New Zealand, and have left a mark on the religious and secular fabric of the country (Beattie & Stenhouse, 2007; Mol, 1967). Admittedly, in comparison with the relatively powerful and privileged position Anglicanism and Presbyterianism occupied in Great Britain, both denominations suffered from New Zealand's tendency towards religious pluralism (Ahdar, 2006), but they nevertheless continue to be among the largest denominations in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2011), suggesting that they retain some social influence.

The role and place of the colonial church differed from the churches 'back home'. Due to geographical distance, the churches in New Zealand had increased freedom which produced changes in their development (Davidson, 1986; Derbyshire, 2006). For example, over time, Anglican churches embraced the opportunities of electing their own leaders, developing their own liturgy and ordaining women (Derbyshire, 2006). However, the development of these churches in New Zealand was hampered by shortages in clergy and an increasing population growth. These issues, in conjunction with factions of society opposing the hegemonic rule of churches of the establishment (Wood, 1975), led denominations to compete among one another for national status (Derbyshire, 2006). Consequently, the power and influence of these establishment churches over New Zealand society, never matched the dominance they held in their countries of origin. Having offered a brief account of the position of churches of the British establishment in New Zealand, the discussion to follow offers a general background to the Church of England and the Church of Scotland.

The Church of England

Since its inception in the sixteenth century, the Church of England has been aligned with the British monarchy and government and has been a mainstay of the Establishment. The hierarchy of the church traditionally comprised members who happened to share the same social class as the country's political leaders (Towle, 2007). The relationship between the church and state was mutually beneficial: the state protected the privileges of the church, and the church used its spiritual influence to discourage rebellion (Towle, 2007). The privileges of the Church of England included ecclesial courts, which were considered to be part of the legal system, and legal protection for the "doctrines and sensibilities" of Anglicanism against blasphemy. The 26 bishops also held seats in the House of Lords, which not only gave the Lords Spiritual a degree of temporal power, but also entrenched the conservatism of the church: the status quo was a comfortable place for Anglicanism to be. However, over time, these privileges have been reduced and amended in response to an increased political desire to separate church-state relations (Modood, 1994). Consequently, there is growing discussion as to whether The Church of England should remain an establishment church given its weakening political position (Towle, 2007), reduced representation among the House of Lords and falling membership numbers (Cumper & Edge, 2005).

The Church of Scotland

Since 1706, the establishment Church of Scotland has been Presbyterianism, but the relationship between church and state has been a tumultuous one (Munro, 1997). For instance, Acts of Parliament have been used to stamp government authority over the religion[61], and the church has taken exception to civil authority intervening in Church affairs because it meant that the state was able to dilute the influence of the Church over society. Munro (1997, p. 642) concluded that prior to 1921, "[T]he Church's claim to final powers of legislation and of judicial determination of spiritual matters was not accepted by the state." However, an Act of Parliament in 1921 permitted the Church of Scotland to disentangle itself from the state, and it was able to self-govern and fulfil its role of aiding parishes throughout Scotland in meeting their religious ordinances.

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[61] An example is the abolishing of religious tests for school and university teachers according to the Act of Security implemented in the 19th Century (Munro, 1997).

The power and influence of the Church was weakened by the introduction of new denominations in the regional areas of Scotland from the 18th Century onwards (Piggott, 1980; Pacione, 2005) and by divisions within the religion which culminated in the development of the Free Church (Munro, 1997; Pacione, 2005). The Free Church believes that the constitution governing the Church of Scotland allowed the State to encroach too much on the rights of religious followers (Brown, 1997; Vinogradoff, 1924), and appealed philosophically to those with strong political views about Scottish self-rule. Thus, the power and control of both these establishment churches has suffered from increased competition from religious and secular organisations.

Arguably, the slow decline of both these denominations has already begun by the time New Zealand was being colonised, and their presence in a 'settler society' was part of the ties to 'home', as some New Zealanders used to fondly refer to Great Britain (Derbyshire, 2006). The new colony never really had the same regard for the social power and influence of the two denominations of the Establishment that they had enjoyed in Great Britain, mostly because the rigid class system that characterised society in their countries of origin was not transferred to New Zealand (Chong & Thomas, 1997). However, even if adherents were largely paying lip service when they declared membership on census forms, the Anglican and Presbyterian denominations were an important presence in the developing nation, and it is for this reason that I wished to include some of their everyday messages. I found a certain poignancy in the fact that two denominations whose forms of worship are among the most conservative[62] on the Christian landscape chose to advertise themselves and Christianity in such a commercial medium as a billboard, and took the juxtaposition of faith and publicity to be a crux (Fairclough, 1992) worth examining. The messages of the five billboards deal with churches' perceptions on belief, Easter, homosexuality and atheism, but the sub-text of each is that the church must *be there* in people's minds and lives.

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[62] Conservative in the sense that Anglicans and Presbyterians use a formal liturgy, as opposed to the orchestrated, but neverthess more "free form" services in the Pentecostal (McLoud, 2007) and other non-establishment denominations.

8.2 Billboard communication[63]

Using billboards to convey organisational messages is not uncommon (Taylor, Franke & Bang, 2006). According to Donthu, Cherian, and Bhargava (1993) and Bhargava, Donthu, and Caron (1994) billboards hold value in that their short messages, pictures, colours, humour and backgrounds allow for easy recall and differentiation in products and organisation, all of which perhaps account for the growth of outdoor advertising (Taylor, Franke & Bang, 2006). Billboards, with their 24 hour presence in the public eye, will be observed by an array of commuters, who may become familiar with the message and brand of the producer (Taylor, Franke & Bang, 2006). Billboards are designed to be impersonal, unambiguous, informative and quick to assimilate, but despite the clarity and brevity of typical billboard messages, observers will decode them according to their own varied frames of reference (Cathcart & Gumpert, 1983; Hall, 1980; Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1948; McQuail, 1979; Peters, 1994).

Billboard one

The first billboard comes from the Presbyterian Church St Columba in Botany Downs (St Columba, n.d.). The billboard under analysis was photographed on October the 14th 2011 and included the message **"Rugby is not a religion. Go the All Blacks"**. The key event it referenced was the Rugby World Cup that took place in New Zealand during September and October.

Billboard two

The second billboard was developed by the Bethlehem Community Church in Tauranga. As a Presbyterian church, they aim to serve their local community as an "extension of God's talents and abilities" (Bethlehem Community Church, n.d.). The billboard erected by the Bethlehem Community Church met the criteria for analysis, not because it refers specifically to a key event, but rather, because its erection (April 2010) occurred not long after the controversial NZ Atheist group's bus campaign (a key event) was undertaken in December 2009. The NZ Atheists intended to brand buses with slogans promoting

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[63] See Figures 8.1-8.5 (Appendix 7) pp. 267-269. *(All images and texts have been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons)*

atheism (NZ Atheist Bus Campaign, 2011). Additionally, this church billboard attracted much controversy because it 'borrowed' the format of the well-known "Tui" billboards, which are famous for their "Yeah, right!" tag-line. The church billboard said **"Atheists have nothing to worry about! Yeah Right"** and included a "spirit" logo in place of the Tui logo. The billboard was a step too far for Dominion Breweries, who owned the intellectual property in the Tui advertisements. Dominion Breweries notified the church that they had infringed a registered trademark, to which the church retaliated that the billboard had simply drawn on a common sarcasm in New Zealand vernacular speech. The church pointed out that it had been using the colloquialism for eight years without attracting legal action (Williams, 2010a). The dispute was resolved amicably when DB breweries contracted advertising agency Saatchi's to find another way for the church to advertise itself (Williams, 2010b).

Billboard three

Billboards three, four and five all originate from the Anglican St Matthews in-the-City (Auckland Central). The church claims it has high social relevance, aiming to modify the understanding of the Christian brand by "thinking outside the box, exploring innovative liturgy, progressive ideas and topical issues" (St Matthew-in-the-city, n.d.). Such objectives are epitomised in their billboards which have been edgy (Ikram, 2009), controversial (Jones, 2010) or supportive of disadvantaged groups. One such billboard attempted to draw attention to a notable issue in the Anglican Church and read, **"Gay-Dar: As used by the Anglican Church to assess potential priests. Sign the petition to stop discrimination in the Anglican Church at www.stmatthews.org.nz"**. The billboard refers to a crux (Fairclough, 1992) in that the billboard's developed coincided with a general meeting of the congregation, which bought people together to unanimously decide to send a letter to the bishop, voicing their disgruntlement at the inequality permeating the church (Jones, 2011). Not long after its erection, the billboard was vandalised and the cross removed (Jones, 2011) and the church vicar Glynn Cardy said that the billboard had resulted in a number of both negative and positive phone calls being made to the church (Neale, 2011).

Billboard four

The hope held by St Matthew was that billboard four would stress the importance of Easter message without invoking the controversy of their earlier Christmas message "God was a hard act to follow"[64] (Tapaleao, 2010). The church's objective was to have people reflect on the actions and words of Jesus with a message couched in youthful slang: **"Well this sucks. I wonder if they'll remember anything I said...."** The message was coupled with a dejected-looking Jesus attached to the cross (Tapaleao, 2010).

Billboard five

The final billboard reads **"Pray like it's 1987"** and was erected by St Matthew-in-the-city when New Zealand made the final of the Rugby World Cup in October 2011. The image depicts a pixelated Sean Fitzpatrick holding the William Webb Ellis Cup, which was last won by the All Blacks in 1987 (Smith, 2011)[65].

