Work in a Spiritual Place

An Ethnographic Study of the Nature of Organisational Life in Self-Sustaining Spiritual Communities

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Abstract

This study investigates a body of work under the banner of 'spirituality in the workplace', which, although having precedents in numerous earlier writings examining the relationship between religion and organisational life, arguably began in the middle 1980's and continues to the present. The literature appears to be broadly divided into those authors promoting the idea of a more spiritually informed workplace, and those offering more critical views; this study approaches the subject from this more critical position. More specifically, where most of the literature discusses the notion of 'spirituality in the workplace', and does not engage with theological or mystical work, this study offers a critical perspective based on empirical work carried out in two self-supporting spiritual communities, and therefore represents a consideration of 'work in a spiritual place'. Furthermore, the study is supported by reference to theological and mystical writing, as well as contributions from Jungian psychology.

The empirical work takes the form of an ethnographic study of two self-supporting spiritual communities; a Benedictine monastery in Gloucestershire and a Buddhist giftware business based in Cambridge. Data was collected by in-depth interviews and participant observation spanning approximately two and a half years, and included substantial time spent in both communities. Essentially, the study finds that the form of spiritual workplace envisaged by much of the spirituality in the workplace writing differs from the experience of the people in these two communities in certain important respects. Most notably these communities do not adopt a managerial stance in regards to decision making and they also aspire to non-dualistic and non-reified

orientations that contrast sharply with the emphases in the spirituality in the workplace literature. In addition, the communities studied here consciously engage with traditional symbol and ritual, and these represent the imaginal means by which the community is held together and by which the individual seeks spiritual growth. The conclusions drawn from these observations are that spiritual communities offer a rich source of understanding to organisation theory in general, and to the spirituality in the workplace discourse more specifically.

Contents

ABSTRACT 1

CONTENTS 3

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 7

CHAPTER 1. THE RELEVANCE OF RELIGION AND THE NATURE OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE 8

THE BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH 9
THE AIMS OF THE RESEARCH 12
A SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH 12
THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE THESIS TO KNOWLEDGE 14
THE RELEVANCE OF RELIGION TO SCIENCE, MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION 15
'God is not dead' – The secularisation debate 16
The humanity and mythos of science and management 18
The contribution of religion and theology to science and organisation studies 24
WHY SHOULD ORGANISATION THEORISTS STUDY ALTERNATIVE AND SPIRITUAL COMMUNITIES? 26
DEFINING SPIRITUALITY 31
THE NATURE OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE 37
A non-dualistic aspiration 37
Action, grace, simplicity and reflection 40
A solitary struggle in communion with others 43
Focussing on the journey not the destination 45
SUMMARY 47

CHAPTER 2. RELIGION AS 'SOCIAL CEMENT' AND A CARRIER OF MEANING 49

RELIGION AS A FUNCTION OF SOCIAL PROCESSES 50
Marx on religion 50
Durkheim on religion 51
Weber on religion 54
THE RELIGIOUS IMPULSE AND A SYMBOLIC RENDERING OF MEANING 57
The reality of the psyche and the role of myth 58
The historical development of the Western myth 61
A symbolic reading of Christianity 63
THE DEMISE OF RELIGION AND THE GROWTH OF SPIRITUALITY 65
The movement from collective to individual experience 66
Spirituality as a growth in consciousness 68
Why the increased interest in spirituality now? 71
The search for meaning 75
SUMMARY 78

CHAPTER 3. THE SPIRITUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE LITERATURE 81

THE CONTEXT OF THE DISCOURSE – WHERE, WHEN, WHY AND HOW? 81
THE CRUSADERS 87
Defining spirituality in the workplace 87
The benefits of spirituality in the workplace 90
Implementing spirituality in the workplace 95
THE CRITICS 99
Functional and managerial 100

Manipulation and control 100
The managerial emphasis 103
Extraordinary science? 110
Incommensurable with the dominant paradigm 112
Dualistic *114*
Assuming spirituality is absent 114
Separating spirituality from religion 116
SUMMARY 118

CHAPTER 4. METHODOLOGY 120

TOPIC SELECTION AND THE RESEARCH SITES 121
METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES- FROM POSITIVISM TO THE POST POST MODERN 123
Reflexivity in reflective organisations *126*
THE METHODS OF THIS STUDY 131
Ethnography and its limitations in this study *131*
Case studies *135*
THE RESEARCH PROCESS 136
Secondary data *136*
Primary data *138*
The 'insider'-'outsider' distinction 138
Finding research sites and gaining access 141
Data collection 148
Data analysis 155
Data interpretation 158
SUMMARY 161

CHAPTER 5. PRINKNASH ABBEY – THE BENEDICTINE EXPERIENCE 163

THE PURPOSE AND MEANING OF THE COMMUNITY 164
The Rule of St Benedict *164*
The reflective community *166*
ECONOMIC VERSUS SPIRITUAL TENSIONS 169
The business interests of Prinknash *169*
Balancing ethics and pragmatism *170*
The spiritual life as an exchange relationship *173*
Spirituality and non-dualism *175*
DECISION MAKING, MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP 177
Decision-making as if people mattered *177*
ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE 182
Balancing survival with spiritual goals *182*
Balancing survival with the present moment *185*
The emphasis on impermanence *186*
Balancing the pace of change with spiritual goals *187*
SYMBOL AND RITUAL 188
The symbols of the liturgy and the working day *188*
The physical symbols *190*
The role of symbol and ritual in the growth of the individual and stability of the organisation *193*
Mystery and the limitations of the symbol *196*
SUMMARY 196

CHAPTER 6. WINDHORSE: EVOLUTION – THE BUDDHIST EXPERIENCE 199

THE PURPOSE AND MEANING OF THE COMMUNITY 201
Formal purpose *201*
The reasons for being there *202*

Teams, friendship and trust 205
Ordination 207
Community living and practicing the dharma 210
ECONOMIC VERSUS SPIRITUAL TENSIONS 213
DECISION MAKING, MANAGEMENT AND CHANGE 218
SYMBOL AND RITUAL 222
Work as a spiritual practice 225
Non-dualism 228
SUMMARY 232

CHAPTER 7. AN INTERPRETATION OF WORK IN A SPIRITUAL PLACE 234

NON-MANAGERIAL 235
Consultative, flexible and pragmatic 236
Spiritual development – the individual in communion 237
Action and reflection 240
NON-DUALISTIC 242
Integration 244
Symbol, ritual and the non-dualistic aspiration 247
NON-REIFIED 254
The emphasis of meaning over purpose 257
The emphasis on the present rather than the future 260
The emphasis on direct experience over intellect 267
SUMMARY 271

CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSION 274

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN ARGUMENTS AND FINDINGS 274
THE CONTRIBUTION TO ORGANISATION STUDIES 275
The non-dualistic aspiration 276
The conscious engagement with symbol and ritual 280
The non-reified organisation 281
THE CONTRIBUTION TO MANAGEMENT PRACTICE 282
Trust 282
Leadership & Management 283
Work/life balance 284
Non-dualism 285
Symbol & Ritual 286
THE FUTURE OF THE SPIRITUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE DISCOURSE 288
Learning from spiritual communities 289
The life of the symbol 289
The search for meaning 291
PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS 292
Reflecting on reflexivity 292
Some final reflections 293
On why I did this work 294
On the 'shadow side' of these communities 296
On my own dualism 298
On the reception of this work 300
On my future in writing and teaching 303
CONCLUSION 305

REFERENCES 308

APPENDIX ONE – THE TEN PRECEPTS 336

APPENDIX TWO – THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS AND THE EIGHT-FOLD NOBLE PATH 337

APPENDIX THREE - IMAGES OF PRINKNASH ABBEY 338
APPENDIX FOUR - IMAGES OF WINDHORSE: EVOLUTION 340

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Chapter 1. The relevance of religion and the nature of the spiritual life

Somewhere around the middle 1980's management and organisation theorists and practitioners began to write substantively about what was to become known as 'spirituality in the workplace'. Although Europeans have contributed since then, it was North American writers which dominated the field and this continues to the present. The stimulus behind this particular research came from reading this literature, but my academic interest in religion and its connection with economics, organisation and management began in 1985 as an undergraduate. On a personal level my interest in religion goes much further back.

My reaction to the literature in question was broadly one of surprise. First, in regard to certain unstated assumptions and second by the dearth of empirical work, more specifically, work enquiring into the experiences of people living and working in spiritual communities. I felt that these experiences could contribute substantially to the spirituality in the workplace conversation. Closer examination of the literature led me to note its Christian emphasis and also the paucity of theological reference points.

These and other issues became more apparent as I read and it is hoped that this work will contribute to organisation studies and more specifically, to the emerging field of spirituality in the workplace, by introducing some philosophical, empirical and methodological issues which I feel are underrepresented.

The background of the research

This work might be difficult to apprehend in the absence of some contextual framing, so this first chapter begins with a comment on the background to the work and my interest in it, as well as autobiographical comments.

The original proposal for this research included a section on how I had come to be interested in religion, spirituality and organisational life. The reader was subjected to a sanitised version of a messy business and left with the impression that life had been a well planned expedition; linear, few digressions, fewer wrong turns and no cul-de-sacs. This was not the case, but there were a few landmark moments which, taken together suggest a degree of consistency in interests. I have been interested in religion from an early age. My parents wanted me to have some understanding of the Christian religion, even though they were not church goers. I went to Sunday school in a small Baptist church in Colchester in Essex, where I learned the stories of the Bible[1] and asked awkward questions which, looking back, were probably more designed to gain attention than understanding. Some of my school friends were also in the Sunday school, but the most powerful reasons for my attendance were football and camping holidays. Even though I attended Sunday school, I can well remember telling my school friends I was an atheist. Whatever that meant to me, I did not sing hymns in school assembly, and would instead rehearse my atheist justification for this, in case a teacher asked me why I wasn't singing.

Beyond collecting Bibles, I had little further connection with religion from that time until in 1982 when, at the age of twenty-six, I was given a copy of Edward Conze's

[1] All Biblical references are from Holy *Bible* (1982) *The New King James Version.* Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

'Buddhist Scriptures' (1959) and I immediately felt some connection to Buddhist teachings. While the strange imagery and culturally alien ideas such as Karma were difficult, there seemed to be some common sense to the Buddha's teachings. If pressed to say further why these teachings had an impact two things stand out; that it made no claims to be better than other faiths and seemed to lack the need to 'convert', and this was important to me.[2]

However inauspicious my earliest religious explorations were, something did stay with me and manifested not only in undergraduate and postgraduate work, but also in the authors I chose to read. After reading Bede Griffiths *'Return to the Centre'* (1976) in 1989 I travelled to South India to meet him in 1990. Griffiths' work on interfaith dialogue, particularly East/West, dialogue influenced the choice of subject matter for this study. I also made a second trip in 1995 to Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh, Northern India, where I was fortunate enough to meet His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama in a public forum.

That was fourteen years ago, and this autobiographical comment must end with some observations about my position now. First, I do not see my spiritual development as being in any way complete, but as an ongoing process which encapsulates all of life's

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[2] My atheist position was superficial and I have since been reluctant to commit to a particular tradition and this had a lot to do with an experience when I was about 13 years old. My best friend's father was killed as a pedestrian in Colchester where I was brought up. I was in his house when the news came and was asked to leave. My friend's mother eventually remarried to a Jehovah's Witness and my abiding memory was of calling for him one Saturday morning and seeing him walk down his driveway towards me, his face stained with tears. His long hair had been roughly cut short and, as he recounted to me, his stepfather and brother, by now converted to the Jehovah's Witnesses, had tied him to a chair to enforce this upon him, the bruises on his wrists were clear. He was no longer permitted to be my friend and the progressive rock music which formed the common ground of our friendship was taken away from him. Our friendship came to an abrupt end and I can remember bewilderment at the pace of this change. Nevertheless, I can see my current rejection of anything that looks like extremism as being closely linked to this experience; my friend was eventually 'converted' and he and his family began to try to convert me too via our continued connection at secondary school. I recall my parent's unusually strong council against this as I began to see becoming a Jehovah's Witness as a way to regain my friend. This, I think led to a reluctance to join a particular religious group and an acceptance of other's faiths rather than a complete rejection of religion.

experiences, however I might label them. Second, because of the experiences I have had, the reading I have done and the people I have met, I adopt an ecumenical stance and I have therefore tried, in this work, to give voice to the different traditions I have encountered. I have for a long time not felt the need to say my 'faith' is better than any other, only that it 'works' for me to the extent that it does, and I celebrate the working of the faiths of others up to, but not including, the point of their claim to superiority. This stance has been fuelled by reading of the scriptures of other faiths for the last twenty-six years and while I have not committed to a particular faith, Buddhism has been the closest I have come to doing that.

This research began, I claimed, with an interest in religion, as if religion were for me an academic and intellectual matter from which I was separated by a reasoning mind, yet I never truly believed this to be the case. From the beginning of the work I knew it was meaningful to me in some way, although I could not have articulated it. I have not been separated from this work, observing dispassionately and from a safe distance, the workings of spiritual communities or the literature; at each step I experienced an inner reaction, often confused and always challenging. This specific project actually began with an adverse reaction to the 'spirituality in the workplace' literature which seemed to trivialise my struggles, reducing them to a set of prescriptive measures for creating 'spiritual organisations' and placing management in a pastoral role. For me it has been an inner and solo journey, and so being confronted with literature that potentially made the journey the responsibility of 'the organisation' and 'the management' generated an immediate and suspicious reaction. So, while I do present a critical view here, I am keen

to offer a different perspective based on my own experience and that of people for whom the spiritual journey is consciously, a life-long endeavour.

The aims of the research

Although the phrase occurred to me much later, this study enquires into 'work in a spiritual place', as opposed to 'spirituality in the workplace'. More specifically, the study aims:

1. To reveal the nature of organisational life in self-sustaining spiritual communities.
2. To allow the voices of theologians and mystical writers to contribute to the conversation.
3. To compare those voices with those of the spirituality in the workplace discourse in order to reveal difference and commonality.

In this way the study aims to offer a fresh perspective on the spirituality in the workplace conversation.

A summary of the research

Chapter one argues for the relevance of religious perspectives in science in general and organisation studies specifically. This is achieved, first by an examination of the secularisation debate, and second by consideration of the idea that science, and social science, and organisation studies in particular, can gain much from dialogue with

religious and theological discourses. The chapter also demonstrates the need for closer examination of alternative communities generally and, more specifically, religious communities. There follows a consideration of various attempts to define spirituality and, having noted the difficulty with defining spirituality, the chapter concludes with an exploration of the nature of the spiritual life drawing on diverse sources.

Chapter two focuses the research further by considering the relation between religion and religious belief on the one hand and wealth creation and organisational life on the other. This is approached by drawing on sociological literature beginning with Classical social theorists including Marx (1963), Weber (1965) and Durkheim (1915) and concludes with more recent sociological contributions. The chapter continues with an examination of contributions from psychology, particularly Jung (1963) and (1973)[3].

Chapter three focuses the research still further via a critical consideration of the spirituality in the workplace literature. Whereas spirituality in the workplace writers frequently attempt to define spirituality, as would be required of them in academic circles, a key observation of the work of many spiritual and theological writers is that the spiritual is beyond ordinary language. There follows a critical examination of the content of the literature.

Chapter four begins by exploring the methodological issues which impacted on the study and includes recognition of the 'outsider' status of myself in these communities. The methods finally used in the study are discussed and the process of the research is delineated. The research takes the form of an ethnographic study of two separate

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[3] All references to the work of Carl Jung, unless otherwise stated, are from Jung, C. G. (1973). *Collected Works of C G Jung.* Adler, G., Fordham, M., and Read, H., (Eds.) Volumes 1-20. London: Routledge.

spiritual communities which are economically self sustaining. The communities in question are firstly, Windhorse: Evolution; a Cambridge based wholesale and retail giftware business run entirely by Western Buddhists and adhering to Buddhist principles. The second community is Prinknash Abbey; a Benedictine community in Gloucestershire, adhering the Rule of St Benedict, also self sustaining, although different in many ways from Windhorse: Evolution.

Chapters five and six present the case study material. The two cases have been treated differently, partly because they are so different, and partly because there was no substantive intention to make comparisons between the two communities.

Chapter seven addresses the issues identified in the first three chapters and particularly the extent to which the underlying emphases found in the spirituality in the workplace literature coincide with the findings in these two case studies.

The structure of the work emerged from the rather contentious nature of the subject matter. To begin with there are question marks over whether religion and religious communities are a fruitful lines of enquiry for organisation studies at all. Certainly, religion and spiritual communities in particular have not figured substantially in organisational studies literature. These issues are dealt with in this first chapter.

The contribution of the thesis to knowledge

The study identifies the presence of a conscious aspiration to integrate all aspects of organisational life rather than to separate different elements. Dualisms such as work/leisure, spiritual/non-spiritual, and management/non-management are not seen as helpful in these communities. This does not imply the dualisms are not present, but in each case the overriding intention of the individual is to seek their own spiritual growth

in communion with others. The different facets of organisational life are seen as contributing to this end.

The study also identifies the presence of conscious engagement with symbol and ritual, alone and in communion with others, as a means by which the community is held together and the individual's spiritual growth might be furthered. This contrasts with the bulk of the spirituality in the workplace literature which so far does not appear to address the role of symbol and ritual in its discussions of the spiritual workplace.

The study further identifies the presence of a non-reified orientation to organisational life, one in which individuals consciously focus on direct and immediate personal experience rather than on abstractions, intellect, formal purpose and the future.

The relevance of religion to science, management and organisation

For centuries organised religion in the West has, in some quarters, been derided as irrelevant, destructive, confusing, corrupt and divisive. Perhaps then we should not been surprised when Bartunek (1999) says , *'...little attention has been paid in the organizational literature to formal religious organizations as sources for scholarship'*. A study designed to reveal some of the influence of religious teachings on the process of organisational life may therefore seem to be a particularly Canutian exercise. Studies of this nature are certainly not in plentiful supply and the sceptic might well say the reason is that religion is irrelevant to contemporary organisations. But the assertion that religion is irrelevant begs the question irrelevant to who? This section considers why we should

study religious teachings and their relevance to contemporary organisations. I begin with an examination of the secularisation thesis.

'God is not dead' – The secularisation debate

'God is Dead'- Nietchze 1911

'The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated'. Mark Twain 1897

Sociological enquiries into religion have centered on the relationship between modernisation and secularisation. Berger (1973) argues that cultural and religious pluralism have led to the weakening of values and faith. While there can be little doubt that cultural and religious affiliations have been in decline for a long time, Joas (2008) argues that the secularisation thesis needs examination and qualification. Citing an apparent turnaround by Jurgan Habermas in his 2001 acceptance speech for the Peace Prize entitled, '*... post secular society*', Joas (2008) asks what *'post secular'* means. For something to be *'post'* the must have been a *'pre'*; that is, we must have experienced a secular society from which we are now emerging. But secular can mean two things; first a loss of religious significance and/or second, the emergence of the religiously neutral state, and neither of these are accurate.

First, while religion has declined in some places because of state suppression and in Western and ex colonial countries, nevertheless, Joas (2008: 106) concludes; '*it would be utterly Eurocentric to conclude that these facts constitute a global trend'*. It is not true of all European states and demonstrably not true of the USA, Russia, China and much of South America. Habermas, says Joas, (2008: 107) underestimates religion when he claims that a society which; '*adapts to the fact that religious communities continue in a*

context of ongoing secularisation is post-secular'. For Joas (2008) there has been no epoch breaking moment. The secularisation of society is a geographically specific phenomenon and shows no sign of becoming a global one. The second possible meaning of the word secularisation is the emergence of a religiously neutral state such as in Germany. Placing restrictions on religious expression Joas (2008) argues is being wrongly labelled the secularisation of society. Religion is present, but suppressed.

In 1934 in *'A Common Faith'* Dewey sought to de-institutionalise religion and concentrated instead on the religious experience, he also suggested that people should have faith in democracy. The *'sacralisation of democracy'*, as Joas puts it (2008), has its echoes in a variety of 'isms' thrown up by the 20th century.[4] In deriding religion as the *'opium of the people'*, Marx and Engels (in Bottomore and Rubel, 1963: 41) hoped to position Socialism as the new religion. Durkheim (1915) regarded all religion as rooted in its social setting, and the individual gradually loses a sense of self as he or she engages more in the practices and beliefs of the group, this *'collective effervescence'* makes the individual less able to reflect. Similarly, Jung (1963) argued man is in search of his soul which was lost in the 20th century leading to disorientation and hysteria. For Durkheim (1915) the problem is how to maintain social cohesion without losing individualism and the answer is also of a secular nature, not religious. For Joas (2008) however, the aim must now be to sacralise the person, which he says is possible in the context of

[4] The need people have for meaning in their lives and therefore for religious affiliation was not lost on Hitler and Himmler as they attempted to bolster the notion of the master race with ritual, and symbol befitting any major religion. And so they set about hijacking the myth of Atlantis and the legends around King Arthur and the Knights of the Roundtable to reinforce German claims to human supremacy. Nazi regalia and ceremony which comes to us only through Nazi propaganda film, was clearly designed to have the effect of cementing in the German mind their natural superiority. For John Gray (2007) what all these 'isms' have in common is the notion of utopia. All claimed to have, not a set of policies, but an entire system which would lead to the promised land, and while Christianity was at the root of much of this, traditional religion was conspicuous by its absence.

modernisation. There may be evidence that this is happening, for example, Walter and Waterhouse (1999) found a surprisingly high level of belief in reincarnation in England which, they say, while different to Eastern conceptions, fits the notion of privatized religion. It may be that what we are witnessing, in the growth of the 'spirituality in the workplace' literature, is this very thing, but as this study argues, there are some significant issues to be addressed before such an assertion can be made.

The humanity and mythos of science and management

If we are not witnessing global secularization, then a second line of argument claims that the scientific mind has replaced the religious as a way of explaining life and therefore religion is irrelevant. This view is underpinned by the most strident assertion that there is no God. Perhaps the best known anti-religion protagonist is Richard Dawkins (2007) whose books and television documentaries have taken the discussion out of the universities and into the public domain. Dawkins' (2007: 137) chief argument is against any notion of a supernatural designer of the universe. He brings to bear on this an impressive array of 'evidence' that God *'almost certainly'* doesn't exist. and goes on to argue that religion, having found its origins in the human propensity to form cults, then goes on to cause wars as members of cults seek not only to defend their beliefs, but also to promulgate them and then to dominate others through them.[5] In a pointed repost

[5] Dawkins claims his main objection is to the notion of a supernatural designer and therefore has no quarrel with non-theistic religions such as Buddhism, which he says may not be a religion at all, but a philosophy. I would argue that Buddhism is a religion in the original meaning of the word (the word religion has its roots in the Latin *'religio'* meaning tie, bond or reconnect) since Buddhist practice is seen by Buddhists as a way to approach ultimate reality or Dharma as a Buddhist would call it. It is also worth pointing out that while Buddhism is not a theistic religion, it does acknowledge the role of symbol and ritual in approaching 'truth', something that all religions have done and consciously so. For the purposes of this study the objection to a supernatural designer does not exclude a contribution from the non theistic religions. For many the anthropomorphising of ultimate reality has not been helpful; even some Christian writers have

Armstrong (2009) points out that this form of atheism represents 'shallow thinking' by taking 'God' as a literalism and in doing so creates an idol, something the early church Fathers would have rejected. God is understood as an allegory and the mystery begins where words end.

Dawkins (2007: 137) assertion that there *'almost certainly is no God'* includes, en route, the idea that science is a superior form of knowing. But an alternative argument is that theology and science are alternative ways of knowing. John Polkinghorne (1998) for example, a theologian and theoretical physicist, sees science and theology as occupying opposite ends of a spectrum of rational human enquiry into reality. For Armstrong (2009) similarly Mythos and Logos are alternative frames of knowing. Furthermore, science and theology also have a number of features in common, first among which is; *'... they both believe that there is a truth to be found or, more realistically to be approximated to'* (Polkinghorne, 1998: 45).

The reference to approximation is important. Neither induction nor deduction can yield ultimate truth; all that can be achieved is the appearance of truth, not truth itself. As Polkinghorne (2003: 44) puts it scientific theories give us, *'verisimilitudinous knowledge of the structure of the physical world'*.

However, science seems only able to address the 'how' questions of our existence and not the 'why' questions. While, for the fundamentalist scientific mind, the 'why' is simple enough; there is no reason (Dawkins, 2007), for others that response is inadequate

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preferred terms such as the *'ground of our being'* Tillich (1952). Nevertheless, for many it is a doorway and while I would prefer not to use it myself, I would also not want to brick it up for others. Furthermore, the religious experience is not bound by intellectual assent to the notion of a supernatural being (Dewey 1934).

and the question 'why?' seems to be as much a part of the human experience as the 'how?' The human search for meaning is found in all cultures, at all times, and religion is one of the ways in which the search has been conducted, science is another. Indeed, the need for meaning is central to our lives, so much so that Zohar (1997) argues that it is self-actualisation that we primarily seek, and all other elements of Maslow's (1954) scheme are attendant upon that. In organisation theory authors are also making the point that people are looking for meaning in their work lives for example Cash, Gray and Rood (2000), Laabs (1995), Salopek (2000), Neal, (1997), Pava, (2004), and Pauchant, (1995). In the absence of traditional meanings for our lives, such as religious doctrine and belief, some have argued, we seek meaning in other, possibly less wholesome places. The historian Michael Burleigh (2006) for example points to the *'Dark side of the Enlightenment'* as the reason for our willingness to engage with what Joas (2008: 110) called *'the tyrannies of the secular ersatz religions of the twentieth century'*. These include Nazism, Communism, Fascism and now Consumerism, echoing Chesterton's more famous quip that *'When people cease to believe in God, they don't believe in nothing; they believe in anything'*.

The method employed by the religious mind may be different, and perhaps incommensurable, with that of science, but the goal is the same (Laszlo, 2006). However, even the distinction between ways of proceeding may not be as stark as it seems. Science proceeds in many different ways, as Feyerabend (1975) pointed out, and the social sciences in particular have, for many years, employed methods, and acknowledged epistemological positions, far removed from the objective world of the 17th century natural sciences (Braud and Anderson, 1998). Furthermore, Polkinghorne

(2003) argues that **both** science and theology are developmental or *'work in progress'* and partial.

There are also those who question the extent to which science **is** an orderly process of dispassionate, objective, impersonal enquiry, during which the scientist is embedded in a *'falsification factory'* (Midgley, 2005: 229). Kuhn's (1970) notion of scientific paradigms (loosely translated as world views) demonstrates that the scientist works within a set of assumptions about the nature of the world, and this influences the choice of topic, methods and techniques employed, and ultimately what we will find. We are not impartial observers of our condition, scientists rarely *'rejoice in refutation'* as Popper (1963) argued they should, and though perhaps some seek the *'Socrates within'*, few find him or her. Kuhn's (1970) contribution is to draw our attention to the humanity of the scientific enterprise, while it might be capable of **imagining** an objective human being, it is an abstraction; our partiality is our condition, not a methodological choice.

For the philosopher Mary Midgley (2005: 235) science is a powerful myth and a story, and no less so than the religions it frequently derides. We have a choice she says,

> *"...of what myths, what visions we will use to help us understand the physical world. We do not have a choice of understanding it without using any myths or visions at all".*

The rise of science in the 17th century is often presented as a point at which we shifted, seemingly overnight, from a medieval science allied to magic to modern science allied to mathematics. However, historians of the medieval period are clear that our

modern understandings are inextricably linked to those of that time (Heer; 1961) and more specifically Ducheyne (2006) notes that *'Newton's metaphysical system was highly theologically inspired'*. Midgley (2005) argues that seventeenth century scientists regarded the uncovering of the laws of the physical world as a further testament to the glory of God. Even during the 18th century, the anthropomorphising of what we now refer to as the price mechanism, *('the invisible hand')*, demonstrates reluctance to relinquish the supreme controller. (Smith, 1776, 1970) To corrupt Oliver Cromwell we 'trust in powder and keep our God dry'. In the 20th century Dewey (1934) also points out that many of our attitudes to our lives are religious at root, though we do not see it, much less acknowledge it. Midgley (2005) singles out Stephen Hawking, (1988: 175) who makes no use of theologians, philosophers or historians, yet frequently employs the word *'God'* and the term the *'Mind of God'*.

Humans use myth and story, consciously or otherwise as a way of living, and few are able to step outside the framework of stories by which we live. Campbell (1968) showed that humans have, from the earliest times, expressed the inexpressible and the mystery of life through myth and symbol. If theory precedes observation, as Popper (1963) argued, and imagination precedes theory as Midgley (2005) argues then what we observe, is the result of our imagination and symbolic and ritualistic praxis act as catalysts to imagination. For Cottingham (2005) the religious mind proceeds by faith which leads to 'evidence' or experience, but faith does not imply a suspension of rationality and it is, for many I would argue, the height of rationality to take a step of faith, in the presence of a mystery.

Science according to some is a religion; it has many of the characteristics of a religious faith, so much so that Losch (2005: 277) says; '*The scientist and the theologian both work by faith*'. Not only that but it also has a Priesthood and Church (the Royal Society), it employs imagination, it has vociferous proponents like Dawkins that will go to extraordinary lengths to defend the orthodoxy, it engages in ritualistic behaviour at conferences, it has symbols of its own power, (Nobel prizes) and it has a creed embedded in the methodology of objectivity.

Not only is science imbued with religious sentiment and praxis, but so too, are areas of human experience more directly related to this study, yet Demerath III et al (1998) say, '*...we pay little attention to the implicit religion in organisations*'. Management is also imbued with many of the sentiments traditionally associated with religion; faith in markets, belief, ritual, symbol, doctrine, transformation, dogma, heresy (Pattison, 1997). Others have pointed in the same direction for example regarding organisations (Bowles, 1997) and regarding economics (Gimpl and Dakin, 1984). Oslington (2010) concludes that the separation of economics and theology is neither possible nor desirable. Religious language in management settings is clear enough; 'guru', 'transformation', 'mission' and 'vision' being just some of the examples (Pattison 1997). What is more interesting is that this language is not seen as religious in nature, but as simply as borrowed from religion. But it could be argued that management is not merely metaphorically religious, but is actually so, attempts to inspire employees and persuade them to 'believe' in the 'vision' of the leader are religious in character. A closer look at the language reveals what Bowles (1997) referred to as the *'language of the*

Gods' akin to the Ten Commandments, for example, *Total Quality Management,* (Deming, 1987) and 'Excellence, '*In Search of Excellence'* (Peters and Waterman, 1982).

It has equally been demonstrated that organisational life is infused with the irrational at an emotional level (Fineman, 1993). While business and management have been seen as the province of science, at least since the work of Frederick Taylor (1911), there are many voices now in those fields that would argue the process of management is itself, anything but rational. Strategy, management, leadership, and economics are all held to be products of less than rational processes. (Stacey, 1993; Sievers, 1990; Bowles, 1991; Denhardt, 1981; Judge, 1991; and Maccoby, 2000).

Our contemporary organisations also owe a considerable amount to the church in terms of structure, symbolic presence and management ethos. Titles such as Dean and Bursar have their historical roots in the church and monastery and for whatever reasons we have retained these titles. The very physical structure of the buildings themselves some have argued, has taken its roots from the church (Hillman, 1989). The twin towers in New York were perhaps the most obvious example of our need to express the supremacy of commercial activity by being the tallest buildings, a role traditionally assigned to the church. When Heer (1961) stated that contemporary life is heavily influenced by the high Middle Ages, he was referring to the social arrangements and to the laws of the time, perhaps he might have added the physical structures of the time.

The contribution of religion and theology to science and organisation studies

Writing in 1934 John Dewey suggested that theology adopt the methods of science, by which he meant objective enquiry, but he did not identify the possibility of

religion being able to influence science. What the preceding discussion leads to is this possibility; that religious institutions, doctrine and praxis may have something to offer science in its endeavours. More specifically, it is argued here that theology might have something to contribute to organisation studies. For the fundamentalist scientist this would be unthinkable, but for those with what Polkinghorne (2003: 45) calls a *'realist cast of mind'*, there may be some grounds for hope.

Religion, with its emphasis on personal experience, mystery, faith, imagination, myth, symbol, and collective practice may help science because the latter is already imbued with these features, albeit unconsciously. Religion may be able to help science bring these attitudes to consciousness, and so influence the ways in which theory is formed (Watts, 2005). In the social sciences this has already begun to take place, for example Hertz, (1997) on reflexivity and Braud and Anderson (1998) on transpersonal research methods.

Over two and half thousand years ago the Eastern religions identified many things which 'modern science' is only just beginning to grasp, for example, particle physics and the movement of science into considerations of chaos and uncertainty (Capra 1976). Still more optimistically, Walters and Kriyananda (2006: 29) suggest that the ideas of science are:

> *"strikingly similar to the ideas that come to the mind of spiritually intuitive persons, giving rise to the hope that with the recognition that at the bottom, objective reality and spiritual truth are one, the historic opposition (or feud) between science and spirituality can at last be overcome".*

More specific to this study, religious institutions, doctrine and praxis may be able to inform our organisational and management theorising. Contemporary writers claim that mythical and religious insight can help management on a day to day basis. For example, considerations of the insights of the ancient Greek mind have been the concern of organisation theorists (Bowles, 1997). Louis (1994) suggests the Quaker approaches may have something to offer management. A non Western perspective has also been identified, such as Kemochan et al (2007) who point to the Buddhist emphasis on self reflection, as does Gould (1995). Other writers suggesting a Buddhist perspective in business include Alexandrin (1993). Some have suggested Taoist perspectives (Pheng, 1994; Heider, 1995; Vaill, 1989), Islamic perspectives are present too in these commentaries (Beekun and Badawi; 2005).

Why should organisation theorists study alternative and spiritual communities?

Communal living has not been well received by almost everybody except those living that life. Armytage (1961: 430) reports that Marx and Engels were among the first to deride the attempt to live in alternative ways and described people that attempted to initiate such communities as, *'fanatical, superstitious and pedantic'*. Many of the criticisms levelled at these communities relate to the supposed attempt to create a utopia, a heaven on earth, as is evident from this quotation from Bertrand de Jouvenal (in Armytage, 1961: 432) *'Utopians in the real are beyond question abominable'*. While the

communities in question appear to have no desire to proselytize, their protagonists are disproportionately zealous in their efforts to dispel them, presumably in favour of their own (much more universal) forms of utopia which the philosopher John Gray (2007) would add include Communism, Capitalism, Socialism and Fascism. The attempt to organise differently from the prevailing mode has continued to surface since Plato's Republic (Moss-Kanter, 1973). This suggests that something deeper in the human condition seeks expression (and is therefore worthy of our attention). Armytage, (1961: 433) says these communities are; '*...protests against permanent bureaucratic and hierarchical structures, against inertia and atrophy*'.

A further reason we rarely study alternative organisations is that by some measure they do not appear to be successful, in his survey of communal living over at least 2000 years Rexroth (1974) concludes that while some communities have survived for significant periods of time, most have failed. The problem for many such communities as Rexroth (1974) finds, is that they are unsuccessful in controlling membership which has the effect of watering down the ideology, the opposite is equally a problem, namely that by creating a rigid ideology the community is unable to benefit from resources from outside itself and is therefore likely to disintegrate through stagnation Niv (1980).

However, what is meant by failure? Some have survived and continue to flourish, O'Neill (1997) for example examined the history, tenets and life style of the American Amish community and concluded that it had survived, in part at least, because of its unambiguous value system, its emphasis on integration and continuity and its meaningful rites and rituals. Organisations of any type rarely continue ad infinitum, on this basis we should study only existing organisations for clues as to how to organise in the future, this

is clearly unhelpful. Assuming survival is the only measure of success negates the experiences of those living in the communities and the lessons they learned. Peters and Watermans' (1982) book *'In Search of Excellence'* sold 1.5 million copies and surveyed 200 'excellent companies', many of which eventually failed. If communal living should not be studied because they haven't survived, then the experiences of the people in Peter's and Waterman's study should likewise be erased from history, again, not very helpful.

Frederick Taylor (1911) and those that followed him considered the *'one best way'* (Kanigel, 1997) to organise for companies whose chief purpose was deemed to be profit maximisation. Like science itself, contemporary management theorising struggles to acknowledge it roots. It rarely traces them further back than Taylor and the Classical management theorists.[6] Yet while the study of organisations with profit in a subordinated position is deemed unimportant, the form of organisation itself is older and more matured than its contemporary profit oriented counterpart. There are celebrated examples of organisations with a profit purpose but philanthropic sentiments. A number of these organisations emerged throughout the 19th century and many became household names, synonymous with success and fair play; Cadbury and Rowntree to name but two. There are even examples of 20th century commercial organisations which are successful and yet which appear to organise in very different ways to the standard commercial model. Richard Semler's book Maverick (1993) prompted Charles Handy to comment on the back cover that Semco, (Semler's company inherited from his father) had, *'revived his*

[6] The belief that the West 'invented' management is an unquestioned assumption of our time, yet history is peppered with texts which demonstrate that the attempt to codify the management process predates Taylor significantly, Sun Tzu (1963) in the East and Machiavelli (1961) in the West being obvious examples. Reluctance to acknowledge the 'Johnny come lately' status of Western thinking more generally was demonstrated by Fritjof Capra in 1976.

faith in human beings and his hope for businesses everywhere'. Collins and Porras (2002) in their study of contemporary visionary companies conclude that they have survived over long periods because of the *'sense of togetherness and community'*. An attempt to answer some of the questions that arise from this phenomenon might yield interesting results for the contemporary organisation theorist. Why do people continue to try to organise differently? What are they trying to express? What, if anything, have they learned from previous attempts to do it? And what can commercial organisations learn from them?