8.3 Strategy 1: Pointing to common ground

The *common ground strategy*, unsurprisingly, is much favoured by rhetors who desire to win sympathy for their argument, and although the billboards contain only a few words, the juxtaposition of the tagline and the image propels a strong line of reasoning towards the audience. This section examines the tactics that have contributed to the establishment of *common ground,* but also acknowledges another of Cheney's (1983a) strategies, *identification through antithesis,* as attempts at creating common ground could polarise viewers depending on whether they engage in oppositional or favourable readings (Siero & Jan Doosje, 1993).

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[64] This billboard depicted Mary and Joseph in bed together, and was vandalised hours after the billboard was erected (Lilley, 2009). The billboard also received international attention with articles published on the Huffington Post (Lilley, 2009), Daily Mail (2009) and BBC News (2009) websites in the United Kingdom.
[65] Prior to the All Blacks Rugby World Cup win of 2011, the only other time the team had won the Rugby World Cup was 1987. There was much angst surrounding the lead up to the 2011 win, as it was believed among New Zealanders that the cup should have been won in 1995 and they apparently only lost to the Springboks because the team were poisoned a week prior to the match (The Observer, 2004).

Expression of concern

Four of the five billboards employ the *expression of concern* tactic (Cheney, 1983a), identifying social problems and pushing the public to adopt ideas that are intended to ameliorate social wrongs. The *expression of concern* is intended to secure their audience attention, and not just attention, but sympathy, in order to prompt change in both attitude and behaviour (Taillard, 2000).

In billboard one, erected during the rugby fever of the 2011 World Cup, the concern is that rugby (only a game) is equated to religion and is even, perhaps, attracting attention that amounts to worship.

Rugby is not a religion. Go the All Blacks.

Text 8.1: Tagline of billboard 1

Religion functions as "a system of symbols" (Geertz, 2002, p. 63) that constructs a general order of existence, so here, the church is warning that rugby can never have the same capacity to orientate, nor the same power to save and console as 'true' religion. The *admonitory tone* is, of course, softened by an almost mandatory patriotism, without which the message would have been, in the context of the World Cup, almost offensively 'preachy'. Despite the placatory effect of, "Go the All Blacks", however, the church is still making a strong statement about itself and its place in society as the arbiter of a 'true' religion, and from its point of view, concerns that New Zealand has gone too far towards the secular are not unfounded. For instance, reporter Michelle Pickle stated that "Rugby is a religion" in TV3's (2011, October 23) Rugby World Cup Final build up, and no one contradicted her. If the media reflect what society thinks and feels (Oetzel, 2009), Pickle's assertion on national television seems to elevate rugby beyond its objective being as a sport onto some uneasy status as a social artefact that expresses national identity. The *expression of concern*, then, is that New Zealand should seek its general order of existence (Geertz, 2002), not in something transitory as rugby, but in the spirituality of a real religion. Essentially, the church has used the billboard to remind the nation that true religion is still around, and offers what rugby cannot. In doing so, the church subtly reminds the audience that joining the church in-group (Tajfel, 1982) is possible for everyone, with all the benefits that membership implies.

Greenwald (1965) argued that a prior attachment such as, in this case, to rugby in general and to the All Blacks in particular, may preclude change in audience attitudes or behaviours. The church therefore runs a risk that by asserting its position, people will disidentify (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). The patriotic cheeriness of the statement "Go the All Blacks!" is intended to reduce the likelihood of oppositional readings to the message (Siero & Jan Doosje, 1993) and shows some awareness that individuals always identify with a number of different organisations (Abraham & Anderson, 1984). Overall, the message creates a commonality (Burke, 1969; Cheney, 1983a) that can prevent individuals feeling as if they have been instructed to cut ties with other institutions with which they affiliate. Therefore, following "Rugby is not a religion" with "Go the All Blacks" is a polite way for the church to assert its point of view without attacking the audience's attachments at a personal level. The *politeness factor* (Fairclough, 1992) is an important tactic in the message, because a direct attack might well be likely to trigger defences against a diminishing sense of *self* caused by being told that their associations are wrong (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Dutton, Dutton, & Harquail, 1994).

Billboard two also uses an *expression of concern:*

> Atheists have nothing to worry about! Yeah, right!

Text 8.2: Tagline of billboard 2

Anyone in the audience who has even a rudimentary knowledge of Christianity is going to know that this billboard alludes to the unpleasant fate that awaits all unbelievers (that is, people who do not profess Christianity) after death, and by reminding the world, even indirectly about the possibility of hellfire, this billboard shows concern and offers help. However, the message ostensibly addressed to atheists and to the world at large about atheists, also speaks to existing church members, because in its ironic reminder of the effects of unbelief, the message simultaneously affirms church in-groups. Indeed, it is hard to assess whether there is a single primary audience for this billboard: it seems that in-groups and out-groups equally are intended to ponder on the "worries" that atheists will eventually encounter, in the hope that the in-group will continue its affiliation (Tajfel, 1982), and that the out-group will acquire the same connections to the church.

For a message intended to entice and affirm, it is not particularly soft. The heavy *irony*, though familiar to all New Zealanders through the Tui beer campaigns, lends a tone of indifference and cynical in-group superiority (Allen & Wilder, 1975; Billig & Tajfel, 1973), and the words speak more of tough love than gentle compassion. Yet the message is skilful at a number of levels: it puts forward the church's sincere point of view about atheism, mitigated by *humour* and familiarity, and by juxtaposing the word "atheist" with a church building, it obliquely offers a solution for disbelief: walk in and begin to believe. The *expression of concern*, then, reaches outwards to non-members because of their lack of belief and the fate consequent on it, while it simultaneously reaches inwards to church members because their faith might possibly lapse. Thus, the *expression of concern* on this billboard is strongly modified by a concurrent use of *identification through antithesis* (Cheney, 1983a, p. 154), which negatively accentuates the issue of atheism to construct the church as a positively distinguished in-group (Stets & Burke, 2000; Tajfel, 1982), and the members as right-minded for identifying with the church and its beliefs.

Another tactic used in this message is a *fear appeal*, addressed to both the in-group and the out-group. Clark (1999, p. 46) argues that *fear appeals* can raise "perceptions of personal vulnerability" that motivate people into re-evaluating existing feelings and attitudes. Here, the *fear appeal* is summarised and embedded in the word 'worry'. What 'worries' atheists will eventually have is purposely left unspoken, because a degree of vagueness tends to facilitate individual interpretation and increase the likelihood that the message will be accepted (Puntoni, Schroeder, & Ritson, 2010; Vézina & Paul, 1997). A perceived threat in the message will activate danger control processes (Witte, 1992) to limit the risk to the *self*. Danger control processes cause people to evaluate the "efficacy of the recommended response" (Witte, 1992, p. 338) and one of the options is always to reduce their fear by accepting the coping strategies suggested by the organisation.

In the case of a *fear appeal* that emerges, as this one does, from an *expression of concern* (Cheney, 1983a), a positive response to the organisation's recommended strategy brings immediate benefits through the reduction of anxiety and fear (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Pratt, 2000), but the organisation also gains. In this case, for instance, the Bethlehem Community Church may acquire new members and cement the loyalty of

existing members by extending the in-group bias (Allen & Wilder, 1975; Billig & Tajfel, 1973) which can, ultimately, sustain the church's presence in a competitive marketplace (Finke & Stark, 1998; Gruber & Hungerman, 2008; Land, Deane, & Blau, 1991; Zaleski & Zech, 1995).

Billboard 3 has the tagline:

> Gay-dar as used by the Anglican Church to assess potential priests.

Text 8.3: Tagline of billboard 3

This billboard also references the familiar sign warning about the risk of forest fires (see *8.4 Strategy 2: Unifying symbols for more detail*). The billboard is an *expression of concern* (Cheney, 1983a) about discrimination based on sexual orientation within the Anglican Church. Their billboard is a public call for change within the church, primarily because of concern for those suffering the discrimination, but a secondary reason might also be concern for the church itself and its ability to survive in an increasingly liberal and secular New Zealand society (Kolig, 2000). The billboard, which expresses the localised opinion of St Matthew in-the-City, is a strong call for action that may provoke adverse reactions in the Anglican hierarchy and create division among congregations and clergy. The negative image of Anglicanism created by this exposure of its attitudes towards homosexuality threatens the social entity of the church as a whole. Members who feel strong identification with traditional Anglicanism and whose religious identities are very salient, may therefore mobilise (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991) to restore what will seem to them to be the tarnished image of the church. Ultimately, the message of St Matthew's typifies Martin's (1992) belief that subcultures may not agree with the prevailing views of, in this case, the church the hierarchy.

Interestingly, St Matthew in-the-City has targeted its own denomination rather than other Christian denominations that also discriminate on sexual orientation (Buchanan, Dzelme, Harris & Hecker, 2001). The harsh judgment evident in St Matthew's billboard seems to contradict Pfeffer and Fong's (2005) argument that groups will defend the actions of their own people in order to maintain positive feelings about the attachment they have formed. Pfeffer and Fong's theory of building the organisation and self-enhancement suggests that the St Matthew members would normally be disinclined

to put their own organisation into a bad light. Here, then, is evidence that an identity other than that of church membership is most salient: the members of St Matthew may be Christian and Anglican, but above all, they are gay and Christian and Anglican, and the issues of social justice involved in that identity are worth the certain anger of the church hierarchy and any unrest that might ensue with colleagues and fellow members. The critical position of St Matthews is in line with the 'black sheep effect' (Abrams, Marques, Brown & Henson, 2000; Abrams, Rutland, Cameron, & Marques, 2003; Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988; Marques, Yzerbyt, & Leyens, 1998): if a group has high expectations of the conduct of their own kind, then they are inclined to judge them more harshly then they would other groups. Therefore, St Matthew has, with its billboard, created separation or antithesis among Anglican affiliates by expressing their concern about discrimination against gay priests.

As with billboard 2, the *expression of concern* can hardly be separated from *identification through antithesis* (Cheney, 1983a, p. 154) as identification with the in-group calls for united action against the discriminating groups, who are presented as enemies to progress and social change. The out-group is positioned as overly, even dangerously opposed to social change, which corresponds with Johnstone's (1975) assertion that there is a negative perception of religion as being too conservative. The billboard invokes an 'us versus them' mentality and in-group members need to conform to the prototypical characteristic (Hogg & Terry, 2000) of supporting rights for gay clergy to achieve a sense of belonging (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Hogg & Terry, 2000).

The concern promulgated by St Matthew-in-the-City, offers validation and support of the homosexual identity and encourages church membership for this group to maintain those validations (Swann Jr, 1987). However, by validating the identities of homosexuals, St Matthew-in-the-City is projecting an image to audiences that is likely maladapted to the organisation's culture, given that many Christian denominations condemn homosexuality (Buchanan, Dzelme, Harris & Hecker, 2001). The discrepancy thus created between public image and organisational culture can adversely affect members identification (Hatch & Schultz, 2004), but for staunch members of the in-group, the defiant whistle-blowing involved in publicising the issue of discrimination is likely to strengthen identification.

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Billboard four relies for its impact on a vernacular speech, purportedly made by Jesus on the cross. It does not use the *expression of concern*, but billboard five does:

Pray like it's 1987!

Text 8.4: Tagline of billboard 5

On the surface, the *expression of concern* is frivolous, appearing to express hopes about the outcome of the Rugby World Cup by reminding the nation that the All Blacks won the inaugural competition in 1987. The message about rugby, however, is something of a trojan horse, allowing the church to ask its audience simply to connect to God through prayer. The reference to 1987 here is not to be taken literally (except, probably, by rugby enthusiasts), but rather, is a call to pray deeply for any issue that matters. Although the tagline is an *expression of concern,* it also contains a mild *fear appeal* (Witte, 1992) because it can make rugby followers doubt New Zealand's likely success at the Rugby World Cup without divine intervention. By using a *fear appeal*, the church is attempting to alter the cognition and action of members, constructing a reliance on religion to alleviate concern and to make their desires possible. However, the message is unlikely to have the desired effect if the audience cannot make the connection to 1987 and the euphoria that accompanied the first world cup win. Therefore, prior commitment (Greenwald, 1965, 1968) and *cultural capital* (Bourdieu, 1986) are necessary for individuals to be receptive to the messages presented, because, as Greenwald (1965, p. 168) says, "…the individual reacts with favourable cognition to persuasive statements within his latitude of acceptance."

The "Pray like it's 1987" message also presents the church as a supporter of the All Blacks, emphasising commonality (Burke, 1969; Cheney, 1983a) with the audience. The billboard reduces any cultural distance between the church and 'ordinary' (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Pratt, 2000) New Zealanders, which could make the audience accept the church as part of everyday life. If audience members give the billboard a shallow reading, they might take it as belittling Christianity, given that rugby is not as important as, for instance, world peace, and that interpretation, like any oppositional reading, could prompt disidentification (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004) with the church. However, the message is clever in that it lets people know that anything – even the outcome of a rugby competition – is something that can be prayed about, emphasising to existing and

potential members how 'great' Christianity can be, which can prompt or reaffirm identification. In other words, the billboard says that members can have all this – that is, the benefits deriving from prototypical behaviours (Hogg & Terry, 2000), as well as rugby.

The discussion in this section shows that even in the small space afforded by the tagline of a billboard, *expression of concern* is used in the everyday communications of churches to directly appeal to audiences. The tactic is not the only one that has been used in efforts to establish common ground, however: by using *identification through antithesis* (Cheney, 1983a) and *fear appeals*, the churches have been able to create layers of meaning within a few words and so construct quite complex opportunities for identification and disidentification. Given the diverse audience that these billboards targeted, there must be an expectation of a varied reaction, which can prove fruitful as well as limiting to each of the churches.

Recognition of individual contribution

Cheney's (1983a) tactic *recognition of individual contributions* entails pointing out particularly favoured actions to which other members are expected to aspire. None of the billboards in this corpus of texts meet this criterion, although billboard four does approximate to the tactic:

Well this sucks. I wonder if they'll remember anything I said….

Text 8.5: Tagline of billboard 4

The tagline is adjacent to a caricature of Jesus on the cross, and although the words themselves do not specifically set out the contributions of Jesus, the image of the crucifixion can remind the audience of his willing sacrifice. Additionally, the use of *youthful colloquialism* understates the pain and suffering of being crucified, and the taciturn line "Well, this sucks," emphasises the contributions of Jesus to mankind. The words, " I wonder if they'll remember anything I say…" also create a *guilt appeal* (Coote, Coulter & Moore, 2005): the message is that in the face of the 'suckiness' of

being nailed to a cross, people might, at least, make an effort to recall and profit by Jesus's words.

As a cartoon, the picture appears somewhat oxymoronic. The billboard is *humorous* and *ironic* in its emphasis of Jesus' contributions, but at the same, those contributions were fundamental for Christianity and teach members how they should and should not be leading their lives, which is not humorous at all. According to Gibbs and Izett (2005), Tindale and Gough (1987), and Weinberger and Gulas (1992), *irony* and *humour* are powerful persuasive devices. In this case, the *humour*, albeit slightly black, is included to encourage audiences to receive and consider the inexplicit but real message, and shows audiences that Christianity can be 'cool' and 'down with the kids'. However, Bless, Schwarz and Strack (1990) warn that, whereas the use of *irony* and *humour* can induce a good mood in audiences, it can also halt elaboration of the message, so that the humour becomes the end in itself, and thus, limits the likelihood of any attitude change continuing over time. The ideal identity of receptive audience members is constructed as one where members remember Jesus and his words and are grateful for the contributions that caused the statement, "Well, this sucks!" However, the style of the billboard was a risk for the church, because many people may react negatively to a summation of the crucifixion as, "Well, this sucks!" The billboard could, therefore, offend as many people as it attracts, reducing the likelihood of identification with the church.

Espousal of shared values

The *espousal of shared values* are attempts by the organisation to appear as if they share the same values as their members (Cheney, 1983a). Across the five billboards, the values that are promulgated include religion, inclusiveness and equality, patriotism and winning. Valuing religion is not unexpected, given the organisational identities from which the billboards originated. Thus, the "central", "enduring" and "distinctive" characteristic of the organisations' identities (Albert & Whetten, 2004, p. 91) are reaffirmed by the billboards. Inclusiveness and equality are epitomised in billboard three, and in a society that protects individuals' rights to freedom of sexual orientation (Maher, Sever & Pichler, 2008), promoting the cause of gay priests can aid St Matthew in-the-City to appear as the contemporary church, hip and responsive to the changing

society it serves, which can invoke favourable responses from the audience. A cynical reading of St Matthew's motivation is possible: that the espousal of these values is mere lip service directed towards an inner-city population where competition for church membership is high (Finke & Stark, 1998; Gruber & Hungerman, 2008; Land, Deane, & Blau, 1991; Zaleski & Zech, 1995). By appearing inclusive then, the church can benefit from increased recognition and attendance, but the ramifications of espousing some values over others is that those seeking uniqueness (Pfeffer & Fong, 2005; Swann, Milton & Polzer, 2000) and alternative values to those given by the organisation, will disidentify (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004).

It may be hard to accept rugby as an *espoused shared value*, but whether or not the churches actually hold rugby as a value, they certainly capitalised on the attention it was receiving in the national life during the world cup. The espousal of rugby as a shared value allowed churches to make themselves seem ordinary, sharing the same concerns that exercised the whole nation, and to express some patriotism connected with winning. It has been noted that people are inclined to identify with organisations they think hold similar values to their own (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Swann Jr, 1987) and therefore, given New Zealand's strong rugby culture (Fougere, 1989), demonstrating an affiliation with the country's national sport can encourage people to respond to the persuasive intent of the billboards.

It has been argued that New Zealanders are proud winners but sore losers (Savory, 2011), so valuing success can appeal to rugby supporters and in fact, in the billboard "Pray like it's 1987", the church is not only making their ties to rugby and success clear, but are promoting a church activity – prayer - as a means of making that same success possible for All Blacks. By presenting "praying" as a means to an end, the church can encourage attendance and acceptance among the audience of the church, influencing how their organisational image is understood by outsiders (Dutton, Dutton, & Harquail, 1994; Gioia, Shultz, & Corley, 2000) and encouraging religious participation, either personal or organisational (pray yourselves, or pray with us). As with other quotidian communications, the churches are drawing on cultural capital to inspire commonality and favourable responses from audiences (Bourdieu, 1986).

Advocacy of benefits and activities

In billboard five, praying is presented as an activity that produces benefits to members. The church proposes that if rugby fans turn to divine assistance, the current All Blacks would be able to replicate the success of the 1987 winning team. This suggests that religious association and participation can be a means to a secular end, and that praying may be a 'token' activity. According to Schjoedt, Stødkilde-Jørgensen, Geertz and Roepstorff (2009, p. 200) the act of praying is used to enact a direct communication with a "culturally transmitted entity," in an effort to cope with what Bänziger, van Uden and Janssen (2008, p. 102) consider "extreme uncomfortable situations." Suggesting people pray for a rugby win diminishes the importance of prayer to bigger, life impacting events. Those who view prayer as a coping mechanism for the important issues in society might respond negatively to how the church has presented it in this context, in turn disidentifying (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004), despite the church's intention to increase the number of people who turn to God.