What I have referred to as *'alternative communities'* and others as *'intentional communities'* (Rexroth, 1974), includes a substantial proportion instigated and run according to religious precepts. It is argued here, and by McGrath (2005 and 2007) that these communities are a rich source of understanding for contemporary organisation theorists. Rexroth (1974) shows the existence of religiously based communities surviving economically as far back as the Essenes living beside what is now the Dead Sea 2000 years ago. The problems that contemporary management theorists grapple with have been present in religious organisations for a long time (Demerath, 1998). For example, battles over what form the church would eventually take in the century following the death of Jesus are well documented, (Pagels, 1979) and interestingly the vanquished seem to have had some insight into these problems and some solutions.[7]

More importantly to this study, the economic success of monasteries, Benedictine and Cistercian, are well known (Brooke, 2006). *The Rule of St Benedict,* written about

[7] The Gnostic Gospels reveal some very forward thinking including for example the notion of women bishops and rotating bishopric (Pagels, 1979).

1500 years ago, was the dominant 'Rule' of many written by the founders of monastic orders to guide the brethren in their daily activities, both spiritual and economic,

> *"The evil of avarice must have no part in establishing prices, which should, therefore, always be a little lower than people outside the monastery are able to set".* (Fry, 1982: Ch57 v7-9)

More recently, writers have begun to consider the *Rule of St Benedict* as a rich resource for modern leaders, for example, Galbraith and Galbraith (2004), the Jesuits have been considered in the same way (Lowney, 2005) and (Moberg and Calkins, 2001)

Perhaps a more specific reason for studying the religious orders, beyond that of their longevity, is the very interesting topic of the tension between individual and organisation. Argyris (1963: 7) argues that it is possible to integrate the individual and the organisation in such way that both are fulfilled in terms of their 'needs'; *'The incongruence between the individual and the organisation can be the foundation for increasing the degree of effectiveness of both'.* Can a religious community offer any insight into the incongruence or tension between individual and organisation? McGrath (2005: 556) argues that monasticism, (particularly early Irish monasticism), has much to offer contemporary organisation theorists;

> *"It is in terms of integrating the individual, the internal collective and the wider external collective (in total, the community) and balancing the tensions between*

these interrelated components, that early Irish monasticism has a particular contribution to make to contemporary organizational studies".

McGrath (2005: 559) continues;

"The unusual fusion of the rational and the traditional or communal, of place and space, of collective control and individualism of pragmatism and spirituality gave the Irish monastic system a peculiarly tacit and aesthetic quality. The monks did not create a community but were one".

This section has argued for the relevance of the study and recognition of religion and belief, not only to contemporary society, but to science generally and organisation and management studies more particularly. In order to pursue this, the next section considers the attempt to define spirituality and to identify some features of the spiritual life.

Defining spirituality

The purpose of this section is to examine attempts to define spirituality, including contributions from the spirituality in the workplace literature which will be elaborated upon in chapter three. It concludes with a discussion of the nature of the spiritual life as expressed by mystical writers and theologians. While I was surprised by the omission of such voices from the spirituality in the workplace discourse, in the interests of reflexive practice, I also recognize my connection to these sources over the past twenty-six years and this must be considered an equal reason for their inclusion here.

Defining terms is the stock in trade of the academic process and in this case one term which clearly needs attention is 'spirituality'. Examining the various attempts to define spirituality is to be subjected to a bewildering array of conceptions which gives some weight to those who, like McCormick (1994), who say the diversity of definitions is related to the intensely personal nature of the experience. Still, for some, the need for definition is pressing, they call for more clarity Butts (1999), and Gibbons (2002: 6) defends such a call because *'they make our field less abstract and more pragmatic'*. Attempts to find common threads in these contributions often struggle, for example Freshman (1999:326) concluded that;

> *"... definitions and applications of spirituality in the workplace are unique to individuals. One must be careful not to presuppose otherwise".*

In one of very few attempts to approach the issue empirically Konz and Ryan (1999: 208) conclude that even across twenty eight US Jesuit universities in almost all cases the term spirituality, *'...goes undefined or is defined differently by each organisation'*. In their survey of business leaders Fernando and Jackson (2006: 30) concluded that, *'no universal definition emerged'*.

For some, attempts to define spirituality are seen as at best futile and at worst harmful. Futile, because the spiritual is seen by many as being beyond language, this is certainly testified to by the mystical writers. Perhaps then, it is the spiritual <u>**experience**</u> that is beyond words, yet as Konz and Ryan (1999: 201) put it,

"The experience is no less real to the individual yet it is very difficult to objectify and explain to others. It is even more difficult to enunciate the experience when it pertains to the workplace".

Dehler and Welsh (1994) holds that spirituality provides meaning that cannot be cognitively understood, citing Bennis and Nanus (1985: 107) that the vision, *'may transcend verbal communication altogether'*. Others also testify to the difficulty of defining spirituality, for example, Kahnweiler and Otte (1997), McGee (1998). The idea that spirituality is beyond cognitive reasoning would not come as a surprise to Henry Mintzberg (1976: 53) who captures some of this in his views of management itself, '*One fact recurs repeatedly in all of this research – key managerial processes are enormously complex and mysterious'*. Mintzberg's use of the word *'mysterious'* points to an understanding of management which is beyond the rational, the sequential and the intellect; the use of non-rational processes in order to make decisions has been highlighted by others too (Stacey, 1993; Gimpl and Dakin, 1984; Bowles, 1991; and Pattison, 1997).

A closer look at theological and mystical work reveals more of the problem of human language expressing the numinous. Rahner (1986: 70) for example understates the issue, *'To do justice to the mystery of Easter joy with the stale words of human speech is rather difficult'*. Mystical writers frequently point out that the numinous is beyond human language, yet they try. They seem to grope for forms of words that will convey the depths of their experiences, but as soon as the attempt is made, the writing becomes enigmatic and ambiguous. This is evident in the work of Fr Bede Griffiths (1976) and

Thomas Merton (1948) as they try to explore what the spiritual life means to them as individuals. Griffiths himself makes the point that most early attempts to write down the experience of the ineffable are in poetic form citing Homer (1946 and 1987) and the Psalms as well as the Bhagavad-Gita, Swami Prabhavananda (1947), perhaps this is why the poets, musicians and artists among us so often seem to speak with more force than the academic. Murray (1991: 197) says, *'This quality cannot be clearly and distinctly defined; hence I shall attempt to convey it by reference to a poem'.*

The dispute over whether spirituality can ever be an intellectual matter has been around for a long time[8] and some religious traditions emphasise the limitations of reason, logic and conceptual thought. In Zen Buddhism Koans[9] have traditionally been used to emphasise the paradoxical. When Fritjof Capra (1986) asked the Indian mystic Krishnamurti how to be a theoretical physicist whilst at the same time not conceptualising, Krishnamurti's advised that through meditation Capra should go beyond thought, so that he can then engage in thought. This demonstrates the paradoxical nature of what is being discussed and possibly how ill-equipped scientific reasoning is to approach it, and again, to use scriptures to illuminate this point, (quoted in Piyadassi 1964: 80)

[8] In the early 12th century Peter Abelard found himself on the wrong side of Bernard of Clairvaux for what Bernard called his *'shameless curiosity'* in trying to approach God through the intellect. The end point of this disagreement found Abelard condemned as a heretic and his books burned on a bonfire prepared by Pope Innocent II at St Peter's in Rome (Heer, 1961).

[9] Koans are paradoxical statements designed to wrest the listener from habitual thinking such as *'what is the sound of one hand clapping'?*

"Though he recites the sacred texts a lot, but acts not accordingly that heedless man is like a cowherd counting others' cattle. He shares not the fruits of the tranquil man".

These words attributed to the Buddha would suggest that intellectual work is a fruitless exercise; that mere book learning will never bring a person to liberation or wisdom. The Biblical view is similar; '*And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge*'. (Ephesians: Ch3: v19)

For some, the need to define spirituality is also potentially damaging. Baumann (1998) argues that definitions are likely to conceal as much as they reveal and Murray (1991: 197) is unequivocal in his condemnation of attempts to define spirituality;

"There are many ways of interpreting spirituality; the problem is particularly acute because it may not only be impossible, but perverse and misleading, to attempt to supply a clear and distinct definition. It may well be that the search for distinct certainties has been responsible for the erosion of spirituality".

Furthermore, some feel that attempts to define spirituality may become the basis of discrimination. Lips-Wiersma et al (2002) for example, point out that people are self-censuring regarding spiritual matters because they fear offending peers and management. It may also lead to favouritism & fanaticism in the work place (Cavanagh, 1999). Others are concerned that the spirituality expressed in the workplace might be an arena for proselytizing for example Vaill (1991), Mitroff and Denton (1999) and Gockel (2004).

Some argue, reasonably, that people can be spiritual without allying oneself to a particular religion (Sangster 2003). But the possibility that conscious moves to 'implement' spirituality in the workplace might become grounds for discrimination has led others to call for a separation of the words spirituality and religion in the discourse, for example, Marquez (2005), Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003), and Zinebauer and Paragment (1999). Mitroff and Denton (1999: xvi) report from their empirical work, a sharp distinction between perceptions of the words *'religion'* and *'spirituality'*; while spirituality was *'highly appropriate'* in the workplace, religion was *'highly inappropriate'*. Contributors to the spirituality in the workplace discourse have begun to polarise over more than just the <u>use</u> of the word religion. Marquez (2005: 890) for example argues dogmatically and didactically that,

> *"An appropriate reminder at this point may be that religion should definitely be kept out of the picture, particularly in environments where representatives from various cultures, backgrounds and religious convictions are employed".*

The problem with this idea is that many people with allegiance to a particular religion see themselves as on a spiritual journey, therefore, denying 'religion in the workplace' is tantamount to denying spirituality. What is more, the saying, *'the king is dead, long live the king'* suggests that as soon as orthodox, and even unorthodox, religions have been safely banished to the sidelines of the conversation, so a new orthodoxy, 'spirituality in the workplace', will entrench itself and develop its own exclusive rituals and beliefs. Some spirituality in the workplace writers have already begun to use the word

'*movement*' Steingard (2005). There are others however, who would argue for tying the religious to the spiritual (Kriger and Hanson, 1999; Kakabadse et al, 2002; Dent, Higgins and Wharf, 2005; Fernando and Jackson, 2006).

The nature of the spiritual life

Even though the voices are legion, there may be some **implied** agreement, if theological and mystical work is also considered. Broadly, the spiritual life is non-dualistic, involves both action and contemplation and it is an individual journey in communion with others, focussing more on the journey than the destination. This section will demonstrate that agreement, and will draw on those authors writing under the heading of spirituality in the workplace in addition to work of mystical writers.

A non-dualistic aspiration

First, there are those that point to the integrative and non-dualistic nature of the spiritual. A few of the many examples may help to make the point. King and Nicol (1999: 234) define spirituality *as 'a quest to unite the inner and outer world'*. And Stamp (1991:80) similarly offers that spirituality is, *'... an awareness within individuals of a sense of connectedness that exists between inner selves and the world'*. Konz and Ryan (1999: 200) connect the integrative nature of the spiritual to both work and non-work environments '*spirituality grounds people in their work and allows them to connect with the transcendent in all that they do'*. Mitroff and Denton (1999: 83) say spirituality is, *'the basic feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others and the entire universe'*. In all these cases, the authors point to the individual's desire or attempt to

unite different facets of themselves to each other and to the universe. The word religion from its Latin root broadly means 'reconnect', this is perhaps the sense in with spirituality is being understood here.

A second observation is that most authors like Tischler et al (2002) use or allude to the idea that the spiritual is 'beyond' or 'transcendant'. The 'beyond' that is referred to in this literature points to the aconceptual state of mind, the non dualistic. Turner (1999: 41) for example says spirituality is, '*That which comes from within, beyond the survival instincts of the mind*' and Kakabadse (2002: 6); '*Spirituality implies a relationship with something beyond the self*'. Some see spirituality as ever present energy, evident in economics, language, politics and sexuality (Fox, 1982). Such a view appears to dispense with distinctions between 'good' and 'bad' in relation to the spiritual, a further non-dualism. The idea of spirituality as energy is found beyond Western and North American culture too, Kakabadse (2002:6) posits a Taoist view, Yin and Yang are, '*...a flow of complementary yet opposite energies through which all trends eventually reverse themselves*'. Taoism, they say, '*embodies sensitivity to the natural seasons and cycles of life and the environment through universal forces*'.

Mitroff and Denton (1999: 25) reflect the non dualistic character of the spiritual thus,

"Spirituality is timeless and universal, is non denominational, is inclusive and accessible to all, emphasises interconnectedness, transcends the ordinary and acknowledges the

sacred, it reflects peace, awe, calm and connectedness and is experienced inside and outside formal religious traditions".

The word 'God' has many connotations that may impede our spiritual development, the masculine God being perhaps the most obvious. Yet, during this research, the word God has come to mean something quite different from that which it meant to me in earlier times and has enabled me to look both within, and beyond the confines of Christianity for understanding. Nevertheless, for some, God is an appropriate term for what others might call the transcendent, Tao, Dharma, Allah, and many other terms. The Buddha is said to have pointed out to his disciples that beyond him there was something greater, and that was the Dharma.[10] Beyond the person, beyond the messenger, beyond the teacher, there is the Truth; Reality and Thomas Merton (1958: 52) too, is unequivocal on this point, I quote him at length here,

> *"Then we discover what the spiritual life really is. It is not a matter of doing one good work rather than another, of living in one place rather than another, of praying in one way rather than another. It is not a matter of any special psychological effect in our soul. It is the silence of our whole being in compunction and adoration before God, in the habitual realization that He is everything and we are nothing, that He is the Center to which all things tend, and to Whom all our actions must be directed. That our life and strength proceed from Him, that both in life and in death we depend entirely on him, that the entire*

[10] The word Dharma has different meanings but can be seen to have similar intentions behind them for example, the teachings of the Buddha, ultimate reality.

course of our life is foreknown by Him and falls into the plan of His wise and merciful providence; that it is absurd to live as though without Him, for ourselves; by ourselves; that all our plans and spiritual ambitions are useless unless they come from Him and end in Him and that, in the end, the only thing that matters is His glory."

Action, grace, simplicity and reflection

Spirituality is also seen as related in some way to action, that is, spirituality finds expression in 'doing something'. Dehler and Welsh (1994: 21) refer to spirituality being the energy behind an action, '... *a subconscious feeling that energizes individual action in relation to a specific task'*. The idea that spirituality is connected to action in some way is also present in Mitroff and Denton (1999: xv) who define spirituality as *'the desire to find ultimate purpose in life and to live accordingly'*. The view of the spiritual as finding expression through action similarly extends beyond the Western and/or North American perspective. Krishnakumar and Neck (2002: 2) for example, point out that while a Christian view is that spirituality is the *"call for work"*, Hinduism sees spirituality as *'doing work with the utmost devotion'*.

Turning to theology and to mystical writers, the action arising from the spiritual is of a social nature; Garvey (1986: xiii) *'...a spirituality which ignores the hungry is bankrupt'*. And the Christian mystic Thomas Merton (1958) states that genuine spirituality, is not detached from the struggles and pains of the world. McNeill et al (1986: 106) point to the capacity for evil in both the individual and in our social structures, confrontation they say is essential, *'Compassionate confrontation is to look at the evil in men's hearts including our own'*. Yet the spiritual life is one in which action

and prayer, contemplation and meditation are complementary, *'Prayer without action grows into powerless pietism and action without prayer degenerates into questionable manipulation'*. The Jesuit William Johnston (1986: 105) sees the action that the spiritual life contains as revealed in the quality of the fruits of their work,

> *"From all that has been said it will be clear that mystical action is chiefly a matter of baring fruit. It is not a question of frenetic activity, of getting a lot done of achieving immediate results. Rather it is a question of unrestricted love which goes on and on".*

And what fruit is the result of the spiritual life? For Johnston (1986) compassion is central. The mystic knows the suffering of the world because he or she has experienced it within, as a potentiality. Compassion grows from recognizing the experience of another is the same as one's own possible, or actual experience.

Yet, if the spiritual life is revealed in the quality of our action, then a paradox emerges. While spirituality has to emerge in action the notion of Grace suggests we are powerless to 'do' anything alone. The Anglican theologian, Evelyn Underhill (1986: 108) shows the mystery to have been around for a long time and quotes St Augustine; *'Give what Thou dost demand, and then, demand what Thou wilt'*. The notion of Grace suggests that we are not the starting point, but rather we should submit to God and allow Grace to lead us. This has become a problem for the modern Western mind because it has become enchanted by three hundred years of Enlightenment 'reason' and technology

giving the impression of complete control. It is very apparent in some of the spirituality in the workplace literature too, for example, Marquez (2005).