Another instance of *advocacy of benefits and activities* (Cheney, 1983a) is notable in the "Gay-Dar" billboard. The billboard encourages people to "Sign the petition to stop discrimination in the Anglican Church at www.stmatthews.org.nz." By signing the petition, members can express their opposition to organisations that prevent social change and prohibit equality. For those signing, the benefit could be feelings of self-worth and esteem for actively protesting behaviours that run contrary to their own attitudes, which can prove beneficial to the church, as those positive feelings may extend to the church for offering the opportunity. As Pfeffer and Fong (2005) argue, people will align with organisations that instil positive feelings and can mean that audiences who see the billboard and sign online, affiliate with the church because of perceived similarities.

8.4 Strategy 2: Unifying symbols

A *unifying symbol* that presents in two of the billboards is the crucifix. As Cheney (1983a) outlines, *unifying symbols* can be objects that are revered and that offer insight into the identity of the organisation, and with which people can identify. In the case of

the crucifix, the symbol denotes a commitment to Christianity (Bobrova, 2004) so will attract the attention of professing Christians.

Another of the *unifying symbols* present is the William Webb Ellis Cup evident in the photo of Sean Fitzpatrick on the "Pray like it's 1987" billboard. Named after an Anglican clergyman credited with developing rugby, the William Webb Ellis Cup is awarded to the team that is victorious in the Rugby World Cup held every four years (Sky Sport, n.d.). According to Prime Minister John Key, winning the cup is an achievement that has required courage, determination and team work (Sydney Morning Herald, 2011) and is the epitome of rugby dominance, which, it can be argued, rugby fans in New Zealand greatly desire, given the importance they place on the national sporting team (Savory, 2011). By placing the symbol on their billboard, St Matthew in-the-City is constructing its organisational identity as one that values what the trophy represents, building a connection to all New Zealanders who also value rugby. The inclusion of Sean Fitzpatrick holding the cup conjures up memories of the last time New Zealand held the trophy, but more importantly, it shows that the church is alongside its audience and knows what is on people's minds.

The final *unifying symbol* evident is the rainbow on the "Gay-Dar" billboard. According to Moore (2001), the rainbow has become a symbol of pride and solidarity to the homosexual community, and its presence on the billboard should tell audiences that St Matthew in-the-City is friendly to gay people and therefore, the rainbow might attract the gay community to identify with the church. Attracting the gay community is the first of the functions of this billboard. The second function is to show how the out-group sees gay clergy as a danger. The rainbow, in this function, is a *visual pun* on the easily-recognised seasonal fire danger indicator (Wanganui District Council, n.d.) to which audiences may respond, given their likely prior knowledge of the fire danger campaign. In this instance, the indicator does not outline the chance of fire, but rather, offers a continuum from straight to gay, with the crucifix attached to what would constitute very high on the seasonal fire danger indicator. Therefore, the symbol posits that St Matthew-in-the-City has a very high affiliation with homosexuals, further emphasising the organisation's identity (Albert & Whetten, 2004) and potentially motivating homosexuals to associate with the church. Of course, those that hold firm to

traditional Christian values that oppose homosexuality, may view the symbols negatively and instead disidentify (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004) with the church and its message.

8.5 Strategy 3: Other rhetorical devices

Rhetorical devices outside of those stipulated in Cheney's (1983a) typology have already been referred to above. These devices include *puns, visuals, irony, humour* and *youthful terminology*. The purpose of this section is to further explore these devices and their influences on audiences.

A *pun* is evident in the Bethlehem Community Church billboard as they draw from the 'Tui' advertisements that have become a part of New Zealand's popular culture. The 'Tui' advertisements open with a statement that is accompanied by the sarcastic response "Yeah Right", which is considered to be a colloquial New Zealand expression (Williams, 2010a). The Bethlehem Community Church has created their billboard using the same format and colours, as a means of expressing their attitude towards atheists. By creating a replica of the popular 'Tui' advertisements, the Bethlehem Community Church has incorporated cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) to increase familiarity and receptivity in audiences. Of course, the actions of the church did eventuate in legal issues, which may have split reactions to the billboard, with those siding with DB Breweries opposing the use of the format of the billboard to make the message known.

The other notable rhetorical device is presenting the messages on one of the billboards as if it was *directly quoted* from Jesus. The use of 'direct' quotations from Jesus could be accounted for because the characteristics of the communicator are considered in the consumption of persuasive messages (Clark, 1999; Greenwald, 1965; Petty, Cacioppo & Schumann, 1983). In these instances, using Jesus to convey the messages means the churches can *draw upon his credibility* and appeal (Clark, 1999) to make the audience more receptive to their persuasive intent; that is, the audience might be more inclined to remember Jesus if his disappointment seems first hand. The church is attempting to *borrow credibility* for their message as segments of society would perceive Jesus as trustworthy, which according to Clark (1999), can influence public perception. Should audiences respond to the use of Jesus, they would interpret the message according to the

peripheral route of the elaboration likelihood model (Petty, Cacioppo & Schumann, 1983), which may prompt attitude change, but that attitude change is unlikely to be sustained over time (Festinger, 1964; Petty, Cacioppo & Schumann, 1983).

However, the *'direct' quotation* is not taken from the bible, which is the source document for the words of Jesus (Schneidau, 1976; Stott, 1974), and the message may, therefore, not be received as credible by the targeted audience. The use of Jesus as a tool for communicating persuasive messages may create identification for those who accept what is posited, but it might also produce disidentification (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004) because audiences may disagree with what Jesus is being credited as speaking or thinking. For instance, depicting Jesus as using slang such as "sucks" could resonate with youthful members of the audience, or the slang could offend other sections of society who view slang as the degeneration of language (Dumas & Lighter, 1978). Either way, the churches have constructed an identity for Jesus that audiences may or may not identify with.

Conclusion

After analysing the five billboards, I am inclined to believe that because of the confines of the medium and the public gaze, the everyday communications set out to be more provocative and attention-grabbing than the previous communications analysed. This is not entirely unexpected given that three of the billboards originated from a church that, by its own admission, is exceptionally controversial. A key way the billboards tried to provoke a response in the audience was to refer to their insecurities and concerns, in some cases suggesting religion as a coping mechanism. The billboard messages, like all the everyday messages I have analysed, encouraged identification and attendance. As with the other messages, a number of rhetorical strategies were present, particularly those that establish *common ground*, but depending on the audience, these strategies could have produced disidentification as much as identification. In all, the billboards marketed the churches, drawing attention to their brand, values and other distinguishing characteristics, often in a clear and concise manner for easy reception.

Chapter 9

Discussion & Conclusions

Introduction

Underlying my research was the notion that, throughout most of the history of the western world, Christianity held a powerful influence over all aspects of social life, but that to a large extent, and certainly in New Zealand, that influence has markedly declined. In a strongly secular society, churches now compete in the open market for their membership and also, for an echo of their former authoritative voices (Giggie & Winston, 2002; Moore, 1998; Voyé, 1999). It is my contention that the competition in which the churches are engaged begins with the everyday messages that are composed and distributed to keep the churches in the attention of current and potential members. The messages I have examined in this research have been different from one another in content and style, reflecting the cultural differences of the denominations, but all the messages revealed a common characteristic: they use rhetorical tools to appeal to the audience and to cement the attractiveness of the Christian churches - and specifically, their own particular denominations - as a source of salient ideal identities.

It lies outside the ambit of this research to suggest that the churches are cynical in their motivation, and in fact, I have proceeded on the assumption that the churches are sincere in their desire that members should find spiritual satisfaction within the beliefs that they promulgate. For instance, in the bulletin from the Greek Orthodox Church a plea was made for members to enact the sacraments to cleanse their immortal souls, and that plea is a spiritual incursion into the people's lives. However, fulfilling the plea also takes people to church and into quite strict forms of compliance, which maintain the church as an authoritative social presence. So, inasmuch as the messages are genuinely spiritual, they are also the arbiters of ideal identities which generate behaviours that are

predictable, largely controllable and directed towards maintaining the primacy of the church as a social authority.

In past times, Christian churches had far less need to put out public messages of encouragement and teaching. Churches occupied a privileged position in the world, imposing their views, doctrines, morals and rules on people (Voyé, 1999), because they offered rationalisations of the unknown (Johnstone, 1975), and maintained social order by providing a broad foundation on which to base morality and law (Barnett, 2003). However, the Enlightenment project that instigated modernity (Voyé, 1999) led many to question the validity of Christianity as the foundation of social organisation. The emergence of modern science and technology, a desire for freedom, capitalisation and functional differentiation (Jaspers, 1953; Lambert, 1999) led people to focus on their individual needs and to be concerned instead with the phenomena in the world around them (Kitagawa, 1967). Consequently, people no longer took religion seriously, but rather, developed their own "pseudo-scientific realizations to bring their faith in its experience validity into some kind of cognitive harmony with the twentieth-century world" (Bellah, 1967, p. 44). In conjunction with the burgeoning secularisation occurring (Lambert, 1999), Christianity, in particular, was pushed to the margins of society (Gedicks, 2005). Essentially, Christianity underwent a period of rejection in the wake of modernity, where it is was still tolerated rather than strictly adhered.

Additionally, a growing number of non-Christian and non-orthodox bodies emerged to compete alongside Christian groups for the public's allegiance (Melton, 1998). In response to the changes in society, churches have become increasingly privatised and have had to amend their discourse and presentations in order to compete for members who consider religion a personal choice rather that a necessity (Voyé, 1999). Therefore, Christian groups have engaged in the promotional culture characteristic of capitalist enterprise to compete in a society of religious pluralism and secularisation (Giggie & Winston, 2002; Moore, 1998; Voyé, 1999). Thus, with my research I set out to explore quotidian religious communications that promote their organisations for evidence of identity construction. What I found was, whether it was intentional or not, every text analysed included rhetorical strategies that were capable of shaping the identities of members. The remainder of this discussion chapter is designed to acknowledge the types

of identities constructed, how they were constructed to promote identification or disidentification as the case may be, and the underlying motivations behind why the churches constructed member identities.

9.1 Types of identities constructed[66]

Although there are obvious distinctions between the messages of establishment and non-establishment churches, a number of the identities constructed were similar regardless of the denomination. For instance, the Elim church and a Presbyterian church both constructed their members as 'ordinary blokes' to establish common ground and make members receptive to their organisational expectations. In this case, the specifics of the identity, the strange attractor that was offered to church goers, was to see themselves as rugby supporters. However, there were also marked differences in some of the identities constructed. St Matthew-in-the-City built an identity for their members around the idea of being broad-minded, tolerant and anti-discrimination. Elim church insisted that members building their church were to be cautious in whom they welcomed into the fold: a prudent Christian identity in a wicked age, perhaps. The texts did not always construct favourable or even pleasant identities for members. In fact, members were presented as sinful and subordinate. The churches' efforts to define members according to unfavourable identities can be construed as an attempt to make members' re-evaluate their self-concepts according to the correct suggestions of their church. In other words, members were pushed to identify and submit to their church, forfeiting a degree of control over their identity development.

For the most part, the ideal identities promulgated fit with the "central", "distinctive" and "enduring" characteristics of the churches (Albert & Whetten, 2004, p. 91). For the Pentecostals the types of identities constructed included being time efficient, family-oriented, participators in religious activities, builders and inclined to enjoy life. The identities constructed for members of the Greek Orthodox Church emphasised their 'Greek-ness'. Additionally, the church constructed identities for members as New Zealanders, by writing the text in English, because it falls to diasporic religious groups to

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[66] A summary table of the data findings can be found on pages 270-271 (Appendix 8).

not only assimilate people to their new country of origin, but to continue to emphasise such associations (Cadge & Ecklund, 2007; Peek, 2005; Vertovec, 2000). Alongside their ethnic identity, members' religious identities were produced as they were presented as stewards who partake (or at the very least should partake) in religious sacraments and are future–oriented as they grow their church towards full Christian witness. The identities disseminated in the Salvation Army advertisements are of concerned givers who strive to assist the disadvantaged in society. Finally, the billboards sought to construct members and New Zealanders as religiously-inclined rugby supporters who oppose discrimination. However, whether these identities were explicitly referred to or subtly alluded to, the communications each defined prototypical characteristics to which 'ideal' members were to conform in order to benefit from their organisational association (Hogg & Terry, 2000). In most cases the benefit to members was self-validation (Swann Jr, 1987) and improved feelings of self-esteem (Abrahamson & Anderson, 1984; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994; Pfeffer & Fong, 2005) on being affiliated with organisations who stressed their positive perspectives on life and valuable influence on society.

My research, however, was not so much interested in the types of identities created, but more, how they were created and why. Consequently, I have arranged the remainder of this chapter around my two driving research questions:

1. How do religious organisations use rhetorical tools to construct identities for current and potential members and produce identification and disidentification?
2. And for what purpose(s) are such member identities constructed, mobilised and perpetuated?

9.2 *Getting to the* how *of it: research question 1*

How do religious organisations use rhetorical tools to construct identities for current and potential members and produce identification and disidentification?

There is evidence in the data that suggests rhetorical devices were used purposively to, in some cases, patently emphasise the key message of the church. I find support for this

assertion in the work of Cuno (2005, p. 210), who, in talking from his own experience states:

> …Our words are never incidental. They always contribute to the larger narrative that tells our institution's story and as such, are written to include our audiences in that story, to have them, if only in a small way, identify with that story and become a part of it.

Cuno's perception justifies why the leader of the Greek Orthodox Church, in an unusual move, disclosed personal information by including his pledge card in the church bulletin. It does not seem to matter that the pledge card draws attention to the obvious financial plight of the church: the gesture was made out of a need to stimulate commitment among members whose ties to the organisation seemed weak to the priest. The draw-back of excessive honesty can be overlooked provided the communication successfully encourages contributions from members. The desperation permeating the bulletin reflects a larger narrative of the organisation, not dissimilar to the narratives of the other churches in this research, in that religious pluralism has cemented the need for religious organisations to not only promote their existence, but to have members identify with the church by any means possible.

Although the communications were designed with the audience in mind, my data also suggests that not all the strategies included were consciously incorporated, but instead, were a product of the long-held stylistic conventions of their genre. For instance, the Salvation Army advertisements used *unifying symbols* because one of the functions of advertisements is to establish brand recall in audiences (MacInnes, Moorman & Jaworski, 1991). Similarly, linguistic resources such as *puns* (Bell, 1991) are used in advertisements to persuade and seize audience attention, which explains why some churches used challenging images and thought provoking language when their everyday messages took the form of advertising billboards. In fact, the rhetorical strategies and tactics that presented across the different communication channels are frequently used and although the effect might be different, the overall purpose of the communications was the same. That is, whether purposeful, coincidental or preconscious (Janiszewski, 1988;Moskowitz, Li & Kirk, 2004) , the texts of each church sought to portray a favourable image of the organisation, establish a framework for positive assessment of the message, and ultimately persuade members to enact cognitive and behavioural changes. These

underlying motivations are not unlike those expected in communications distributed by secular organisations (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Festinger, 1964; Greenwald, 1968; Miller, Brickman & Bolen 1975; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984), which begs the question as to whether, given the role churches have in creating and maintaining a belief system that guides members' personal and social understandings, they ought to employ rhetorical practices commonly associated with secular organisations.

My data suggest that the communications analysed were predisposed to incorporate specific rhetorical strategies which included, *common ground*, *identification through antithesis*, *transcendent we* and *unifying symbols* (Cheney, 1983a). However, although these rhetorical strategies were employed hopefully, one notable conclusion was that, just as happens in secular organisations, the strategies could produce disidentification as easily as identification, depending on the subjective response of the receiver (Bhattacharya & Elsbach, 2002; Hollinshead & Butler, 1996; Osbourne 1997). Yet, inadvertently facilitating disidentification can be even more problematic for religious organisations than their secular counterparts, because unlike an activist group or education facility, members who feel dissatisfied with their church cannot easily convert to the demands of a new religious organisation (Gautam, Van Dick, & Wagner, 2004). To disidentify with the church means members would be rejecting a belief system that had formed the "general order of existence" (Geertz, 2002, p. 63) to which they had orientated their lives, and would require a major re-evaluation of their self-concepts. Therefore, although the rhetorical strategies found in my data produce the identification and disidentification unavoidable in the communications of secular organisations, the impact of these strategies can be so debilitating to members engaged in oppositional readings that religious organisations might perhaps reconsider adopting these rhetorical strategies.

My intention with these next sections is to look more specifically at the rhetorical strategies of *common ground* and *transcendent we, antithesis* and *other techniques* of persuasion for how they have constructed member identity.

Common ground and the *transcendent we*[67]

Each of the texts analysed included rhetorical strategies identified in Cheney's (1983a) typology, but some were more conspicuous than others. Those that occurred frequently included *expression of concern*, *recognition of individual contributions*, *espousal of shared values* and the *transcendent 'we'*. Among the reasons for the frequent inclusion of these tactics and strategies is that they build common ground between the senders and the receivers of persuasive communications (Cheney, 1983a). The construction of common ground is known to encourage attitude and behavioural change, as such persuasive messages are perceived as personally relevant and as aligning with prior commitments, which can, in turn, prompt members to interpret the communications favourably (Greenwald, 1965, 1968). For example, in the address published by the Elim church, enjoying life is presented as an ideal way of living that members want and can have by identifying with the church. The above rhetorical techniques are purposive in fostering identification as they stress the relevance of the messages to the members.

However, at the same time that they create common ground, the tactics also offer insight into the underlying motivations held by the churches. Returning to the Elim church example above, it can be understood that the leader sees fault in the ideals held by New Zealand society, and he has covertly attempted to redirect members' understandings toward church-approved perspectives. By promoting positivity as a universal need in an attempt to rectify issues in society, the church is also able to emphasise its moral superiority because the church and its methods can provide the right solutions to all problems. Therefore, enacting common ground benefits the churches as they are able to exert a degree of social control that, on the surface, gives the illusion that the churches maintain positions of authority in society.

Choosing to construct common ground may be necessitated by the changing place of religion in contemporary New Zealand society. In previous centuries, Christianity has constructed members' identities through directives that set standards of behaviour that members conformed to because of the knowledge and authority held by hegemonic religious groups (Voyé, 1999). However, that same degree of authority is reduced in a

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[67] I have chosen to discuss these strategies together as they both attempt to establish common ground between the church and its members.

society where the more educated and affluent majority may question, and in some instances rebel against, enforced conformity (Hardy & Phillips, 2004; Chomsky, 1998). Consequently, religious groups have been forced to change the tactics used to disseminate their persuasive messages. Lawton and Bures (2001) argue that religious organisations have had to amend their approach to establishing identification because members expect modern religions to meet their needs, particularly their personal lifestyle choices. If a religion is not malleable and conscious of its members' needs, it could lose out to the other activities that compete for disposable time, as well as disposable income, in the entertainment and leisure market. Accordingly, religious groups, including those analysed in this study, veer towards creating common ground with potential and committed members, disguising their attempts at identity construction as a choice.