For the Roman Catholic monk, Lev Gillet, the spiritual life is about being quiet. While *'there is no short cut in the spiritual life'* (1949: 82), there is nevertheless a need for simplicity, because complicated techniques can dissipate thought. There is a need for the spiritual aspirant to be reflective in order to penetrate beyond the superficial 'root' causes to the ultimate solution, which he says lies beyond *'the cloud of unknowing'*, (Wolters, 1978). This requires us to be liberated from ideology, not allied to it; a point much laboured by the Indian mystic Krishnamurti (1956, 1986, 1986, 1991). The widely influential Jewish writer Martin Buber (1986: 3) points out that in the Book of Genesis, it is a *'still small voice'* that asks Adam where he is hiding and not a thunderous one and is echoed in the words of another Jewish theologian Herschel (1986: 9) as he tells us,

> *"We do not refuse to pray: we abstain from it. We ring the hollow bell of selfishness rather than absorb the stillness that surrounds the world, hovering over the restlessness and fear of life in the secret stillness that precedes our birth and succeeds our death.".*

Mindfulness of God, Herschel (1986: 9) reminds us, *'...rises slowly, a thought at a time'*. All of this indicates that the spiritual life has more to do with listening than proclaiming. Trungpa (1986: 122) also points out that the Buddha recognized that the insights he had,

came in the absence of the struggle; the middle way, '*Freedom*', says Trungpa '*is the absence of struggle*'.[11]

A solitary struggle in communion with others

The previous section suggested that the spiritual is to be alighted upon in the absence of struggle, yet most testaments we have of the spiritual journey appear to include struggle of some sort. The stories of Jesus wandering in the desert and facing the temptations of the flesh, give some sense of the fear that might be part of the spiritual journey. So does the story of the enlightenment of the Buddha, who, after an epic struggle with Mara the Tempter, emerges victorious and enlightened. These stories hint at the notion of heroism, a point made by Campbell (1949), the spiritual aspirant is seen in many cultures and traditions as one who has faced the worst and prevailed. Returning to show others the way, he or she, is afforded heroic status by some, and the status of deviant by those with most to lose in terms of power and position. The origin of the hero story can be seen as far back as Egyptian mythology in the stories of Osiris and Isis. More recently the same notion can be seen in the cultural heroes of the West, Superman and The Lone Ranger for example (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars, 1994). The struggles are also evident in the writings of modern mystics too; from the Greek Orthodox tradition, Metropolitan Anthony (1986: 34) tells us that the difference between two people is the extent of the struggle to gradually transform the old Adam into the new Adam. Thomas Merton (1948) and Bede Griffiths (1979) both attest to the nature of the

[11] This is true also on a physical level, the body gets stronger not during exercise, but in the gaps between exercise as the cells regenerate themselves. Equally in the music, it is the silence between the notes which give the notes themselves meaning. I am reminded of the piece by John Cage *4' 33"* (1952) in which the listener is treated to four minutes and thirty three seconds of silence in the presence of a full orchestra. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hUJagb7hL0E

struggle, and in psychology, Carl Jung's (1963) autobiography reveals a very similar process, which he termed the *'Night Sea Journey'* or *Nekyia.*

This paradox of the spiritual requiring both struggle and non-struggle does have some resolution however. A Buddhist source, Broken Gong, states that *'the conquest of self is the greatest war'*, the struggle is not with 'the other', but within oneself. The stories alluded to earlier posit the existence of the enemy 'out there', Mara the Tempter and the Devil. The Psalms of David, if read literally, would indicate the presence of an enemy who must be vanquished and a God that can be beseeched to assist (see for example Psalm 109). Reading the Mahabharata (Buck, 1973) from Hindu scriptures gives a similar impression. However, a symbolic reading of these texts reveal a personal struggle as the individual tries to deal with inner afflictions and contradictions. A Jungian interpretation might see this as the struggle to individuate (Jung: 1963). The paradox is that the struggle must be engaged with and yet in the end the goal is found in stillness and non-struggle, which in Buddhism is referred to as mindfulness, simply watching the impermanence of all things including thought. Paulo de Coelho in his novel *'The Alchemist'* (1988) has his main character Santiago struggling to follow and realize his dreams, encouraged by a mysterious mentor who assures him he will succeed. The end of the story sees the mentor telling Santiago that he never said he would want the dreams when he gets there. Similarly, Hermann Hesse (1922) reveals the spiritual development of Siddhartha, culminating in the old Siddhartha becoming a ferryman and finding his peace in the non struggle.

Part of the nature of the struggle is evident in spiritual and theological writing; it is the struggle against spiritual pride. Authors repeatedly point out that the spiritual life is

not one in which the gains made can be taken for granted and assumed to be in place like a bank deposit. Lev Gillet (1949: 80), who describes himself as *'a monk of the Eastern Church'*, cautions the spiritual aspirant,

> *"We must avoid an over-eager longing for such experiences; religious emotion may easily become a disguise for some dangerous kind of greed and sensuousness".*

In the Judaic tradition Herschel (1986: 11) says attachment to what is spiritually superior is good, but not if it *'puts a roof over all of life it shuts out the light'*. From the Buddhist tradition Trungpa (1973: 120) points out that spiritual pride is the workings of the ego and is as much a problem for theistic religions as it is for Buddhists,

> *"Our mental habits become so strong as to be hard to penetrate. We may even go so far as to achieve the totally demonic state of complete egohood."*

Focussing on the journey not the destination

Perhaps one of the most pervasive themes emerging from theological and mystical literature is that of process. The spiritual life is a process not a destination. Again from the Buddhist tradition Trungpa (1973: 117) points out that the spiritual path is, *'the process of cutting through our confusion, of uncovering the awakened state of mind.'* This not only points to a path rather than the destination, but also to the idea that our natural state is enlightened and without illusion, we must endeavour to rediscover this condition. It is our task to set our will to reconnecting with God, to reach Nirvana. The

spiritual pride of which Trungpa (1973) wrote arises when we understand the path we are on as the destination, the goal, the end point, it is to mistake the finger for the moon, to borrow from Zen. The point at which we see the path we are on, as the ultimate objective, is also the point at which we begin to tell others how to get there, as if we ourselves had already arrived; spiritual pride. Tugwell (1986: 63) makes the point differently quoting from Philippians (Ch3: v12) *'Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on'*. Tugwell comments that *'Perfection means a continual striving ahead, not any conviction of achievement'*.

Numerous seminal Christian works of mysticism and theology testify to this point, for example, the *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a Kempis (1952), *'The Ladder of Perfection'* by Walter Hilton (1957), and *'The Cloud of Unknowing'* (Wolters, 1978). From the Russian Orthodox tradition Metropolitan Anthony of Souraozh (1986: 35) tells us; *'Being of one mind we shall gradually become inwardly what we try to be outwardly'*. The spiritual life is one which recognizes that gradual nature of the task. Evelyn Underhill (1933: 23) is even more specific on this point, *'It works out, I think, as a gradual growth in the soul's adherence to God and cooperation with God'*. The process she says takes place by three means; mental, moral and devotional discipline, symbolic and sacramental acts, and an ever renewed dedication of the will. Simone Weil (1951: 143) makes the point differently, *'It is only necessary to know that love is a direction and not a state of the soul'*.

Thomas Merton (1986) suggests this process is not only one which takes place in the individual, but also in the development of the religions themselves. Referring to modern scholars who identify a radical discontinuity between the first churches and later

generations Merton (1986), points out that the early church saw the coming of Christ as an imminent event, a new kingdom. Over time the church has increasingly seen the coming of the kingdom of God in metaphysical and mystical terms; a gradual process of changing views on what the spiritual path is, and what the process comprises. Polkinghorne (2003) also notes the developmental nature of theology as do Armstrong (2007 and 2009) and Chopra (2000).

Summary

This chapter began by arguing that far from being irrelevant to contemporary science; religion or spirituality are able to contribute to it, not least because science is imbued with religious sentiment. Furthermore, the notion of secularisation is seen to be a very limited phenomenon and not the global one that is sometimes implied. More specifically, whether or not it is acknowledged, management and organisations can be argued to be equally embedded in a mystical and theological frame of reference which has its roots in mediaeval times. Given these arguments, the need for organisation and management theorists to examine more closely, alternative organisations in general and religious communities in particular, as sources of important insight into the management of organisations as communities, was discussed.

The word 'spirituality' was shown to present difficulties associated with definition, particularly, division and discrimination. Rather than join the fray in defining spirituality, the chapter ends with an examination of various theological and mystical writers on what the spiritual life comprises. This discussion suggests the spiritual life is far beyond any institutional or socio-structural arrangements, yet this is how it has largely

been treated by Classical sociology and to some extent by psychology. This treatment presupposes religion to have had a 'function' in society, however, when religion is reunited with its symbolic significance, a different picture emerges and it is this that the next chapter addresses.

Chapter 2. Religion as 'social cement' and a carrier of meaning

The previous chapter demonstrated the relevance of studying religion, spirituality and alternative communities in the field of organisation studies. While a number of disciplines have contributed to our understanding of religion and spirituality and their place in our lives, this chapter explores significant work on religion from sociology and psychology, particularly Jungian psychology. The purpose of this is to provide further underpinning for a more focussed discussion of the spirituality in the workplace literature in chapter three. As such this chapter marks a point of departure from the classical contributions and argues that it has largely focussed attention on the institutionalised religion that **follows** the inception of the religious impulse. Where it has offered commentary on this inception, it is still placed mostly in the social context. However, Jungian psychology has offered a more convincing analysis of the inception of the religious impulse by focussing its attention on the individual and the role of myth and symbol. The apparent decline in significance of traditional religion in Western Europe is analysed in terms of a growth of human consciousness, which has included a move away from collective interpretations toward the individual seeking meaning.

Religion as a function of social processes

Marx on religion

The significance of what Marx (1963) wrote about religion is not in proportion to its quantity. Hamilton (1995) points out that the most concentrated statement Marx made on the subject amounted to a few paragraphs, yet this passage includes the often quoted phrase religion is *'the opium of the people'* (1963: 41) and with this the conclusion that religion is an illusion that will be superseded by political action. Marx's rather dismissive approach to religion led him to conclude that like the capitalist system, it was facing demise, indeed they are related (Hamilton, 1995). Religion was for Marx, a socially produced phenomenon; man-made religion in his own image, and it resulted from people feeling alienated, i.e. not in control of class divisions. Social order was believed by the masses to be fixed and religion emerges in Marx's analysis, as a comforting illusion in the face of this alienation. Traditional religion had superseded magic and superstition which had earlier provided the same comforting illusion, when the uncontrollable force was nature. For Marx religion was used as a tool of oppression by the ruling classes; the masses should accept the injustices of this life in order to reap the benefits of the next. But, according to Marx, the ruling classes are also deluded, because while they are in control, they too believe the class system is natural.

There has been some criticism of Marx's ideas on religion. Hamilton (1995) for example, points out that if religion was an instrument of oppression, then we might expect it to have emerged from the ruling class, and yet this is often not the case, Christianity for example, finds its origins in the poor, and commenting on the radical and revolutionary message Jesus brought, H G Wells (in Benn, 1979: 25) writes, '*Is it any*

wonder that the priests realised that between this man and themselves there was no choice but that he or priestcraft should die?' It is only later used as a political lever by Constantine in the third century. This is the point; traditional religion may <u>become</u> the tool of certain groups, but this is rarely the reason for its inception. Furthermore, Marx's prediction is that as man begins to use reason, so he will dispense with religion and move to political action. While there is some evidence for this in Britain Cupitt (1984) regards the debate over whether society as a whole is secularising as far from over, (see the discussion in chapter one).

Marx was, at least in his discussion of religion, a product of the Enlightenment, *'Religion is only the illusory sun which revolves round man as long as he does not revolve round himself'*, (quoted in Hamilton, 1995: 82). Marx's insistence that religion has the dual 'function' of providing comfort to the disenfranchised masses and also of providing the ruling classes with a means of controlling them, locates him close to the functionalist paradigm, albeit with an agenda based on radical change (Burrell and Morgan, 1994). Religion is a means to an end, an instrument, *'organon'*, and not as an end in itself, and is the product of certain socioeconomic-structural arrangements.

Durkheim on religion

Like Marx, Durkheim (1915) saw religion as wholly a societal matter, also like Marx he saw religion as fulfilling a function in society. Religion provides the *'social cement'* for society, this is the case even though believers are unaware of it. People believe they are engaged with ritual in order to achieve material ends such as improvement of crops, when according to Durkheim (1915) they are actually engaged with ritual in order to maintain social order. For Durkheim (1915) our thinking

categories emerge from our religions which in turn emerge from society; this leaves little room for the religious impulse of the individual. To put it another way, religion for Durkheim (1915) is a system of symbols generated by people in response to their social setting; society dictates morality and religion arises to supply it. People act morally because of the sense of duty to society; a deontological argument, and not because they have reasoned the consequences of not doing so. Society is seen by individuals as being 'outside' and beyond because it (society) continues after the individual has died. This observation offers a reason why we reify society, make it solid; give it opinions, emotions and personality. Indeed, for Durkheim (1915) society is God; omnipotent, 'out there', independent, prior to us and beyond us. Society in this sense is both reified and deified, it gives us moral instructions, which we obey out of a sense of duty and religion is the response of people to a moral obligation we 'owe' society; the ritualistic and symbolic means by which the moral power of society is renewed and strengthened (Hamilton, 1995). All religion is reduced by Durkheim (1915) to this *'social cement'*, and the inability of modern society to produce effective Gods and rituals leaves society devoid of social cohesion. This, he predicted, would lead to a rise in suicide and deviant tenancies (Hamilton, 1995).

Various criticisms have been made of Durkheim's (1915) view, including for example, that his empirical data was limited, shedding doubt upon his generalisations. More substantially however, Hamilton (1995) points out that in advanced industrialised societies political, economic and religious 'functions' are deliberately separated, and this fragmentation considerably weakens the idea that religion holds society together.

Furthermore, people act immorally in the name of religion, not only morally, society is therefore not only being held together by religion, but also fragmented by it.

A further point is that for many, far from being' *'social cement'*, the inception of religion often comes from those who were opposed to the prevailing social arrangements, Jesus, for example, paid with his life for challenging the Judaic system, and far from taking place within the collective, the inception of religion is more often preceded by a total withdrawal from society, Jesus, Siddhartha Guatama - the Buddha to be, Moses and Mohammed all withdrew before returning with the new understanding. In addition, if religion holds society together, as Durkheim suggested, then what performs this function when religion loses its significance? Durkheim (1915) argued that new forms of religion would emerge.

Durkheim (1915) believed that he was able to see what the individual could not see in their own behaviour, namely, that their religious ritual was *'social cement'*, not a substantive attempt to improve material conditions. In this Durkheim (1915) was thoroughly modernist believing his vantage point afforded him special insight as an observer, separate from the observed. Yet the conclusion that new religions would emerge to replace the old, does not include the possibility that the new religion might be any one of a number of other 'faith' systems such as the economy (Hillman, 1989), science (Midgley, 2005) or even management (Bowles, 1997; Pattison 1997).

Durkheim's (1915) views appear to offer some explanation for the development of religions over time, but are weaker when applied to the explanation of their inception. For Durkheim (1915) the inception of religion and its development over time are deemed to be the product of society; society is primary. But the alternative view, and the one

held here, is that the inception of religion, what might be termed the 'religious impulse', and what Jung called the *'religious instinct'*, (1963: Vol 11) should be separated from the development of the religion over time. If religion is a 'function' of other social processes or even a dysfunctional element of those processes (Merton, 1957), it may be so, only insofar as other human institutions are also. The religious impulse frequently arises away from, and in opposition to, the society and its norms. What happens to that religion over millennia, after that time, might be the preserve of the sociologists, but for an understanding of the religious impulse it may be necessary to look elsewhere, as will be developed further on.

Weber on religion

For Weber, (1965) unlike Durkheim (1915), religion is not produced solely from social forces. We experience a tension between what is, and what we believe ought to be, and religion helps us to make sense of this disparity; the disparity between for example success and suffering. These two he says, are experienced differently by different groups in society and this is why Weber (1965) studied religion in relation to social groups (Hamilton, 1995). As society becomes more complex and people more remote from one another so we increasingly rely on rules and procedures and so, Weber argues, in religions we see the emergence of the priesthood and the systematisation of ethical principles, of which they are the guardians. But not all social classes experience religion as a set of ethical principles; peasants for example, see religion as magic which is engaged in to improve the crops. While officials and bureaucrats might see religion as an instrument to maintain order, merchants and financiers are more interested in the material features of life and will see religion as a legitimising their action and interests.

For Weber (1965) the working and middle classes are the 'carriers' of religion as ethical principles, which have usually been developed by the intellectual classes. Yet, it is the interests of the most significant group in any given society which will determine which ideas will dominate. Distinguishing between formal rationality as in calculation, and substantive rationality involving human values, Weber's (1930) interests in the economic dominance of the West arise from his observation that the West emphasised formal rationality. The removal of ambiguity and contradiction from the problem of salvation (making sense of suffering and success) by formal rationality led, in part, to the economic dominance in the West.

Northcott (1999: 199) comments that;

> *"Religion in a Weberian perspective is in different contexts both a source of social change and challenge and a source of social order and legitimation of the status quo".*

Religion and social processes interact within *'spheres in which divine calling and destiny of the individual is realized and expressed'* (p200). What this suggests, is that for Weber, economic activity, potentially at least, is about what Maslow (1954) left until last, namely self-actualisation, a point made more recently by Zohar too (1997); that meaning is at the centre of all our activities.

A few observations are necessary at this point. First, Weber (1965) does not appear to be as reductionist as either Marx or Durkheim, allowing for various

determinants of the religious institution. Nevertheless, the linking of religion to social factors, and in the West to economic activity emerges from the two observations that different social groups experience religion differently and that the dominant expression of the religious impulse will come from the dominant group. Where, for Marx, the idea of different groups experiencing religion differently is present, Weber sees this difference in experience as a catalyst for action, and in the case of Western Europe to very significant effect.

In Weber's (1930) work, early religion (magic and taboo) was a response to material problems and organised religion was a response to existential problems, i.e. the problem of salvation. In some sense he was forging an evolutionary model of religious belief; belief systems become more sophisticated, and (crucially) rationalised, as society becomes more complex and differentiated. What Weber called *'the Protestant Ethic'* (Weber, 1930) was, in Western Europe, a response dominated by the Puritanical, and more specifically Calvinistic, views on austerity and predestination. Western European Capitalism was the unintended outcome of Calvinist views on the problem of salvation; making money was seen as an end in itself, and as a calling from God, or as Craib alliterated, *'moralised money making'* (1997: 253). Work hard and deny yourself and God will reward you, and this view led to the economic rise and development of the West.[12] Paradoxically, the rationalisation of ethical principles that this view sprang from, also led to secularisation. This reading of Weber (1930) suggests a dialectical

[12] Furthermore the message is delivered not to the community as in Confucian and Hindu society, but to the individual. What Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (1994) referred to as the *'inner directed individualist'* of 20st century capitalism as espoused by Hayek (1960) and Margaret Thatcher finds its roots in 16th century Calvinist theology. The economic dominance of the West was therefore closely linked to the rise of the entrepreneur.

explanation of secularisation; by focussing attention on ethics in everyday life, Calvinism in early modern Europe, fostered rationalisation, which eventually led to decline in the influence of religion.

The religious impulse and a symbolic rendering of meaning

While Classical sociology sees religion largely in terms of its function for other social purposes such as social cohesion and wealth creation, other attempts to understand religion from within the field of sociology focus instead on the religious impulse. Luckmann (1967) for example is interested in the religious impulse before it becomes institutionalised within a particular socio-cultural context. The institutionalisation of a particular religion is for Luckmann (1967) the social construction of a *'symbolic universe'*, which constitutes a *'system of meaning'* that relates ordinary life to the transcendent (Hamilton, 1995). Similarly (Geertz, 1966) sees religious symbols as both expressing the world we live in and shaping it. Humans need a world of meaning and order and cannot stand chaos, yet chaos and bafflement characterise a world filled with suffering and evil, and so religion becomes a way of making these, to some extent, meaningful in a social context. As might be expected from sociologists, both these writers place religion in a social context even in its inception, but in both cases there is the hint of a psychological explanation for the religious impulse.