In his typology, Cheney (1983a) shows how common ground is sometimes established by the rhetorical tactics of *testimonials* and *praise by outsiders*. However, these tactics were less prominent in the texts of my research, actually only presenting in the advertisements of the Salvation Army. Gioia, Schultz and Corley (2000) and Hatch and Schultz (2004) offer insights into why these tactics were included in the national television campaign for donations. These scholars argue that organisational identification occurs, and is strengthened, when the image of the organisation mirrors the expectations of outsiders. In the case of my data, the testimonials were designed to manage the impressions of a widely-targeted audience, while the *praise by outsiders* established positive assessments of the Salvation Army, which could then be used to determine the attractiveness of the organisation. The addresses and bulletins of the other religious organisations were predominantly targeted at internal stakeholders, which perhaps reduced the need for these common ground tactics, but does not entirely justify their lack of use.

I think it is significant that these tactics are not present in all of my texts, as in Cheney's (1983a) analysis of house organs, which were also targeted at internal stakeholders, both tactics presented. Therefore, I have assumed that these tactics are omitted for several reasons. In the case of the Greek Orthodox church, for instance, the absence is probably because the church, as a small minority group inside New Zealand society focusing on its

own 'Greek-ness', does not seek opportunities to influence outsiders and so is not in a position to win praise. Rather than courting external admiration, the Greek Orthodox sought praise from the Archbishop, which not only emphasises that the organisation gives precedence to the approval received from in-group members (Abrams, Marques, Brown & Henson, 2000; Abrams, Rutland, Cameron, & Marques, 2003; Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988; Marques, Yzerbyt, & Leyens, 1998), but implies that the organisation is intensely authoritative and members are subordinated to the church hierarchy.

Another reason for the omission of these tactics is that the Salvation Army is recognised for charitable works, particularly in times of crisis (Salvation Army, n.d.b), increasing their exposure and interactions with outsiders and thus avenues for praise. However, in the advertisements, it is not religious practice that is praised, but rather, the good works expressed as service in the secular world, signifying that some characteristics of the organisational identity are more praiseworthy than others, and that the organisation disavows part of its authentic identity to avoid being segregated from the secular New Zealand audience it requires donations from. It could be difficult for outsiders to praise an organisation for its material religion (King, 2010), especially when efforts by members to do so are likely to be taken as proselytising. Additionally, the advertisements are targeted at New Zealanders, whose culture favours modesty over self-promotion (Kirkwood, 2007; Mouly & Sankaran, 2000), further elucidating why the religious organisations in my study face limitations on the use of *praise by outsiders* and *testimonials* to build their image and create identification.

Despite the text producers favouring the *common ground strategy*, it was by no means sustained in many of the texts analysed. In fact, the incorporation of other rhetorical strategies, such as *declarative statements*, showed the religious organisations reverting to a communication style based on the position of authority that churches have occupied in the past (Reber, 2006; Voyé, 1999). For instance, the Elim Church claims both the present and the future for its members, saying that they are the most blessed people around, and in its confident assertions, lays out a pre-determined path that members must walk to obtain the benefits it offers. In other words, although the churches might recognise that they need to relate to, and acknowledge the needs of their congregations (Lawton & Bures, 2001), the belief that they possess a commanding and directive role

over members of society persists and has become firmly entrenched as a central and enduring characteristic of the organisations' identities (Albert & Whetten, 2004).

Such a finding suggests that the churches have not embraced an audience-centric nature as is to be expected (Lawton & Bures, 2001), but rather, at their heart, are church-centric, pushing members to abide by Christian decrees that would reinstate the historical social status of these churches. For instance, the Greek Orthodox church, by its very nature, continues to enforce its authority over members by demanding they take responsibility for the well-being of the church, invoking both guilt and fear-appeals to imbue the church messages with accountability. Therefore, while *common ground* tactics are noted throughout the texts, these are juxtaposed with efforts by the churches to possess members present and future by holding to identities of the past. Of course, attempting to appear open and amicable can create disjoins between the organisational identities and organisational images (Hatch & Schultz, 2004) held by the churches. These disjoins can confuse identifying members to the point that they disidentify with the church to alleviate feelings of stress and anxiety (Elsbach; 1999; Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Hollinshead & Butler, 1996; Ikegami, 2010; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Williams & Connaughton, 2012). Although it is suggested that organisations retain ambiguous identities to target a diverse audience (Albert & Whetten, 2004; Foreman & Whetten, 2002), it nevertheless sends mixed messages about the organisation that can be just as damaging to member retention as the authentic authoritative identity of the church was previously.

Therefore, my data show that the *common ground strategy* formulated by Cheney (1983a) can, in some conditions, be conducive to disidentification, depending on how members interpret the persuasive messages. For instance, the Greek Orthodox priest *recognised his own contributions* to the church rather than the efforts of the church's members and was considered self-promotional and self-important. A similar occurrence was also observed in a Pentecostal address where members were pushed to relate to the leader through shared experiences, yet in-groups and out-groups emerged instead. Using the *recognition of individual contributions* tactic (Cheney, 1983a) went awry for both leaders, although scholars have argued that leaders persuade their groups to follow them "by defining and defending" their "vision of what the group should do and even be"

(Gellis, 2002, p. 201) and by functioning as "prototypical leaders" (Hogg & Terry, 2002, p. 128). In both instances the divisions between leader and follower (Den Hartog & Verburg, 1997) remained, to the detriment of the church. Therefore, members could choose to leave the church (however personally difficult that would be), jeopardising its survival.

Identification through antithesis

Another interesting finding from the texts is the way in which *identification through antithesis* presented. This strategy is designed to bind members close together against an external 'enemy' (Cheney, 1983a), yet in the texts analysed, there are times when the in-groups and out-groups constructed actually occur within the church. One such instance was observed in the Greek Orthodox bulletins where undisclosed members were accused of not doing enough for the church, which can adversely create tension and factions among the contributing and non-contributing members. Any members who felt targeted would not have experienced the positive feelings of self-esteem expected from identification (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Pratt, 2000; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007; Stets & Burke, 2000), and would, accordingly, have disidentified with the church. Again, rhetorical techniques that are designed to create comradeship and identification have been used in the everyday communications of the churches, but might not have produced the effects that were desired and expected.

One of the reasons why the *identification through antithesis* strategy veered away from Cheney's (1983a) conceptualisation might be because the leader wanted to align members with his own understanding of the organisation's culture. According to Martin (1992), culture can be understood from three perspectives: integration, differentiation and fragmentation[68]. With these three perspectives in mind, I would argue that the rhetors of the religious communications may have observed differentiation and thus

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[68] The integration perspective entails viewing the culture as consistent and unanimously agreed upon by all members of the organisation (Meyerson & Martin, 1987). The differentiation perspective revokes the homogenising assumption of integration viewing an organisation as comprising subcultures with alternative understandings (Martin, 1992; Meyerson & Martin, 1987; Sackmann, 1992). Finally, the fragmentation perspective acknowledges that culture is ambiguous with different stories held by members within the different subcultures (Martin, 1992).

targeted dissenting members within the organisation to make them adhere to the approved culture of the church. For instance, St Matthew-in-the-City attacked homophobes in an effort to get members to agree that discriminating against homosexuals is unfair. However, even though leaders might want integration, subcultures will persist (Martin, 1992; Meyerson & Martin, 1987), and instead, the antithesis will produce disidentification and resentment.

Alternatively, the reason that *identification through antithesis* created in-groups and out-groups within the organisation can be explained by concertive control. According to Barker (1993), groups will formulate expectations for behaviours that are collectively agreed on by members and are rigorously monitored to make sure of everyone's adherence. Should members not conform, they will be targeted and judged harshly by their peers. For example, the leader of the Greek Orthodox Church targets members who are not engaged in stewardship, in order to have them amend their behaviours to meet the norms of the church. In other words, the church rhetoric can incorporate *identification through antithesis* to normalise particular behaviours in members, which, if successful, not only establishes conformity, but means that the church hierarchy maintains a degree of control over identifying members. However, concertive control can lead to members dissenting, and potentially disidentifying, suggesting that the move to create antithesis inside the church can adversely affect its power and existence.

Other rhetorical devices

Cheney's (1983a) typology offers an indication of how religious organisations use rhetorical tools to construct member identities, but it does not account for all the persuasive activity present in the texts. In fact, I made extensions to Cheney's typology to rectify some limitations I perceived in the method, such as establishing that *expressions of concern* could be both explicit and implicit and that *recognition of contributions* need not be limited to individuals but could encompass group effort. These amendments are not the first made to the typology: DiSanza and Bullis (1999) incorporated changes to the method in order to achieve a more holistic understanding of the persuasive techniques used to facilitate identification. Yet, even with these amendments, the typology does not include all of the possible rhetorical techniques that rhetors can use to persuade members to accept the messages disseminated. For instance,

I found that *humour, irony, guilt* and *fear appeals, cultural capital, puns, narratives* and *visuals* were all apparent in the texts and added to the likelihood of attitude and behavioural changes occurring in recipients. For example, the *visuals* in the Salvation Army advertisements supported their overall message, increasing the credibility of the organisation, while the *fear appeals* (Sutton & Hallett, 1988) in the bulletins of the Greek Orthodox church suggested that God would know if members chose not to engage in stewardship. Therefore, while I did not find it feasible to redevelop Cheney's (1983a) typology to capture every rhetorical technique, I have nevertheless acknowledged in my data those specific techniques that have assisted in influencing members to identify with the church.