For Berger (1973) however, the lure of psychology is less well resisted. Our social world shapes and is shaped by our physical and mental activity, but the social world we thereby create is experienced as external and independent of us. The interaction of these gives meaning to our experience or what Berger (1973) called

'nomos'. In the absence of that meaning we experience *'anomie'*; a breakdown of the values and norms of society, and it is ritual which reminds us of the historical roots of the present experience and renders it meaningful to us. For Berger (1973: 31), *'Men are congenitally compelled to impose a meaningful order upon reality'*.

Hamilton (1995) reports that in his attempts to defend his own faith, Berger (1971) offers what he sees as a sociological argument for the existence of God. These, he says, can be found in everyday experience and not just in the virtuosi experience of certain individuals. For example, we naturally place order around a chaotic and apparently meaningless existence, in play we suspend reality and do so in many ways throughout life, we reject chaos and death out of hope, we suspend relativism in the face of what we consider to be 'evil', and expect evil to be 'punished', and when we experience a disparity between what is and what we believe should be, we laugh, and for Berger (1971, in Hamilton, 1995) these are all *'the signals of transcendence'*.

Sociological explanations for the religious impulse and for the religious institutions that follow inevitably focus on the social context. Yet even within sociology more recent writers appear to move closer by degrees to psychological explanations. This chapter turns to these psychological explanations next and focuses mostly of the work of Carl Jung (1963 and 1973), the chief reason for which is his attempt to relate his work on the religious impulse to the collective as well as the individual.

The reality of the psyche and the role of myth

Jung (1973: Vol.11) was attempting to make sense of the religious impulse and its symbolic and allegorical manifestations in both Eastern and Western religious traditions. Jung's own upbringing was in a Christian context, yet his interests spanned the East and

the West, as mine have also done, and this research has been heavily influenced by this broader geographical and cultural interest. Jung's well documented split with Freud (see for example Wehr, 1985) is usually associated with his differing views on the primacy of the sexual instinct, but a less obvious difference lay in their views on the religious impulse. For Freud, (1977) as for Marx (1963) and Durkheim (1915), religion was destined to play a lesser role in the future, but unlike them, Freud believed the reason lay not in the political, but the psychological maturing of mankind, and more specifically the recognition of religion as a psychological prop. Religion (in this sense) is seen by Freud (1977) as an infantile projection, a *'father complex'* which will decline as individuals mature provided the individual recognises the problem. Freud's treatment of religion is like the Classical sociologists, functional. Religion fulfils a role only while people are immature psychologically and are unable to take individual responsibility. This view also suggests (Freud, 1977) saw religion in literal terms.

Jung (1973: Vol. 11) moves away from literal, and towards allegorical and symbolic interpretations of religion and spirituality. One of the key contributions of Jung was that he was able to point to the 'objective' reality of the psyche, and the psyche speaks to us, not through literalisms, but through myth, allegory and symbols in order to illuminate the deeper mystery of the human condition (Jaffe, 1990). It is this denial of the objective reality of the psyche and its mode of communication that is, for Jung, at the root of the twentieth century problem, namely, 'man in search of his soul' (Jung, 1933). In order to live meaningful lives we need to be able to see the reality of the inner life, capturing both the rational and the irrational sides of our nature and admit the language it uses to communicate, or, as Tacey (2001: 17) puts it we need to be able to look

symbolically, metaphorically and poetically. Griffiths (1976) points out that all man's earliest attempts to write down his inner experiences have been in the form of poetry, offering the Mahabharata, (Buck, 1973) the Psalms, the Bhagavad-gita, (Swami Prabhavanada, 1947), Homer's Odyssey (1946) and Iliad, (1987) as examples. The myths and symbols the psyche uses to communicate are present in all aspects of our lives, including science and religion, but our interpretation of them both has tended towards the literal and concrete, but this deprives them of their ability to transform because we deny their mythic nature (Armstrong 2009; Bowles 1997). In Greek antiquity both Philo and Augustine also wrote of the way in which the 'mystery' of life can only be explained through allegory, literalism is seen as the arch enemy of such understanding.

The problem, for some, is we don't see science as a myth but as a literal truth, not as a story which enables us to take another step, but as a priori. In any religion, we can be absorbed by the myth and try to engage with it deeply, or we can see it as literal and thereby rob it of its transformative power. In our time, we not only fail to see the power of myth and symbol to transform, but actually do not see the myth and the symbol as real. Science presents itself as the ultimate truth and not as a story by which we are energised to take another step. While it is perhaps optimistic to hope that science might begin to see itself as a modern myth unfolding, (for many scientists it would be seen as tantamount to heresy), it would be less optimistic to expect that of our religions, but our scriptures are still largely treated by the established church as literal which keeps us in what Tacey (2001: 42) calls *'spiritual kindergarten'*.

The historical development of the Western myth

Our recognition of the evolution of human consciousness from pantheism to human reason via monotheism, has itself, ironically, been produced by human reason (Hauke, 2000). Yet the achievements of the Enlightenment did not include the capacity to see this movement to human reason as part of an unfolding myth, and foretell its own usurping. But this is perhaps our condition, most of us seem only able to perceive the myth in retrospect. 'On the day', it is literal and real and only later is it 'interpreted' as myth, usually disparagingly, the latest understanding is seen as the ultimate reality. For the ancients, the gods were real enough to require blood sacrifices, for us science is real too, not mythical and we make sacrifices to that 'reality' too.

Relatively few are able to comment on the mythical unfolding of the present, Jung (1963), Midgley (2005) and Kuhn (1970) might be among them. Wilber (1996: xii) may offer some explanation for this, using the notion of a holon (*'a whole that is simultaneously part of some other whole, indefinitely'*) Wilber (1996: xiii) says *'...an arrogant holon doesn't want to be both a whole and a part; it wants to be a whole, period'*. The inability of a prevailing world view to see itself as one of a number, either at the time or over time, causes the 'owners' of that view to see it as real and literal. The Holon can only see its undifferentiated self and dissociates itself from all other views. Accordingly science cannot see itself as another myth, a story by which we are able to take another step, but instead as literally true and it will go to extraordinary lengths to defend itself. Some have argued what is needed is the capacity to see all things as frameworks and be able to let them go (Hawkins, 1991), a point repeatedly made by the Indian mystic (Krishanamurti, 1956, 1986, 1986 and 1991).

Is this what the Enlightenment did? Are we still enthralled by the promise of ultimate salvation that science and reason makes? To glance at the management text books which inform most MBA courses in business schools from Harvard to Henley is to encounter the arrogance of reason as **the** way of knowing. Fredrick Taylor published **The** Principles of Scientific Management in 1911, but the first word of that title suggests a certainty that has been challenged by others since, for example, Stacey (1993). Taylor's work was in the vanguard of a rash of universalistic management texts which continue to this day and which include 'models' with names like *'the Five Forces'* (Porter, 1980, 1985, 1990), *'Total Quality Management'* (Deming, 1987) and titles such as *'In Search of Excellence'* (Peters and Waterman, 1982). These have the aura of a spiritual revelation about them and with good reason, since they claim a universal explanation for a particular phenomenon, and a set of prescriptions for harnessing the 'power' of the models (and the profits that ensue). Determinism in any field is an epistemological certainty that is, according to this reading, but one whole within another, and needing to acknowledge its roots.

For Jung (1973: Vol.8) the psyche is real and is both personal and collective at the same time (Jaffe, 1990). The symbolic, the metaphoric and the poetic are the ways in which we connect to that reality (Tacey, 2004). As the mind of the individual and the collective grows so the subtle elements of symbol and ritual become more apparent, as does their power to transform (Hughes, 1985, Smart, 1996; Fowler, 1996). Cottingham, (2005) argues that the spiritual life begins with praxis; in other words we need not ask why, but engage with symbol and ritual in faith. For others, myth is a childish fantasy world with no grounding in reality and therefore of no 'use'; fit only for escapist novels

and story books to be read when the 'serious' work of 'reality' is done. The mythic world created by Tolkien (1937, 1991), and C S Lewis (1950) is entertainment for some and imbued with meaning for others.

This is perhaps a further reason for organisation theorists to study religion; because while we 'understand', at some level, the workings of our formal institutions, our understanding of them as being imbued with symbol and ritual, as layers of psychological construction and as carriers of that meaning, is still largely confined to limited academic circles. The earliest discussions on the symbolic nature of organisations and management took place as recently as 1983 (Pondy et al, 1983).

Tacey's (2001) observation that the New Age is a symptom of the yearning for meaning is important, (however bizarrely it might present itself). But I would add, that it is a response which points to a mind which is ready (possibly again) for the symbolic and recognises its power to transform. The New Age has begun reaching for, creating, resurrecting and borrowing symbols because traditional religions, while imbued with the symbolic, have not communicated their power effectively, preferring instead, to cling to literal interpretations of the key teachings inhibiting the religious impulse generally.

A symbolic reading of Christianity

While Tacey (2001) says Jung was willing to predict the demise of Christianity unless it changed, he nevertheless saw an essential truth of the Christian message. Perhaps his key insight was the need for Christianity to acknowledge the symbolic in its teaching and its power. Christ's death on the cross and the resurrection was, for Jung, a symbol of the surrendering of the ego and the realisation of the wider personality of the 'Self'. Seen in this way the Christian message can be understood as powerful and

relevant today, but interpreted solely as a literal event leads to irrelevant disputes and deflection from the real task.

For Tacey (2001) Jung has been hijacked by the New Age movement as its guru.[13] Jung offered a critique of the Christian faith in its inability to provide symbolic representation to people, over and above a dogma, so the New Age saw in Jung, a figure to justify their revolutionary proclamations for a new age of the spirit. But as Tacey (2001) argues, Jung had a conservative streak running through his work which the New Age have chosen not to acknowledge, and which did not allow for the wholesale jettisoning of traditional religion. Quite the opposite, both Tacey (2001) and Jaffe (1990) argue that Jung reinterpreted the Christian message in psychodynamic terms and in a way that attempted to rescue it from patriarchal literalism and give it further relevance.

The symbols of the Cross and Christ's crucifixion are powerful for Jung (1973: Vol. 11) because they point to the need to balance the tensions of life; of ego and soul, the masculine and the feminine, Yin and Yang. This **act** of balancing, or relative balancing, is difficult and requires effort and perseverance because we will fail often. This is the message from the Cross for Jung; that we suffer as individuals and collectives, the more we cannot reconcile the opposites alive in our natures, this inhibits the maturation process or what Jung refers to as *'individuation'* (Jung, 1973; Vol. 8).

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[13] Jung was aware of the likelihood that his ideas might be misused and he was not alone. Marx is reputed to have remarked in a letter to his son-in-law Paul Larfargue in about 1883, *'If that is Marxism then I am not a Marxist'*. Rudyard Kipling was equally aware of the problem *'If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools.* (*'If'*, Kipling, 1895). Tacey (2001: 33) points out that the New Agers have a tendency to encourage infantile dependence on leaders, a problem even amongst what he calls *'low grade Jungian followers and writers'*.

The demise of religion and the growth of spirituality

The word religion is being replaced for many by the word spirituality and why this might be happening is instructive. Mitroff and Denton (1999) report that the while the word 'spirituality' is acceptable in companies the word religion is not. Tacey (2004: 15) cites research that 7% of Britons attend places of worship, but 76% report an interest in spirituality (Hay and Hunt, 2000). It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the fall in interest, relates to the institutional and formal aspects of religion and not in the religious impulse, or as the comedian Lenny Bruce had it, *'Every day people are straying away from the church and going back to God';* (in Tacey, 2001).

The use of the word spirituality may be because many are trying to respond to the religious impulse without the institutional 'baggage' of traditional religion. The word 'religion' is for many, coterminous with monolithic, monotheistic, dominating, dogmatic, political, patriarchal, ideological, corrupt, and even murderous. The word 'spirituality' on the other hand seems to imply a generality of human capacity, potentiality and experience without the institutional memories. Religion in this sense emphasises the sacred and not the institutional as Connolly (1999: 6) says;

> *"... I would suggest that any definition of religion that places more emphasis on it's dimensions or modes or whatever than its rootedness in the sacred is not only inadequate but misleading".*

The movement from collective to individual experience

Wilson (1992) argued that because modern society cannot produce effective theodices (explanations for the coexistence of good and evil) and shared moral values, the role of religion will still be considerable, but in a more privatised form. Perhaps then, people are trying to articulate the religious impulse without it being shackled to a formal institution, doctrine or creed; there is 'something', 'a mystery' and it needs expression, but to express it in terms of the old is to rob it of its newness. This is seen quite clearly in the *'Sea of Faith'* movement which was inspired by the BBC series and book of the same title in the 1980's (Cupitt, 1984).

Jaffe (1990) comments that the religious attitude must now be found by the individual because we have entered a time when we cannot accept dogmatic assertion. This supports the view that the decline in interest in religion is a decline in interest in the formal institutions and not the religious impulse. The organisation, its structure, the dogma and the ossified symbols of yore are no longer able to satisfy the yearning for the individual religious experience. We are rejecting the collective; we may even be rejecting the hero figure in favour of our own experience as Jaffe (1999) argues.

We now require a 'reason to believe'; indeed we do not want to 'believe' but to 'know', as Jung said (Tacey, 2001). Again, this points to our personal experience being the centre of our endeavour. In the past we were told to believe and if we asked *'why?'*, the institution said *'because we said so'*; now however, we either ask *'why?'* again, or walk away, in my case, towards the East. The direct experience of reality has been a central concern of Eastern religions from the outset, and Buddhism is no exception.

As a society we walked away from organised religion, and as Cupitt 1984: 30) puts it,

"...modern secular man invents his own autonomous ethic and is no longer accustomed to allowing religious authority to prescribe his morality to him".

We did not however, walk away from the religious impulse; that remains, and we seek expression for it in hippydom, drugs, New Ageism, science, conquest and a host of psychotic behaviours as Durkheim (1915) hinted we might. Now, there is evidence Tacey (2004) that we are beginning to look at the spiritual without the institutional baggage because we begin to see the superficiality of the places we looked for the expression and destination of the religious impulse. This is not to necessarily dispute the role of Christianity or any other tradition in history, but to recognise the evolution of the 'God concept' (Chopra, 2000, Armstrong, 2009). All knowledge and understanding is provisional and can be understood to evolve over time. The New Age movement for Tacey is an immature expression of the search, but no less important in that it points to the 'gap' we are experiencing, however caused.[14]

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[14] The history of our organisations has always been the gradual movement towards ossification and rigidity and there is every reason to believe that new organisations will experience the same tendencies; including the New Age. For Weber (1947) the tendency to bureaucracy was a feature of an advanced industrialised society, increased complexity leading to increased use of rules and regulation to make decisions. For Ritzer (1993, 1998) this is now permeating every form of organisation including the Church itself (See 'The McDonaldization of the Church', Drane, 2000) However this movement towards rules and procedures might be better seen as a tendency in all organisations; how to behave, what to wear, what to believe and how to speak. Was this not what was going on when Moses returned from Mount Sinai? A new ritual was in progress and in time we might surmise it would have spawned a priesthood, a structure, a dogma and a set of rules for carrying out the rituals and who should preside

Spirituality as a growth in consciousness

The idea that humankind is passing through evolutionary stages in consciousness is not new; Jaffe (1990) reports that Joachim of Flora, a twelfth-century theologian, suggested the world would pass through three periods: the Age of the Law and the Father, the Age of the Gospel and the Son, and the Age of Contemplation and the Holy Spirit. Edinger (1984) he says, amplified this and identified the Age of the Law with the Jewish faith, the Age of the Gospel with Jesus and faith, and the Age of Contemplation with a psychological dispensation in which the individual joins with the divine. There is no shortage of more recent authors arguing for this growth of consciousness one way or another. Capra (1982) for example, identified a *'Turning Point'*, referring to a shift from a Newtonian worldview based on mechanistic relations and predictable futures to a holistic world view based on systemic understandings of many areas of life, including economics, psychology and politics. This shift was led by discoveries in the modern age in science and particularly physics, yet pre-empted by Eastern religions 2500 years earlier (Capra, 1976).[15]

Other contributors to the growth of consciousness argument include the transpersonal theorist Ken Wilber. Wilber (1996) acknowledges that both Hegel (1977) and Teilhard de Chardin (1964) had posited that evolution was a spiritual unfolding and that Jean Gebser (1972) and Jurgen Habermas (1971) had suggested evolutionary stages

[15] Zohar (1997) argues similarly that the Newtonian world view which had also dominated the 'science' of management was also to be over turned through the influence of the 'new physics'. It is interesting to note that just as physics was being revolutionised and relativised by names like Einstein, so Frederick Taylor was publishing *'The Principles of Scientific Management'* (1911) with the exception of a few lone voices like Stacey (2003) management thinking has struggled to escape the Newtonian paradigm in the one hundred years since the New Physics became a reality.

in consciousness, but neither from a spiritual dimension, it was these deficiencies that Wilber (1996) claims to have rectified in *'Up from Eden'*.

The book was based on certain principles which Wilber (1996) makes explicit. First, the idea that progress takes place in a dialectic fashion; today's solutions bring with them a range of new and complex problems of their own. On this basis the much derided 'modernity' brought problems, but solved many too, and what preceded modernity was not all good. Progress is a process of differentiating and integrating which brings new tensions to be resolved by those that follow. This conception goes someway to answering the question of why the increased interest in spirituality now. Modernity was a stage in a spiritual unfolding, and that process continues now as we see the increased interest in spirituality without the institutions, possibly a post dogmatic stage. It will be interesting to see whether the institutional energy will be put to the service of the unfolding spirit or whether, like all human institutions to date, it will also ossify; deifying its principles and reifying its rules. Predictably this observation puts organisation theorists at the centre stage, since it is in the context of organisations that the ossification takes place.

A second principle of *'Up from Eden'* (1996) is the distinction between differentiation and dissociation. Wilber argues that differentiation is necessary to grow on a cellular and on a human level and entails the evolving consciousness beginning to see itself as separate from other experiences. However, seeing ourselves as separate is different from dissociation; when we dissociate we loose sight of the process and our connection to it. The implication is that having lost the connection and the sense of continuity, we are consumed by existential fear, cry foul, entrench and fight wars to protect what we fear losing.