Of the *other rhetorical devices* acknowledged in the texts, cultural capital was used regularly, particularly in reference to the All Blacks and rugby. The Elim Church address and the billboards from St Matthew-in-the-City and St Columbia each capitalised on New Zealand's rugby affiliations to establish common ground and to heighten awareness and receptivity of audiences to the messages of the churches. I have assumed that the inclusion of *cultural capital* is a purposeful technique, as for the most part, there has not been much deviation of rhetorical forms in the communications. In fact, these same rhetorical forms have been found in an array of communications such as in the speech of a Bangladeshi prime minister (Ahmed, 2009), the communications of U.S. forestry workers (DiSanza & Bullis, 1999) and banks of Canada (Chreim. 2002), suggesting that although the messages have the same objective of creating association or disassociation (Cheney, 1983a), they nevertheless can possess differences by drawing on cultural understandings that will make the content disseminated personally relevant to their members (Greenwald, 1965). The inclusion of cultural capital can influence members into relating to the organisation, which reduces the likelihood of ambivalence. Therefore, referring to specific New Zealand cultural markers provides a degree of cultural difference in a typology and persuasive techniques that have diverse application, but which ultimately cater to a homogenised culture.

Although the texts reference cultural capital that encapsulates New Zealand's uniqueness, I believe that the core and stylistic conventions of the messages are very much the same from church to church. This matches Adler's (1995) finding that the same rhetorical

strategies were used in the communications of Lutheran Churches America. Furthermore, across the texts analysed in Adler's research and in mine, a common Christian message is to take a positive perspective to life and do good work. Thus, it seems that whatever else is mentioned in everyday messages, the unifying ideologies of Christianity are overwhelmingly present, and that these ideologies overshadow national cultural differences (Clapp, 1996).

It is interesting that, although churches all compete for members in the religious marketplace (Stark & Bainbridge, 1985; Finke & Stark, 1988), the churches in my study disseminate the same sorts of messages and rely on the same rhetorical techniques. In fact, rather than establishing points of difference, the messages themselves, and the feelings they evoke, emphasise a certain sameness among the churches. Clearly, the "distinctive", "central" and "enduring" characteristics of which Albert and Whetten (2004, p. 91) write, are all but identical from denomination to denomination, reducing the likelihood that that their presence in the everyday messages of any one group will offer a competitive advantage.

Additionally, the media used by the churches to communicate with potential and current members were the ubiquitous channels used by secular organisations. By using the same channels, such as magazines, emails, television advertisements and billboards, the activities of the churches are promoted in the same way as those of the commercial sector, which is somewhat unsettling, given that what religious organisations are 'selling' are life-altering attitudes (Geertz, 2002), not goods and services that range from the mundane to the profane. Accordingly, the advertising and marketing behaviour of churches is paradoxical in relation to the content of church messages, particularly as some of the texts criticised materialism, and the vehicle of its dissemination, advertising and marketing (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1977). Here, in a sign of hypocrisy, the deployment of commercial channels of communication seems to be all right if the author is a church. Arguably, however, what is left is the sense that Christianity is a product that is sold like any other commodity, using the same tools of promotion that could be used for hair shampoo or bicycles.

The channels of communication chosen by the churches were not always ideal for the audience. For instance, a number of the members of the Greek Orthodox church of this

study are over 70 years of age and are do not use computers and the internet (personal communication, 7th January 2011). These "digital immigrants" (Prensky, 2001, p. 3) are likely to have limited access and understanding of technological developments preventing them from accessing the communications online, which could have affected how they identify with their church. Although the emails were later distributed in the entryway of the church, the delay in access to pertinent information could have created a degree of resentment, while also emphasising the obvious age gaps between members.

At the end of my research, I was left wondering whether the rhetorical strategies in the texts I analysed distinguished the everyday communications of churches from those of any other organisation dependent on a voluntary membership. Sports clubs, Girl Guides, environmental groups and the like survive because they offer individuals a sense of belonging (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Brewer & Gardner, 2004; Chen & Xin Li, 2009; Scott, 2007) and self-worth (Pfeffer & Fong, 2005; Swann Jr, Milton & Polzer, 2000), which is precisely what churches also do. I conjecture that other social organisations are also likely to build identities that accentuate positivity for members and the altruistic intentions of the organisation itself. The heavy dependence on common rhetorical strategies is likely to impart a standardised quality to all quotidian messages. Research is needed to establish whether my suspicion is correct, but I suspect that the case is as I have articulated it, and that the public prototypical identities (Hogg & Terry, 2000) of both members and organisations will become increasingly homogenised and generic.

Summary

In response to my research question, "How do religious organisations use rhetorical tools to construct identities for current and possible members and produce identification and disidentification?", I have found that much like the secular organisation of Cheney's (1983a) research, the tools are used intentionally and unintentionally to construct common ground, and that this, with the many tactics that make up the strategy, is the chief form of persuasion employed. If members accept the common ground, they are likely to enter a relationship with the church in which they give over at least part of their personal identity to a prototypical identity (Hogg & Terry, 2000) that aligns with the organisation's concerns and authority. In their own way, each of the churches analysed,

posited that believing members should align with their chosen church to self-enhance and feel good about themselves. Such a finding indicates that churches operating in a society characterised by consumerism and promotional culture (Elliot, 1999; Giggie & Winston, 2002; Wernick, 1991) will inevitably adopt practices similar to secular organisations to target and maintain memberships. Ultimately, identification will follow, and this identification may be beneficial to the individual, but will certainly be advantageous to the organisation.

However, the text producers' efforts were not evenly successful, perhaps because the rhetors were not sufficiently trained and did not consider that the reading they desired might not be the reading given. The everyday messages, then, composed and distributed in order to establish cognitive and emotional attachments to the churches, were not always going to construct the desired prototypical identities, and could, instead, have the adverse effect of producing ambivalence or disidentification.

It might seem that it is merely common sense to draw the conclusion that the success of the rhetorical strategies lies in the receptivity and subjectivity of the audience, but that does not mean that such research into these techniques should be overlooked. In fact, the findings of my research support the continued efforts of rhetors to compose quotidian communications as it is through their messages and these techniques that a framework for encouraging identification is established and has the potential to be successful. That said, using rhetorical strategies to develop and strengthen members' identification is not without risk because, if members engage in oppositional readings of the communications (Hall, 1980; Siero & Jan Doosje, 1993), it can eventuate in them disidentifying with an organisation (Carlin et al., 2010; Elsbach; 1999; Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Hollinshead & Butler, 1996; Ikegami, 2010; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Osbourne 1997; Williams & Connaughton, 2012). However, as Cheney (1983a) has argued, organisations are going to continue expending resources in the development and distribution of public documentation, so it is worthwhile to consider the effects these communications are likely to have.

9.3 *Getting to the* why *of it: research question 2*

My second research question is, "For what purpose(s) are such member identities constructed, mobilised and perpetuated?" In addressing my second question, I found that the overarching motivation for all the churches analysed was altruism. To be altruistic is to exhibit concern for the well-being of others (Margolis, 1984; Park, 2005; Thompson & Vardaman, 1997; Weaver & Flannelly, 2004). Therefore, in promoting altruism, not only are the churches establishing a positive organisational identity that may appeal to current and potential members, but they are adhering to their traditional roots. Acting altruistically was not an unexpected motivation because, according to the bible, at the heart of Christianity is the need for people to purge themselves of sins to attain salvation (Irons, 1996). This fundamental Christian message requires that believers pursue a good life by doing good work (Matthew 5:16)[69], and respecting one another (Romans 12:10)[70], which emphasises altruism as an underpinning motivation of Christian activity (Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001), and explains why, for instance, churches offer coping mechanisms for people in distress (Park, 2005; Thompson & Vardaman, 1997; Weaver & Flannelly, 2004). In the case of the churches in this research, their altruism presented on every occasion that the rhetors employed the *expression of concern* tactic (Cheney, 1983a). For example, St Matthew-in-the-city was concerned by the discrimination experienced by homosexual clerics, while St Columba worried over society's unhealthy relationship with rugby. In other words, religious groups hold altruism as a "central" "distinctive" and "enduring" characteristic of their organisational identities (Albert & Whetten, 2004, p. 91), so to not be perceived as altruistic would be unconventional indeed, opposing long conformity with social norms.

There are obvious benefits to members of the churches if they engage in altruism. In particular, members can experience positive feelings of self-esteem because the church validates their preferred self-evaluations as having chosen to identify with organisations that possess favourable public images (Dukerich, Golden & Shortell, 2002; Gioia, Schultz, & Corley, 2000; Hatch & Schultz, 2004). For example, members of the Salvation Army can take pride in the organisation's involvement in its good works, and are afforded the

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[69] "In the same way your light must shine in people's sight, so that seeing your good works, they may give praise to your Father in heaven."

[70] "In brotherly love let your feelings of deep affection for one another come to expression and regard others as more important than yourself."

privilege of experiencing the prestige of the organisation, which aids in the development of their positive distinctiveness (Allen & Wilder, 1975; Billig & Tajfel, 1973). However, altruism has organisational benefits for the churches. In fact, because of altruism, identifying members can, and probably will, defend the church should its image become compromised (Dutton & Dutton, 1991) and will enact citizenship behaviours that sustain the organisation (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Organ, 1988; Podasakoff, Mackenzie, Paine & Bachrach, 2000). In this way, members assist in maintaining their church's position of power, because as Cheney and Tompkins (1985) found, organisational members will willingly accept the control of organisations on the condition that they receive some incentive: here, members accept control to experience self-esteem. Therefore, in capitalising on the altruistic behaviour of the churches, members can bind themselves to their church through the process of identification, ultimately choosing to make life decisions that reflect approved religious teachings and support the authoritative position these churches wish to hold in society.