Wilber's observation that the new will *'transcend and include'* the old, suggests that progress is a matter of synthesis rather than wholesale revolution. For Tacey (2001) the New Age has begun by emphasising Mother Earth and represents therefore a regression to an earlier time rather than the 'New Age' it purports to be. We need, he says, spirit and matter, masculine and feminine, Yin and Yang, spirit and soul, God and Gaia, both/and, not either/or, anything else is regressive.

If the increased interest in the spiritual is, for some, the result of a new stage in consciousness emerging, it would be appropriate to ask what has instigated it, and for many the answer is that growth is always preceded by some form of crisis, an idea which has been with us for a long time at the individual and collective levels, and has manifested in a number of areas of human experience. On the level of whole civilisations, Marx's dialectical explanation for the progress of societies in stages from slavery to Communism was influenced by Hegel's (1977) observations about the relationship between slave and master. Each stage would have to reach a crisis point before the new comes emerges. By way of further example, Jung (1973: Vol.10) pointed to the malaise of the Roman empire in the first few centuries of after the birth of Christ, and the 16th century dissolution of the church eventually leading to the Enlightenment (Hauke, 2000). On the level of the individual: the prenatal experience of the infant in the birth canal (Grof, 1976), in biology: the calamity of a forest fire gives rise to new growth by admitting sunlight and providing fertiliser. In organisational theory, Greiner (1972) identifies numerous crises organisations pass through; each (if survived) heralds a new phase of growth. In philosophy, Kuhn (1970) points to the anguish experienced by a scientific discipline and even an individual scientist, as he or she struggles with the loss

of the *'Normal Science'* of the time and to move painfully to the *'Extraordinary Science'* that challenged it. Psychology has long recognised the onset of lifetime crises, such as the mid-life crisis, as the instigation of major change in an individual's life.

In religion the same thing is continually identified in the spiritual development of an individual. Jesus had to die on the cross for the new covenant to be established, the Buddha experienced seven years of self mortification before he finally jettisons the approach and achieves liberation. Taoism has centred its observations on the human condition on the same idea; that change comes about when conditions reach a certain point (Wilhelm and Baynes, 2003).

The reason for all this, Jung wrote, (1973, Vol.8) is that the psyche tends toward compensation at the extremes. Even though the term 'post-modern' was not in use before Jung's death, (Hauke, 2000) the dissociation and relativism in Jung heralded the arrival of a new world view which places the individual's subjective experience in the central position. In terms of religion, the seeds of the new are already contained in the old and so, *'...the leading idea of a new religion to follow the Christian age would be that everyone is Christ'*. (Jung 1973, quoted in Jaffe (1990: title page).

Why the increased interest in spirituality now?

If the increased interest in spirituality is the result of growth in human consciousness and that growth is preceded by crisis, then the question arises 'what crisis'? For some the crisis is a *'God shaped hole'* Midgley (2005: 286). Homans (1979) (in Hauke, 2000) refers to the *'meaning vacuum'* left by the loss of religious certainties which will be filled by what Edinger (1984) (in Jaffe, 1990: 20) called the *'psychological dispensation'*. Put differently, the 'Enlightenment mind' led to the shift from religious to

other, some would say more shallow, symbols in the twentieth century, (Burleigh, 2006) and this has caused a yearning for depth and the so called 'irrational' which is what the religions largely catered for up to that point, as described in much detail by Jung (1973, Vol. 11). The idea that the turn to greater interest in spirituality is the result of a perceived gap in people's lives, has also found expression in the spirituality in the workplace literature to be reviewed in the next chapter. Waddock (1999) for example, says that we see work as meaningless and unethical and Krishnakumar (2002) writes of the desire people have for meaning in all of their lives.[16]

Tacey (2001) argues that the New Age movement represents the antithesis to the Judeo/Christian thesis. According to this idea we might see the increased interest in spirituality as a reaction against traditional religion and to the one-sided view of life that it presents; patriarchal literalism. For Tacey (2001) the New Age movement is a compensation for the failure of traditional religions to address the certain issues of the time, secularism and materialism particularly. New Age thinking is a powerful wake up call for traditional religion which must respond or die, if they are able to respond the New Age movement will disappear. This, Tacey (2001) argues, is so because the traditional religions have the symbolic, historic and ritualistic framework to facilitate peoples search for meaning in their lives. While the New Age, he says, is based on the consumerist

[16] This seems to have some credence; my grandparent's generation spoke of *'jobs for life'* and often felt that if you could get a job working for government, for example in the GPO (General Post Office) you would be *'set for life'*. For that generation there was the expectation of being 'looked after' by 'the company' all the way to a gold watch. Perhaps they had a right to expect that having raised children through the Second World War. But those children, my parents, were to be disappointed, because the GPO became a commercial concern with just as much propensity to lay people off as any other commercial concern. Nevertheless, that generation felt life was to be 'lived' in BT's cheap rate; after 6pm and at weekends. The rest of the time was the company's time, and working people did not expect it to be meaningful beyond being with your work mates. I also experienced this, but now I am not happy if my work is boring or the management of the organisation treat me as a commodity; a 'human resource'. All this for me points to my hope or even expectation that I will find my working life as meaningful in terms of my own development as my time outside that arena.

mode and is an infantile response to the longings of the human spirit, it is nevertheless a powerful display of that longing.

The increased interest in spirituality is what Tacey (2001: 73) calls an,

> *"early low grade anticipation of a higher mysticism that may be expressed at a later stage in our individual or cultural development. It could be a doorway through which we have to pass, as our civilisation recovers its spiritual orientation and begins to reawaken to its religious life".*

It has already been argued that society is rejecting organised religion, but not the religious impulse. Few would deny the fall in significance of organised religion in some sense. Some have pointed to the Enlightenment and the 'cult of reason' as the culprit, others to Darwin, (1998) and yet others to Marxist inspired views on religion in the USSR and China. All suggested that God was no longer 'necessary'. So when Nietchze (1911) pronounced 'God to be dead' in *'Thus Spake Zarathustra'*, it seems it might have been more an open and shut case of murder (Tacey, 2001: 89).

But to point to the events of the last 300 years in Western Europe as <u>the</u> explanation is to point perhaps to the symptom and not the cause, indeed for Wilber the 'cause' is never that linear (1996). Jung and the post Jungians seem united in their assertion that it is the subjugation of the archetypal feminine that has led to a one sided understanding of what is to be human. And this may help address the question of *'why now'?* Increased interest in spirituality is a response to the dominating patriarchal principle which has been in place since we banished mother Goddess three thousand

years ago (Tacey, 2001, Jung, 1973, Vol.11, and Jaffe, 1990). Before then our reverence was for 'Mother Earth', but the veneration was transferred to the Sky Gods and the masculine which became associated with males.

The movement to the masculine was most evident in the rise of Christianity. The spread of a small religious movement originating around Galilee into a world vision which continues to influence the lives of millions today was led by Paul of Tarsus, *'who was Jewish by birth, Roman by citizenship and Greek by culture'* Tarnas (1991: 87). It is little wonder that the form of church which prevailed then and which has dominated ever since, was patriarchal and imperialist, and still less wonder that alternative views on its organisation were suppressed, as were the iconic figures deemed to threaten that masculine view, figures such as Mary Magdalene (Leloup, 2002). Greek rationalism[17] allied to Roman imperialism and Judaic law were the ground in which the seedling of Christianity had to flourish and it did so with little heed for the alternative vision of the Christian message heralded by the Gnostics and which showed all the signs of a non-hierarchical arrangement that placed women in positions of equal authority (Pagels 1979).

The structure of the church, its dominance by males, the de-emphasising of Mary Magdalene as an influence in the life of Jesus (Leloup, 2002), the interpretation of the scriptures, the battle over the ordination of women, (incredibly to this day), are all

[17] Raphael's painting *'The School of Athens'* depicts so well what Tarnas (1991) refers to as the dual legacy of the Classical Greek mind. They were, he said the first to see the world as a problem to be answered, and the answers they gave were first, a conviction that the world is an ordered place characterised by a pervasive intelligence, a transcendent reality which is accessible to humans through various cognitive capacities. The approachable transcendence was clearest in the work of Plato. The second and related answer to the problem was the insistence on human reason and empirical observation probably most clear in Aristotle.

examples of the problem the church, as an institution, has had in acknowledging the 'feminine'.[18] Furthermore, the extinction of various Gnostic views on the organisation of the church in the centuries following Christ's death also points to the reason for our current patriarchal vision and possibly also to the reaction from people with a deeper need for a more inclusive and non-dualistic vision.

The evidence as presented here suggests that some people in some places are not rejecting the religious impulse, or even the institutions, but the particular form of institution, and the dogma that appears to be an integral part of institutionalised religion. It may be that it is this organisational vision, which some see as so partial a picture, is of no use to a society perhaps increasingly recognising the non-dualistic nature of our existence. On the one hand we may be witnessing a post-religious society, one which is rejecting institutional dogma, on the other, and at the same time, there is increasing fundamentalism of many kinds, and people continue to seek the meaning for their lives in institutional forms, the family and the football club (see Corbett, 2007).

The search for meaning

Another explanation for the 'gap' might be that the search for meaning is a reaction to the loss of meaning emerging from the post-modern. If all is relative, then where else does the individual turn for meaning? It could not be put more succinctly than Tarnas (1991: 403),

[18] Things have not changed much, women's access to the membership of the Lord's cricket ground in 1998 was only accepted by member's after it was realised that continuing the 211 year old ban on women would preclude the club from receiving funds from the National Lottery. Commentators at the time implied that this was good by comparison to the House of Commons which took 700 years to accept a woman in the position of Speaker of the House.

"...while in most respects the influence of institutionalized religion has continued to decline, the religious sensibility itself seems to have been revitalized by the newly ambiguous intellectual circumstances of the postmodern era".

For Tacey (2001: 13) there had to be a reaction to what he calls the *'depressive directions of modernity'*; the absence of meaning following the *'death of God'* (Nietzche, 1911). Tarnas (1991) argues that the removal of meaning by the *'post-modern mind'* has forced a re-examination of things spiritual. Yet the reaction has not only been a New Age turn to the spiritual, it has also been a return to old myths with the same interpretations; fundamentalism; and for many that is regression (Tacey, 2001).

Others have responded differently; Malcom Muggeridge famously embraced the Catholic church in his later years (1989) as did T S Elliot in his middling years. One interpretation of this is the fear of an old man *'hedging his bets'*. Another is the maturing of a life and a mind engaged in the consideration of the religious impulse, and, ultimately recognising myth and symbol as powerful ways to 'truth' after all the thinking is done. Far from maturing away from the religious impulse, the anthropologist Victor Turner (1975: 31) had this to say,

> *"...I became convinced that religion is not merely a toy of the race's childhood, to be discarded at a nodal point of scientific and technological development, but is really at the heart of the matter".*

Instead of myth being a fanciful story, it is in this sense a human story which gives meaning to life or as Jaffe (1990) puts it, to our suffering.

Secularisation in Western Europe is almost treated as a given in the 21st century, but in 1984 (p32) the radical theologian Don Cupitt asked a different question; why, in the face of all this, does the church survive? And he answers,

> *"It survives, surely, because the progressive weakening of religious institutions and religious thought does not alter the fact that at the deepest level religious needs and impulses are as great as ever."*

And accordingly;

> *"It is still the task of religion to generate an order of meanings and values for us to live by, an order which can give moral weight and purpose to individual and social life".*

If the religious impulse has survived the secularisation process, then in Cupitt's (1984: 12) words; *'how do we resist the relegation of religion to the margins of life'*? again his answer is, *'...by demythologising religious belief...'*. The strength of the *'Sea of Faith'* movement within the Anglican church, inspired by Cupitt's book of the same name, and the BBC television series which accompanied it, as well as his writing since, suggest there is some sympathy for that view. But perhaps demythologising is a further step towards rationalisation and the psyche does not speak in these terms. The psyche

speaks in symbol and metaphor, according to Jung (1973: Vol. 8) but if the ego usurps its position of dominance, and declares unilateral control and independence, then it begins to see itself as God and interprets the symbols in a limited and realist or literalistic manner (Tacey, 2001). Turning this around it is possible to argue that traditional religion, by insisting on literal interpretations, (God is an old man with a beard, in the sky and 'out there'), is the reason for the increased interest in spirituality; because traditional religion does not accord with a more questioning mind, looking for meaning, or depth or knowledge of itself. Following Cottingham (2005) I would argue for 'deliteralisation' and a conscious engagement with myth and the symbolic.

Summary

Most Classical sociologists like Marx, (1963), Durkheim (1915) and Weber (1965) saw religion as a dying institution predicated on the observation that human reason would lead to a more psychologically and politically mature society, in this sense classical sociology was a product of the Enlightenment. Yet, along with the view that religion was the product of some form of delusional immaturity, was the attendant view that it nevertheless performed some function in society. For Marx and Durkheim, it is a reified society that 'matures'. For Freud it is the society and the individual that matures, either way the idea implies that those with religious faith were somehow immature and further, that those able to see this immaturity were, by implication, more mature. This is certainly the case with Marx, Durkheim and Freud, all of whom were influenced by the publication of Darwin's '*Origin of the Species*' (1998) in 1859.

With the possible exception of Weber (1930 and 1965), Classical sociology appears to base its conclusions about religious belief on this type of reasoning, but in a more localised form. The scholarly mind is seen as being better able to apprehend the mythic and symbolic practices of people than the people themselves. This is explicitly the case with Durkheim (1915) and his claim that people engaged in religious practices were not attempting to ensure a better crop, but unconsciously promoting social cohesion. Weber (1965) perhaps emerges from this analysis as perhaps having a more inclusive understanding of religion in society. His recognition of the different meanings religion has for different classes seems to be a movement in the direction of the individual interpretation being important. He also noted that the activities we might normally keep separate for analytical purposes turn out to be religious in origin; for him the generation of wealth was a religious act and a means to solve the existential problem of salvation. Nevertheless, Weber (1965) still focused his attention on religion in a social context. More recent sociology, for example Berger (1973) appears to move more towards a psychological interpretation of religion, but retains the view that it is a social phenomenon.

What this chapter has argued is that the religious institution should be separated from the religious/spiritual impulse. The religious institution is what is commonly meant by the word 'religion', while the religious impulse is more usefully associated with the word 'spirituality' and this is the manner in which the word spiritual is intended here. While the religious institution is an undeniable outcome of social processes over long periods of time, the religious impulse remains even when the institution becomes corrupt and/or withers.

The ideas presented in this chapter point substantially to the idea that secularisation in the form commonly seen in our some societies, might be better expressed as de-institutionalisation and that this might affect not only religion, but any collective interpretation offered, including the state and science itself. The Age of the Law and of the Hero posited by Joachim in the 12th century and much later Edinger (1984) might be giving way to a *'psychological dispensation'* in which the individual makes sense of their world through their own experience; Joachim's Age of Contemplation and the Holy Spirit. What people seek, it has been argued, is meaning, and it is the absence of meaning that has perhaps prompted the increased interest in the spiritual. Increased interest in spirituality in the workplace might also be because we seek meaning in our organisational lives, not greater functionality; yearnings not earnings, but it might also be read as an attempt to achieve even greater control and domination, and it is to a critical review of this literature that the next chapter turns.

Chapter 3. The spirituality in the workplace literature

This chapter begins with a discussion of the context in which the 'spirituality in the workplace' literature emerged and shows the geographical and attitudinal concentration of the work. There follows a critical review of that literature divided into what I have termed the 'crusaders' and the 'critics'. The use of the rather loaded term, 'crusaders', is designed to highlight the proselytizing tone of many contributions. The key features of the work of the crusaders is largely confined to attempts to define the field, delineation of the benefits of more spiritual workplaces and propositions as to its implementation. The review is largely presented chronologically in order to draw out its development. The critique that follows cuts across these headings and identifies the literature as functional and managerial, dualistic and reified. These critical points are picked up again in chapter seven where the literature considered in this, and chapters one and two, are considered in the light of the data presented in chapters five and six.

The context of the discourse – where, when, why and how?

The literature reviewed here has surfaced under a number of banners, for example, *'spirituality in the workplace'*, *'spirituality at work'*, *'workplace spirituality'*, *'organisational spirituality'*, and *'spirituality in business'* Brown (2003: 395). This may be symptomatic of the difficulty the field is having arriving at a commonly accepted definition, which as yet, does not exist (Ashforth and Pratt 2003). Before examining this literature it will be instructive to address contextual questions relating to where the literature is emerging from, when, why and how? These are significant issues in

themselves, but the limitations of space require dictate that these contextual factors will be brief.

The first point to make is that the very considerable majority of contributions come from North America. There are significant contributions from elsewhere, for example, Gibbons (2002), Bell and Taylor (2003 and 2004) and Peletonen and Keleman (2002), and the 2007 Critical Management Conference included a stream entitled, *'The Spirit of Capitalism: critical approaches to religion and spirituality in organisation'*. This suggests that non-US authors are showing some interest, but these contributions are still very much in the minority, even though possibly the first papers using these terms were published as much as fifteen years ago, Neck and Milliman (1994) (*'workplace spirituality'),* Neal (1997), (*'spirituality in the workplace'),* and Butts (1999) *('spirituality at work').*

There are also attitudinal patterns which subsist across these contributions and while not attempting to make a rigid point here, it is noticeable, for example, that the four articles mentioned above from non-US authors (Gibbons, 2002; Bell and Taylor, 2003 and 2004; and Peltonen and Keleman, 2002) are all either descriptive, and/or critical of the body of work. Critical work has emerged from North America too, for example Pava (2004), and the majority still falls into what Peletonen and Keleman (2002) call the normative category. Given the North American predominance of the literature it should come as little surprise to find that most of it adopts an explicit, or implicit Christian, or at least theistic, stance to the issue of spirituality in the workplace. While there were those that called, early on, for a multidimensional understanding to include both Western and Eastern traditions, McCormick (1994) and Butts (1999), this hasn't happened in any

significant manner, indeed, Bartunek (1999) is critical of one of the earliest publications in the inquiry, Demerath et al (1999), for concentrating on Western religious organisations in the USA. The literature to be reviewed here has been identified as heavily influenced by Christian Puritan and evangelical views, as well as utopian and New Age influences Elmes and Smith (2001). Nevertheless, some non-Christian perspectives have surfaced, for example, Kane (1998) (Shaman), Silvers (1998), (Neo Pagan), White (1998) (Buddhist), and Kakabadse (2002) (Taoist).

The question of why the work emerged was partially addressed in chapter two where the work of Classical sociologists, Marx, (1963) Weber (1930 and 1965) and Durkheim (1915) was considered in regard to the relationship between religion and wealth creation. But it was suggested that religion as a function of other social processes was only part of the explanation for the current rise in interest in spirituality, and the additional explanation of a shift in consciousness was posited. However, the question as to why there is an increased interest specifically in 'spirituality in the workplace' also seems pertinent.