In emphasising their altruistic behaviours, the churches also point to how membership will produce favourable identities for members. For instance, for the Greek Orthodox congregants, engaging in the sacraments will cleanse an individual's impurity. However, these altruistic behaviours entail the creation of unpleasant identities for members, who are portrayed as sinful, subordinate and inadequate. If the church highlights these unfavourable identities, it may engender disidentification, but my data also suggest that the churches encourage members to experience the sense-breaking referred to by Pratt (2000), when members are led to re-evaluate their self-concepts in line with the expectations of the organisation. The church, then, has the opportunity to present itself, and specifically these very same altruistic activities, as a means by which members can develop self-esteem. Accordingly, members may feel that their church is looking out for them and may make decisions that favour the organisation in what Cheney and Tompkins (1985) consider the enthymeme process. Members who identify with their organisation may accept that organisation's decisional premises as their own and in making decisions, will choose the alternatives that best fit that organisation's needs. Enacting this enthymeme process, then, is valuable for churches as they are able to control a distributed membership into meeting organisational objectives, even when members are away from the church, because the church functions as a sense-maker.

Although the churches are motivated to be altruistic, that altruism seems to come at a price to members. For example, *fear and guilt appeals* are incorporated that can make members feel vulnerable (Coote, Coulter & Moore, 2005; Sutton & Hallett, 1988) without their church or responsible for their church's well-being. An example is observed in the address of the leader of the Elim Church who refers to the "tiresome" work God does in order to make members both grateful and guilty enough to undertake God's work too. Previous research (Duncan, 2002; Eckstein, 2005) has shown that the use of guilt and fear appeals are not uncommon in church communications and they are intended to arouse identification in members. Thus, the churches might offer services to aid their members, but they are articulated in such a way that members are required to give back to their church. Therefore, identification with the church is not voluntary and the altruistic acts of the church become a commodity that is 'bought and sold' in a transaction between church and member. As Albert and Whetten (2004) argue, organisations possess hybrid identities that will mean a church looks less like a normative, traditional organisation and more like a utilitarian organisation over time. My early assertion that churches are increasingly exhibiting the characteristics of secular, market-driven organisations seems to be confirmed in the messages permeating the religious communications studied, particularly as an underlying motivation of survival for the organisation also emerged in the data.

As they operate in an environment of religious pluralism (Berger, 1967; Luckmann, 1967; Olson, 1993), finding that each of the churches analysed was motivated to maintain its survival is not entirely unexpected. Stark and Bainbridge (1985) and Finke and Stark (1988) argued that rivalry abounds among church and secular institutions because they all compete to target a heterogeneous audience aware of their options. Therefore, it is difficult to accuse the churches in this study of acting immorally in their pursuit of memberships and strengthening current identifications, particularly as the churches were not the only beneficiaries of their motivation for survival. That is, although the church benefited from the longevity of memberships, members' active participation meant they could attain feelings of belonging, experience self-validation and could adopt the religious view that life should be perceived positively, all of which solidified understandings of their own self-concepts.

However, the motivation of survival does become immoral when churches, serving their own self-interest, present attendance as essential, removing the freedom of choice and informed consent, and consequently manipulating and bribing members into aligning with the organisation. In some cases, the need for members to be active participants was overtly presented. For example, the Pentecostal churches urged members to attend key events otherwise they would not receive the gifts of God, while the Greek Orthodox Church preached the need for stewardship, which simply meant giving money and service to the church. Although the forceful tone in the texts could actually push some members to disidentify rather than participate, in instances of success, the active engagement could flow into commitment and loyalty to the organisation (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Carroll, 1995; Treadwell & Harrison, 1994), which would maintain its survival. As an added benefit, that same commitment could mean the churches retained power and control as members amend their attitudes and behaviours to support the organisation. Therefore, although survival is a necessity for the churches, how they go about achieving it does come into question when members are pushed towards aligning with the church rather than voluntarily making that decision.

Survival of the church was also encouraged in subtle ways. For example, St Matthew-in-the-city suggest that people 'pray like it's 1987', portraying the activity of praying as useful in establishing an All Blacks rugby world cup win. The church does not actually say that people need to go to church to pray, but those that see the value in praying and witness the All Blacks win, might be inclined towards the church as a result, which could have flow-on effects to its survival. Similarly, the Presbyterian church of Tauranga argues that 'Atheists having nothing to worry about', subtly scaring factions of society into attending church in order to feel secure in their future. Although neither instance tells members and the wider public to identify with the church, how people respond to the messages can actually lead to participation in the church, assisting its survival. However, the survival of the church could be undone by members' myriad identities that possess conflicting beliefs (Abraham & Anderson, 1984; Parekh, 2009). Therefore, the text producers might have been motivated by the need to sustain the survival of the church, encouraging members to take a religious outlook on aspects of the world to bind them to their religious organisation, but if they were not successful in getting members to adopt their identity construction, the survival may not be sustained.

Summary

In conclusion, by appearing altruistic and striving to prolong their survival, the churches of this study are able to mobilise members toward holding salient religious identities that are invoked in all situations for the betterment of the churches. That is, members adopt the positive self-assessments promoted by their church and show their appreciation by acting in church sanctioned ways. Therefore, members who possess salient religious identities exhibit pride in their organisational attachment (Pfeffer & Fong, 2005), which is projected out to society through members' interactions with fellow members and unbelievers. Accordingly, the churches establish for themselves positive images that may make an increasingly secularised country, such as New Zealand, more open to and perhaps accepting of these churches and their messages.

Ultimately, by striving to prolong the churches survival, the producers of these communications are also attempting to maintain their influence over society. As has been apparent over the centuries, in holding the support of members, religious hierarchies have managed to possess a degree of control over the cognition and action of groups; a control they only retain by having people who believe in the church and who are willing to be subordinate (Reber, 2006). The texts analysed include evidence that suggests members are encouraged to aid their church: for instance, the Elim church suggests to members that they need to build their church through the acquisition of new members. Therefore, not only are the churches attempting to bind current members more closely to the church, but they are mobilising these members towards proselytising unbelievers, which if successful, can extend the power and influence of these churches over society.

9.4 Future Research

The versatility of Cheney's (1983a) typology makes possible an abundance of other textual analysis projects. For instance, an exploration of identity construction in church worship is a future direction, as is analysing the communications from other, perhaps secular, organisations. In particular, examining public service announcements or marketing from organisations such as weight watchers would be an interesting avenue of analysis, because much like the churches of this study, these communications require

adopting new attitudes and behaviours associated with an individual's self-concept by forfeiting a part of the *self*. Thus, research in these fields could be used to continue discussion of the implications of identity conflict and disidentification as they might permit examination into the degree of difficulty that accompanies the need and desire to change self-concepts. Of course, there is also scope to compare the internal and external communications distributed by organisations for variations in how they construct member identity to possibly evaluate and extend Cheney's typology.

Future research that could advance the research conclusions of this thesis would be the undertaking of interviews with both the producers and consumers of religious texts. DiSanza and Bullis (1999), used Cheney's (1983a) typology to discern attempts at identification in the newsletters distributed to forest service workers, and later interviewed members for whether they actually responded to the identity constructing found in the texts. However, interviewing to determine the success of attempts at identity construction has limitations, especially as communications often reinforce constructions established elsewhere (DiSanza & Bullis, 1999). Similarly, inquiring as to the motivations held by the producers' of the texts at the time of their development can be difficult if the messages are created preconciously (Janiszewski, 1988; Moskowitz, Li & Kirk, 2004). Nevertheless, it is still worthwhile to interview recipients of persuasive communications to determine whether there is a correlation between the degree of religiosity one has with their church and how likely the person is to accept the identity constructing messages of the persuasive communications.

Another area for future research that is worth exploring, and in which I have only tentatively engaged in my own research, is a merging of Dryzek's (1997) and Cheney's (1983a) methods. In my own research I have for the most part, treated both methods as separate entities, but there is scope to strengthen an individual's textual analysis by uniting their processes. Dryzek's (1997) discourse analysis offers a straightforward comprehensive look at both the text (micro level) and broad social context of a text (macro level), recognising potential influences that could impact a text's production and lead to identity construction, yet it lacks specific details on how to recognise, key metaphors and other rhetorical devices. Cheney (1983a), however, focuses his analysis to the level of the text (micro level) rather than the social context (macro level),

meaning the social context under which the text was produced, are not necessarily accounted for. My suggestion then, is that research could be done to determine the validity of these merged methods to evaluate whether detecting attempts at identity construction are improved.

9.5 Conclusion

My research has demonstrated that, not only were the rhetorical devices of Cheney's (1983a) typology evident in the communications of churches in New Zealand, but they were also incorporated both intentionally and unintentionally to construct member identities. These identities established prototypical characteristics (Hogg & Terry, 2000) for members to internalise in order to fit with the church in-group. For members, the decision to identify was strengthened by perceived benefits such as self-validation and self-esteem, but benefits could also be experienced by the churches, as identifying members can, in some cases, be relied on to make decisions that favour the church (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985), to defend the church against criticism (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991) and to contribute to their church's survival. In terms of my contribution to knowledge, I have amended the tactics of Cheney's (1983a) typology in order to account for other instances of identity construction. Additionally, in following earlier scholarship which also used the typology (Adler, 1995; Ahmed, 2009; Chreim, 2002; DiSanza & Bullis, 1999), my research further corroborates Burke's (1969) work on consubstantiality and identification, which can be achieved by establishing common ground, creating antithesis and aligning the dissimilar interests of identifying group. However, disidentification presents because of oppositional readings of texts.

This research was not designed to generalise, yet a conclusion that encompasses all of the churches of this study, is that despite New Zealand's cultural diversity, the rhetorical devices identified by Cheney (1983a) assist in disseminating the unifying messages of the Christian Church. The accompanying global messages and stylistic conventions continue to influence factions of New Zealand and can maintain the presence of Christianity in a contemporaneous society.

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