Some of the answers returned include that it is the result of demographic factors such as the 1960's baby boomers reaching mid life, or the dramatic changes in working life being affected by downsizing and reengineering Neal et al (1999). Gockel (2004) argues it is the result of globalisation, the information economy, corporate downsizing and the increased demands on frontline employees. Similarly, Jurkiewicz and Giacalone (2004) state that most writers consider it is the result of dissatisfaction with social and business problems and the desire for a greater connection between employer and employee. Others, like Tischler (1999), point to a Maslovian explanation; essentially, our

interest in higher order needs is the result of lower order needs having been satisfied. It is not the purpose of this section to provide a definitive answer to the question of 'why now'. However, the argument in chapter two, (that increased interest in spirituality and the seemingly irrepressible religious impulse, may be an expression of a growing consciousness), might now be allied to significant events of the last one hundred years in the Western mind, which I offer here in the form of a list for consideration as to why there is increased interest in spirituality in the workplace, particularly in North America.

The First World War between 1914 and 1918, the great depression in 1929, the Second World War between 1939 and 1945 and the attack on Pearl harbour in 1941, Vietnam from 1959 to 1975 and the encounter with Eastern philosophy and culture, the 1979 Iranian revolution and the American hostage crisis, the coming to power of right wing governments in the UK in 1979 and in the USA in 1981, the fall of the Berlin wall and symbolic demise of Communism in 1989, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and its liberation in 1991, the attack on the World Trade centre in 2001, the start of war in Afghanistan and beginning of the 'war on terror' in the same year, the naming of the 'axis of evil' and the search for 'weapons of mass destruction' in 2003 along with the second invasion of Iraq, and more recently the 'Credit Crunch' resulting from sub-prime lending, arguably beginning in 2007, the ramifications of which are expected for decades to come.

This list is certainly not exhaustive and it doesn't include the important observation that successive US Presidents and UK Prime Ministers have repeatedly claimed the support of God and/or religion in their attempts to gain and retain power. Margaret Thatcher, for example began her first term of office in May 1979 by quoting St

Francis of Assisi, and the US Republican party has consciously courted the Christian Right since the early 1980's (Kaplan, 2005).

Against these events academic work in management and organisation theory continued apace, arguably beginning with Frederick Taylor's *'The Principles of Scientific Management'* (1911) closely allied to the production processes of Ford. In terms of the current research there were some significant landmark publications that are rarely referred to, for example; Maslow (1954), Senge (1990), Golman, (1996) and (1998), and Csikzentmihalyi, (1990). All these works had significant spiritual undertones, as did the work Greenleaf and the concept of servant leadership in 1977, and the Mormon theology of Stephen Covey in 1991. It was against this backdrop that the spirituality in the workplace literature arguably began in the middle to late 1990's, with CEO's of large corporations writing books and articles on the expression of their faith in the running of their organisations. Kakabadse (2002) cites numerous CEO's that have tried to articulate religious visions in their organisations including Max DePree (of Herman Miller DePree) (1997), James Autry (of Meredith Communications Autry) (1991), and Tom Chappell (of Tom's of Maine) (1993). These attempts to lead commercial organisations from religious (and particularly Christian) principles are also predated by others from England such as Cadbury and Rowntree from the Quaker tradition in the nineteenth century.

This last discussion points to the dominance of American authors mostly assuming at least a theistic, if not Christian understanding, writing in a century in which most management and organisation theory is usually deemed to have begun, and against a background of geographically widespread war and economic calamity. The suggestion here is that, coupled to the growth in consciousness argument put in chapter two, the

sudden deluge of spirituality in the workplace writing from the late 1990's seems less surprising.

Much of the work has been of a theoretical nature and there is very little empirical work emerging from the field of spirituality in the workplace. This may be more to do with the difficulty the field has had in defining its terms, as discussed in chapter one, and addressed again in this chapter in relation to defining spirituality in the workplace. While some empirical work has appeared, for example, Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2004), Marques, Dhiman and King (2008), the problems may run deeper. Gotsis and Kortezi (2008) point to the lack of a firm philosophical foundation and there may also be methodological issues regarding the use of positivistic methods (Fornanciari and Dean, 2001). A further observation relates to the lack of reflexive work in what many would see as a field of inquiry that specifically needs authors to recognise their influence on the research process. Again, however there does appear to be some attempts more recently to offer a more reflexive account of the impact of the author on the writing (Delbecq, 2004; Manz, Manz, Marx and Neck, 2004).

A further gap in this literature relates to what McGrath (2005) refers to as the bland ahistoricism that he feels exists in organisation theory generally. In terms of this research there appears to be very little attempt to use theological sources to address even the most basic questions as to what the spiritual life might be. There also seems to be reluctance to acknowledge that many have, in practice, trodden the path of 'spirituality in the workplace', with all its contradictions before, and continue to do so, though not using that term; I refer to self-sustaining spiritual communities.

The crusaders

Defining spirituality in the workplace

In chapter one the point was made that the attempt to define spirituality is likely to fail because the experience is unique to the individual and is, anyway, beyond words, instead, an attempt was made to identify key features of the spiritual life. The purpose of this section is to more specifically examine attempts to define the term *'spirituality in the workplace'*, or its variants.

In 1999 *The Journal of Organizational Change Management* devoted a special issue to the subject of spirituality in the workplace and there, Freshman (1999: 319) asks, *'What are people writing about when they refer to spirituality in the workplace?'*. She concludes that spirituality in the workplace is uniquely personal, that dialogue is better than debate, and that intuition and learning are key themes. Others however, prefer to list what spirituality in the workplace might include. Kriger and Hanson (1999) for example, suggest eight underlying values drawn from the major religions, including honesty and truthfulness, humility, trust, forgiveness, compassion and thankfulness. Similarly, Wagner-Marsh and Conley (1999) suggest six key concepts based on the literature that appear to be essential for maintaining a spiritually based corporate culture; honesty with self, articulation of the organisation's spiritually based philosophy, mutual trust and honesty with others, commitment to equality and service, commitment to employees and selection of personnel to match the corporations spiritually-based philosophy.

Approaching the issue from a Christian perspective Delbecq (1999) considers themes which inform Christian business leaders' journeys and these include a sense of leadership as a calling and co-creation of industrial enterprise as an act of love. In this analysis there

is no separation of the private life of the spirit and the public life of work, the leader is a contemplative in action and is characterised as having courage, bold vision, flexibility and the Christian virtue of humility.

Further indication of what spirituality in the workplace might be came from Milliman et al (1999) who presented Southwest Airlines as an example of a spiritually based organisation because it has strong emphasis on community, and because employees feel they are empowered and part of a cause. A clearer attempt at definition was to be found in Ashmos and Duchon (2000:139) who define spirituality at work as *'recognition of an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community'*. And Ottaway (2003: 43) offers that, *'Spirituality of work is a source of energy empowering and transforming the life of daily work'*.

These attempts to define spirituality in the workplace did not satisfy some who called for tighter definition to make the field more pragmatic (Gibbons, 2002). The problem is that the attempt to define spirituality itself is too restricting. Echoing Gibbons call for a more pragmatic approach, Pava (2004) suggests that intelligent spirituality would be human centered and it would see 'meaning' as potentially intrinsic to all human activity. Spirituality in a business context, Pava says, is better presented in a pragmatic manner and by way of an underlying philosophy suggests the work of John Dewey (1934) who he describes elsewhere as a *'religious humanist'* (2008: 67).

The attempt to find a definition of spirituality at work has continued in more recent years, more predominantly by empirical means. Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2004) for example find the notion of spirit at work is, for their respondents, a multidimensional

state which includes the physical and the interpersonal as well as the mystical. They also confirm that engagement with spirituality at work gives people a feeling of contributing to something larger than themselves and connection to others. Marques et al (2006: 43) carried out in-depth interviews with business executives in Los Angeles that had, *'done some deep thinking and reflection on spirituality in the workplace'*, and concluded with lists of what should and should not be present in a spiritual workplace. What should be absent included negativity, dishonesty, excessive control, egocentric behaviour, mistrust, strong hierarchy, and back stabbing (Marquez, 2006: 46). In discussing the themes that emerged from their study the authors list the necessary features of a spiritual workplace, and they are,

> *"Ethics, truth, belief in a higher power, respect, understanding, openness, honesty, being self-motivated, encourage creativity, giving to others, trust, kindness, team orientation, few organizational barriers, a sense of peace and harmony, aesthetically pleasing workplace, interconnectedness, encouraging diversity and acceptance".*

The preponderance of lists of qualities dating from Kriger and Hanson (1999) to Marquez (2006) suggests that there are still difficulties with the clear definitions that Gibbons (2002) called for. In 2003 Brown (2003) considers the reified nature of the term organisational spirituality unhelpful and Benefiel (2007) seemingly moves the discussion on to how spirituality at work might best be researched, yet she still found the need to ask

questions relating to how spirituality in organisations can be defined. Gotsis and Kortezi (2007: 575) conclude that, *'...the field is full of obscurity and imprecision for the researcher, the practitioner, the organisational analysts and whoever attempts to systematically approach this relatively new inquiry field'.* Eleven years after Bowman (1998: 8) lamented that definitions were *'troublesome and particularly subjective'*, and seven years after the special edition of *The Journal of Organisational Change Management* more clearly placed spirituality in the workplace in the academic realm, attempts to define it, either from a theoretical or empirical base, continue to struggle.

The benefits of spirituality in the workplace

Given the difficulties of defining spirituality in the workplace (or spirituality, as discussed in chapter one), this section will now delineate the benefits that many authors have ascribed to the instigation of more spiritually oriented workplaces. Much writing on the subject has been devoted to detailing the benefits to either the organisation as a whole, or to the individuals within it, but what is noticeable is that benefits are seen mostly to accrue to the organisation and, with only a few exceptions, to the individual, who usually benefits collaterally. Many refer to the benefits of a more spiritual workplace in terms of its impact on the performance of the company or the extrinsic utilitarian value of it Gibbons (2002). In their review of the literature Dent, Higgins and Wharff (2005) find that most researchers in the field have either demonstrated empirically or have hypothesised, that there is a link between spirituality in the workplace and productivity.

Perhaps one reason that the organisational benefits are placed ahead of those of individuals is that offered by Milliman et al (1999: 222)

"We believe that the issue of whether spirituality can have a positive impact on both employees and organizations is particularly important because many chief executive officers (CEO's) will not justify a practice unless it favourably impacts the bottom line".

This view appears to have some empirical support. Overell (Financial Times, 15th October 1999) reported that Father Dermot Tredget MBA, a Benedictine monk, was running weekend retreats for executives to help them recognize the spiritual side of themselves in their work, at least one of which was clear that it was, for him, a way to enhance the bottom line for his company.

In 1982 Peters and Waterman published the infamous, *'In Search of Excellence'* which among other things demonstrated, *'...that employees perform most energetically, creatively, and enthusiastically when they believe they are contributing to a higher purpose'* Peters and Waterman (1982: 329), as did McKnight in (Adams, 1984). Lloyd (1990) was able to report that spiritual companies outperform non-spiritual companies by 86% and in 1994 Neck and Milliman suggested that organisations which provide their employees with avenues for spiritual expression are likely to perform better. Butts (1994: 329) argues that *'ultimate whole system values'*, including truth, trust, freedom, justice, creativity, collective harmony, intelligence, deeper meaning and higher purpose, *'...can also enhance profit and productivity.* Other earlier authors linking spirituality to performance in some way include (Maynard and Mehrtens, 1993; Chappell, 1993; McCormick, 1994; Brandt, 1996; and Mirvis, 1997).

Osborn (2000) sees a clear link between spirituality and success and for Konz and Ryan (1999) individuals that join a spiritually based organization, and share its values, will stay longer, be more satisfied, more productive and are more easily socialized. A more precise indication of how this happens shows that people who feel connected to meaningful work perform better, showup more often and contribute to a better atmosphere. People are more engaged, responsible, ethical, collaborative and creative and the improved quality and innovation affords the organisation competitive advantage Gull and Doh (2004).

Empirical work has also shown that employees relate success in work to the notion of spirituality for example Harrington, Preziosi and Gooden (2001) and Milliman, Czaplewski and Ferguson (2003). Rego and Pina de Cunha (2008) found that the experience of workplace spirituality gives rise to a greater feeling of attachment to the organisation, even obligation and loyalty, which the authors say can ultimately be translated into improved organisational and individual performance. Interestingly, they also note that this is something that **managers can promote** (my emphasis) by improving the spiritual climate of the organisation, a point addressed below. Simliarly, Kolodinsky, Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2008) also find positive correlations between personal spirituality and organisational spirituality. The connection between performance and spirituality in the workplace has also been claimed in the public sector, albeit less marked Garcia-Zamor (2003).

The benefit to organisation is also seen in terms of facilitating change. For Dehler and Welsh (1994) downsizing and re-engineering are not improving organisational performance and therefore structural approaches to change are only part of the solution.

They argue that we need to address emotional and spiritual issues too; spirituality, they say, is the thread connecting non-rational dimensions of human behaviour which are seen as essential to the change process.

For Neal et al (1999) transformation at both the individual and the organisational level is as much if not more to with the spiritual and the non-material, as economics. When a critical mass is achieved in individual transformations, she argues, so a society wide transformation will take place via organisational transformation. Other authors linking spirituality to organisational change include Bartenuk and Moch (1991) and Egri and Frost (1991).

A further and related connection being made is that between spiritual perspectives and the learning process in organisations, Addleson (1996) for example. Porth, McCall and Bausch (1999) point to the confluence of spiritual themes with those of the notion of the learning organisation, including the growth of the individual, collaboration and the community. Howard (2002) argues that focus on spirituality has allowed practitioners to consider many issues related to learning in the workplace, such as complexity, connectivity, the meaning of work, individual identity and moral leadership. Spirituality is even being mentioned in the context of financial decision making McCuddy and Pirie (2007) and customer relations Pandey et al (2009).

While many contributors to the spirituality at work discourse see the benefits accruing primarily to the organisation, with the individual benefitting collaterally, the argument could be made that the opposite is the more likely scenario, namely that the organisation will benefit from anything that can contribute to the individual's well being. King and Nicol (1999) for example argue there is a useful link to be made between Eliot

Jaques and Carl Jung. Following Jaques, the individual is growing and not static and the organisation should be seen as a means by which the individual is supported in this maturing process. Or as Jung (1973: Vol. 8) has it, the individuation process. In regard to the spirituality in the workplace initiative Milliman (1999: 224) makes the point that individuals should be primary in considerations of spirituality in the workplace, *'However, it is important to note that for these values to truly have an impact, they must reflect the inner needs, beliefs and aspirations of the employees'*. In one of few contributions not from the USA Gibbons (2002) is very clear about the order in which the benefits of a more spiritual workplace should accrue, first to the individual who is enabled to integrate work and spiritual life, and then to the families and communities who he says are nourished and contented, and finally to the employers who will benefit from greater productivity and act in more ethical ways through being socially active and more environmentally responsible.

Others that allude in some way to the benefits of spirituality at work to the individual include Fairholm (1996) who sees the workplace as an arena for individuals to find spiritual fulfilment and Mirvis (1997) who sees the proliferation of company training programmes, in for example team-building, as evidence that they are beginning to rediscover work as having spiritual ends for the individual. Harrington (1998) states the need is for boardroom decisions to focus on respect for the individual, and Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) argue from their empirical work, that the individual's spirituality influences their perception of ethical practice within the organisation. Gockel (2004) points to the increased interest in spiritual perspectives at work as a helpful tool for career counsellors. Spirituality in the workplace is also held to make people more tolerant of

diversity and of their own failure which makes them less susceptible to stress. They are also more altruistic leading to better citizenship as well as fostering greater commitment to the organisation and work group Mohamed et al (2004). Nur et al (2009) show from their empirical work, that Christian leaders of small businesses see their role in leadership as a vehicle to reach individual spiritual goals.

Implementing spirituality in the workplace

The preceding section demonstrates that many contributions point to these benefits as a way of justifying the work. However, another major thread of the spirituality in the workplace literature addresses how this might be implemented via management and leadership. For some this would appear as premature with the philosophical underpinnings as yet not fully worked through Gotsis and Kortezi (2007). Nevertheless, the idea that a spiritual workplace can be implemented is implicit in many contributions. McKenna (1997) for example uses the example of the seventeenth century French Saint, Vincent de Paul, to demonstrate that it is possible to lead a spiritually centered life and be successful in a business context.

The question arises <u>who</u> is to implement the spiritual workplace? For many authors it is clear that this is a management or a leadership function or at least has important implications for leadership theory, for example, Cacioppe (2000), Dent, Higgins and Wharff (2005) and Chakraborty and Chakraborty (2004). Brandt (1996) (in Wagner-Marsh and Conley, 1999: 294) in regards to spirituality in one organisation says *'...and the firm expects to extend this emphasis to lower levels in the organisation it the near future'*, and Gull and Doh (2004: 128) *'...propose some concrete actions managers can take...'*

The idea that it is a management function is also clear in this quotation from Konz and Ryan (1999: 201) *'No transformation is easy, especially one as significant as the role shift from manager to spiritual guide'*. And further, *'The spirituality of the leader is the key to maintaining the organisation's spirituality'*. (p203) Vaill (2000) points out that people working in organisations are meaning seeking by their nature, and this means it is a concern for all people in management and leadership positions.

Fry (2003) argues that leadership is a matter of calling and leaders must engage with their own core values and communicate those to others through personal action and Zohar and Marshall (2000) argue that for leaders to inspire vision in their companies they need to give attention to social and spiritual capital as well as material capital. Smith and Rayment (2007) offer guidance to leaders in how they can negotiate the complexities of spirituality. The suggestion appears to be that leading from a spiritual mindset is something that can be taught, in much the same way as for example a course on team-building can be taught. This point will be addressed later. Marquez (2006) argues that while the establishment of a spiritual transformation in the workplace is easier at higher level employees it can be done for lower employees but may take longer and require more perseverance. This shows a very managerial and even patronising attitude to the spiritual aspirations some people have, and it also implies that spirituality is currently absent from companies. Again this point will be address below.

Pawar (2009) notes the benefits to the individual or organisation as two separate, yet related ways in which spirituality in the workplace can be facilitated. Walsh and Vaughan (1993) (in Butts 1999: 330) says that implementation will require six essential elements,

"ethical training, development of concentration, emotional transformation; redirection of motivation from egocentric, deficiency-based needs to higher motives such as self-transcendence, refinement of awareness and the cultivation of wisdom".

The link between spirituality and performance is best made, says Milliman (1999), through the empowerment of individuals and the aligning of HR practices to the spiritual values of the organisation.

Wagner-Marsh and Conley (1999) suggest spiritually based firms should put their underlying philosophy first and develop a distinctive awareness of the spirituality of the company and clearly articulate it. In addition '*outplaced people*' should be looked after. Also, *'New people are given a mentor who helps nurture the servant leadership attitude'* Wagner-Marsh and Conley (1999: 299). Similarly, Konz and Ryan (1999: 202) argue that because managers will bring a variety of spiritual traditions to the workplace organisations should develop *'specific spiritualities'* in order that potential employees can choose whether they want to join it based on its spirituality. This is value based eugenics at work, but few people enjoy the financial independence that would be necessary to choose a job based on the spiritual orientation of the company. This, it seems, is aimed at senior, possibly very senior people, and not most people.

Marquez (2006: 890) says that implementing spirituality in the workplace will require *'thinking outside the box'*, and elsewhere provides a 'protocol' (2008) for spirituality at work, and thereby buttresses her view that, *'religion should definitely be*

kept out of the picture'. The view that implementing spirituality at work is a management function is substantiated by the idea that achieving this involves training managers. Boozer (1998) suggests themes and important questions which can be used to begin the dialogue with managers as to what spirituality in the workplace is, as do others, for example, Daniels, Franz and Wong (2000), Harlos (2000), Epstein (2002). The evidence is that this has already begun, for example, Mirvis (1997), Haroutiounian, et al (2000), and Marcic (2000). Bento (2000) pointed out that while leading from within cannot be taught it nevertheless needs to be learned. The contradictions inherent in learning that which cannot be taught have also been addressed by Lips-Wiersma (2004).

Karakas et al (2009) see the implementation of spirituality in the workplace as emerging from an enhanced role for consultants who, among other roles are encouraged to see themselves as spiritual visionaries in their interventions.

Pielstick (2005) suggests that tomorrows business leaders would do well to consider their own spiritual practices, but there is still little mention of the need for those that enter the spirituality in the workplace discourse to share their own spiritual search. Helpfully Kernocham, McCormick and White (2007) point to the need for those that are engaged in teaching management from a spiritual perspective to consider their own spiritual path (in this case Buddhist), such reflexivity is not common in the literature and only a few have given voice to their own spiritual search while discussing spirituality in the workplace, for example Delbecq (2004) and De la Garza (2004).

One further development in the literature is those calling, not only for a definition of spirituality in the workplace, but for the means of measuring it. Kakabadse et al (2002: 5) for example identifies more than twenty different *'instruments'* which purport

to measure an individual's spirituality. Others trying to measure spirituality include Beazley, (1998), Spilka, (1985), and Heaton et al, (2004). Gibbons (2002) is critical of excessive attempts to derive a measure of spirituality and also of the lack of recognition of attempts to do so from other disciplines, such as the psychology of religion, a point addressed by King and Crowther (2004).

The critics

The previous section explores the spirituality in the workplace literature with little critical comment giving the impression that most contributors are either in favour of the broad thrust of the initiative or at least writing in a descriptive manner. There have, however, been those offering a note of caution from the beginning, Murray, (1991: 197) for example, concluded his critique as follows,

> *"Yet for some the response will be more cautious; they will feel that experience has prove that it is wise for spirituality to relinquish its public ambition. Hence, while some will believe that spirituality can extend its domain on the basis of its intrinsic goodness, others will fell that such belief is naive".*

Other more critical voices include Adlam (1991), and Polley, Vora and Subba Narasimha (2005) and Bell (2008). Peletonen and Keleman (2002) divide the literature into normative, descriptive and critical and it is to the critical contributions that this chapter turns next. This critique identifies the literature as broadly functional and managerial, dualistic and reified.

Functional and managerial

As the previous section demonstrated, many writers justify their work by reference to the benefits that might accrue from developing more spirituality oriented workplaces. It was also noted that, with some exceptions, they tend to emphasise the achievement of organisational goals rather than those of individuals. This utilitarian orientation has been criticised by Gibbons (2002) and it has also been identified from a psychoanalytic perspective, as deriving from the 'empty speech' of the ego, rather than the search for a fully integrated and fulfilled individual in the workplace (Driver, 2005). The 'business case' for spirituality in the workplace has also been the more recent focus of criticism from others too (Poole, 2009).

Manipulation and control

One of the most frequently mentioned concerns is that focussing on the 'business case' may lead to the manipulation of employees and to discrimination Bell and Taylor (2004). Both Cavanagh (1999) and Hicks (2002), while broadly in favour of more spiritual workplaces, note the possibility that it will become an arena for fanaticism and favouritism. Tourish and Pinnington (2002) express concern for what they refer to as the *'unholy trinity'* of transformational leadership, corporate cultism and the spirituality paradigm.

One problem with spirituality in the workplace is that it is necessary to initiate this in a culturally diverse workforce. Lewis and Geroy (2000) and Sheep (2006) identify the problems of a managerially prescribed notion of spirituality in such a workplace, and these considerations also give rise to difficult legal issues (Cash, Gray and Rood, 2000;

Morgan, 2005; Schley,2008). There are already instances of people taking legal action alleging unwanted interference in their belief systems as a result of the transformational agenda (Singer and Lalich, 1995). Ackers and Preston (1997) point out that that management development programmes have taken on the character of an **actual** religion rather than borrowing from religion and using its constructs metaphorically. Such programmes, they say, attempt to 'convert' and 'transform' managers in much the same way as charismatic religions do. Laabs (1995) points out that some are hoping people will move from *'it's just a job'* to *'this is my mission'*. In defending the reinstatement of huge bonuses for bankers, the Chairman and CEO of Goldman Sachs, Lloyd Blankfein, has more recently claimed that he and his workforce are *'doing God's work'*. (*'Meet Mr Goldman Sachs'*, Sunday Times 8th November 2009), demonstrating further, the invocation of religious imagery to further corporate objectives. (Interestingly a poll run by the news agency Reuters Website suggested that 86% of its readers disagreed). Conversley, some have argued that people actually **want** to express their spirituality in the workplace, but fear offending peers and management Lewis and Geroy (2000). Others making a similar point include Vaill (1991) and Mitroff and Denton (1999).

In terms of outcomes, the possibility that the spirituality in the workplace initiative might become discriminatory and manipulative has its opposite too, namely that it might become a set of platitudes, and this was recognised almost from the beginning, Milliman and Ferguson et al (1999: 230) for example, write that it is, *'...not enough merely to integrate spirituality into the mission statement. Instead these ideas need to be woven into business strategies and practices'*. Gull and Doh (2004) point out that spirituality at work cannot be achieved by simplistic, superficial platitudes, but must

focus on the individual unfolding. The concern with superficiality has been referred to frequently from this point onwards and almost in the same words. Beazley (1997), quoted in Gibbons (2002: 15) refers to *'bromidic spirituality', 'a collection of platitudes without a supporting component mandating self examination, self discipline, study and sustained effort'* and Gockel (2002: 7) says,

"The temptation to graft superficial changes onto existing corporate structures, and thus acquiring employee loyalty by changing the packaging but not the end product, is one of the principle pitfalls of this trend".

This is the important point; spirituality in the workplace proceeds as if it was another management technique and as such presents itself as a piece of software to be installed. However, while the gestation period of management techniques is long, (Gill and Whittle (1992) estimate the development of MBO, OD and TQM as taking between 10 and 40 years to unfold), in spirituality in the workplace the *'How to* ... books have already begun Fairholm (1997) and Marschke (2007) for example. Web sites abound, and some of the more cautious ask if this is the next management fad destined ultimately to nestle inconspicuously next to Scientific Management (Taylor, 1911), MBO, (Drucker, 2007) and Re-engineering (Hammer and Champy, 2001). Gibbons (2002) identifies the possibility that spirituality at work will become another management fad and calls for greater integration and collaboration with other disciplines and awareness of the danger of faddism. Stephen Pattison's book, *'The Faith of the Managers'* (1997) perhaps hints at something similar, managers have clung to different facets of the *'myth of management'*

(Bowles, 1997) for about 100 years and now, having clung to everything from the *'Scientific Management'* to *'reengineering'*, they are now offered *'spirituality at work'*.

The drive to find an ultimate answer to the problems of management has a fairly long history. Taylor in 1911 entitled his book *'The Principles of Scientific Management'*, and it was no accident that the title gave the impression of a universal answer, one which would solve all the problems of management for all time. It, and the work of those who followed, was presented as a solution to a problem that would cut across space and time. More recently Ritzer (1993 and 1998) has lamented the rationalisation of the entire global corporate edifice as the answer to all our problems, pointing out (as Weber, 1947 his main influence, had done much earlier), the problems of rationalisation and even more so, its elevation to ultimate panacea. This has not stopped generations of management theorists from offering similar universal answers, for example, Porter (1980 and 1985). The search for a universal answer has been identified as a cultural phenomenon (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars, 1994), where North American notions of universal answers might be linked to a monotheistic religion where one God is the ultimate answer to all things.

The managerial emphasis

The claim that a more spiritual workplace is likely to contribute to organisational performance, leads to the almost automatic assumption that it must be the preserve of practicing managers and academics. Linking spirituality to management value systems is not a recent observation, (see Pascale and Athos (1981) for example). The idea is implicit in Konz and Ryan (1999: 203); *'The spirituality of the leader is the key to maintaining the organisation's spirituality'*, primarily through the decisions on who to

employ. Korac-Kakabadse, et al (2002) link the spiritual search with wider management practices and other authors arguing that the leader's spirituality influences decision-making include Conger and Kanungo (1994), Whyte (1994), Chappell (1993), DePree (1989), Shakun (1999), it is also explicitly addressed in Burke (2006) and Fry and Cohen (2009).

The idea that spirituality in the workplace is something management does, or should do, is apparent in a number of authors for example Gull and Doh (2004). But, seeming to offer an alternative, Marquez (2005) asserts that while some workplaces are just not susceptible to a spiritual mindset, it is nevertheless possible for spirituality to be established by workers, as opposed to management. However, the author goes on to reveal a similar top-down orientation saying that while spiritual transformation in the workplace is easier at higher levels, achievement at lower levels, '*takes longer and needs greater perseverance*'. This echoes a point made nine years earlier by Brandt (1996) that spirituality should be extended to the lower levels in the near future.

Marquez (2005) demonstrates this rather cool approach to the implementation of spirituality in the workplace with surprising candor;

> *'Implementation of spirituality in the workplace is not happening as smoothly and as rapidly as may have initially been expected'.*

This she regards as *'an unfortunate setback'* (p149). Marquez (2005) also refers to John Heider's work on the *Tao of Leadership* (1985), yet while her approach is totally about 'doing' something, virtually every page of Heider's book, developed from Taoist sources,

is that the effective leader stands back, waits and 'does' very little; *'Group process evolves naturally. It is self-regulating. Do not interfere. It will work itself out'*, (p115) and again, *'The leader who understands how process unfolds uses as little force as possible and runs the group without pressuring people'* (p59) and instructively, *'The wise leader does not impose a personal agenda or value system on the group'* (p97). The impetus to 'do' something with regard to spirituality in the workplace is endemic to many of the writers in this field. Konz and Ryan (1999) for example argue people can determine the spirituality of an organisation in the same way they can influence the mission statement.[19] This is the antithesis to what many would describe as spiritual, a point also made by Driver (2005).

A spiritual approach to leadership might see all people as mutually influencing and informing opinion rather than an elite management cadre. An interesting parallel is revealed by examination of the Gnostic Gospels written around two thousand years ago in which individuals appear to be given equal influence over the institutional arrangements and contrasting sharply with the Roman Catholic church which eventually prevailed Pagels (1979).

It becomes necessary to ask how a leader in an organisation might bring their spirituality to bear on the organisation and numerous CEO's have tried, overtly, to articulate religious vision in organizations including Max Dupree from Herman Miller, James Autry from Meredith Communications, Farcoq Kathwami from Ethon Allen Interiors and Tom Chappel from Tom's of Maine (Kakabadse et al, 2002). But this is not new; we can recall the Ford Sociological Department in the early 20th century which in

[19] My own experience is that the mission statement is hijacked for marketing purposes rather than as a rallying call for employees.

return for a higher daily rate of pay ($5) required employees to submit to intimate questions about their private lives including sexual habits and raising children. Corporate paternalism of this nature can be seen as offensive and intrusive by some people and may well cause discord. Accordingly, Konz and Ryan (1999) argue, the organisation should *'develop specific spiritualities'* in order that potential employees can choose whether to join the organisation or not based on 'its' spirituality. Campbell (1997) has argued in defence of stakeholder capitalism, that organisations should clearly state their values so that potential employees can choose whether or not these values accord with their own. The organisation is then populated by people who have chosen, not the job, but the value system.

In both these cases, while the theory seems laudable, the practice may be problematic. It is possible, though debatable, that people in the senior reaches of an organisation may have the luxury of being able to choose a company based on its value system, but the contention here, is that for the majority of people, this is likely to be a luxury they believe they cannot afford.

In addition, there is the problem of employees believing too much in the company and finding their loyalty goes unrewarded when times are hard. Porth et al (1999) argue that the individual needs to make a long term commitment to the organizational mission and vision, but is it reciprocated? There are examples of this longer term commitment i.e. beyond employment, being successful Semler (1993) for example, and some authors contributing to the spirituality in the workplace discourse feel that *'outplaced people'* should be looked after, (Wagner-Marsh and Conley, 1999). But if the organisation is run largely to ensure the financial well being of the shareholders, Friedman (1979), then the

reciprocation may not be present. When the 'chips are down', the non-managerial employee has little power, which has been demonstrably the case since the middle 1980's in the UK. If past experience is any guide, they will be the first to suffer if the 'vision' turns out to be wrong, there are enough examples of companies either closing their pension schemes, demonstrating the opposite to a long term commitment, or using that money to fund corporate activity. Companies like Hanson, Enron and Robert Maxwell's International Publishing Group all spring to mind, as do the more recent problems caused by the 'credit crunch' on both side of the Atlantic.[20]

This demonstrates the problem very well; what a manager, latching onto spirituality in the workplace, sees as a greater purpose, may not accord with that of the individual worker, who may be manipulated into 'believing' they are engaged with a different greater purpose. This appears to have happened with Enron, many of whose employees were persuaded to invest their life savings in the company (Fox, 2004) and (Elkind and McLean, 2004). But people invest a great deal of themselves in things they believe in and there may be considerable emotional distress experienced by the 'believer' when the organisation moves on to a different 'greater purpose'. This happened when Cadburys moved from being the Quaker run paternal and philanthropic confectioner to a world player in everything from soft drinks to toilet cleaners, urged on by McKinsey management consultants.[21] The required commitment to the 'vision' and mission of the company is not usually matched by the same commitment to the employee, yet if

[20] Instructively the Latin root of the word 'credit' is loosely translated as 'I believe' and is also the root of the word 'credo'. The 'credit crunch' might thus be more accurately translated as 'a crisis in confidence' or, more literally as an 'I believe crunch'.

[21] The recent announcement of a hostile takeover bid for Cadbury prompted one family member to remark that if successful, the bid would dilute the Cadbury Quaker ethos, but for those affected by Cadbury's unrelated diversification drive in the 1970's this had already happened.

employees make that commitment, like any other commitment, there are costs if it doesn't work. To borrow from neoclassical economics, there may be 'emotional externalities' to be paid, and, like the fallout from corporate activity in respect of the physical externalities, there may also be a reluctance to pay for it.

However, while there are those that have tried to bring their spirituality to their leadership roles and others arguing it should be confined to the facilitation of employee's spiritual growth, perhaps a more important question is the extent to which leaders are, themselves, emotionally and spiritually mature enough to do either. For Marx, religion was the *'opium of the people'* and a way to control the masses (1963). A contemporary interpretation suggests that including religion in the workplace could lead to coercion, favouritism and be divisive through zealotry (Hicks, 2002). Tourish and Pinnington (2002) argue that transformational leadership may encourage authoritarian forms of organisation and, citing Deal and Kennedy (1999) they say it is largely top down and doesn't involve dialogic communication. The dominant models of transformational leadership, they say, are fundamentally flawed and, via corporate training programmes, are likely to produce cults, not business organisations.

The leader's ability to lead will be to a significant extent dependant on their own *'Emotional Intelligence'* (Goleman, 1996 and 1998), and their spiritual maturity too, (Zohar and Marshall, 2000). Judge (1999) points to the 'shadow' of the leader; that part of the person which he or she unconsciously denies and therefore projects onto others. Managers need to confront their own 'shadow' (Bowles, 1991; Denhardt, 1981) and Hillman (1989) writes of the need for leaders to be *'heroes of descent'*, that is, descent into themselves and Maccoby (1995) points out that the narcissistic ego of the leader has

much to answer for. Similarly, for Mitroff (1983) different facets of the mind of individuals are seen as stakeholders and require attention in the organisational context, again indicating that the organisation prospers as the individuals mature themselves, and not as leaders and managers impose upon employees, the rigours of a journey which they themselves have not trodden.

There are other difficulties too. In the 'West' we are not so wedded to the idea of a spiritual teacher or Guru, whereas in Eastern traditions there is a stronger identification with the spiritual teacher. Choosing the right teacher is seen as an important step and devoting oneself to that teacher is seen as equally important.[22] Perhaps for the West, the idea is less prevalent because the monotheistic traditions emphasise the subordinate nature of all humans to God, whereas in Buddhism at least, individuals are seen to occupy different positions on a spiritual ladder that leads ultimately to Enlightenment.[23] This being the case, the individual can always be helped on their individual spiritual journey by another who is more developed.

The main thrust of Buddhist teaching is on how the individual can work on the self, rather than trying to change others. A Buddhist story explains the impossibility of covering the whole world with leather, but it is possible to put leather shoes on your own feet to avoid them being harmed. Western views might also be the result of Cartesian separation. Culturally, individuals are more likely to see themselves as separate; body

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[22] There are historical reasons for this lesser reliance on the teacher in the Western world. The Protestant Reformation unwittingly begun by Martin Luther included an insistence that the individual can approach God without the intercedence of the Catholic Church demonstrated by the writing of music for the people in the pews to sing rather than sitting passively while the choir praises on their behalf. A tradition continued to massive effect by J S Bach in the early 18th century and influencing Western music ever since.
[23] The same notion can be found in medieval Christianity too; *The Cloud of Unknowing* (Wolters, 1978), Walter Hilton's *The Ladder of Perfection* first published in 1494 (1957) and *The Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius of Loyla (1988). Fr Absel in this study also used the metaphor of a ladder to describe the spiritual life.

and body as well as mind and body, and therefore we tend to try to manage those 'out there'.

George Bernard Shaw is reputed to have said, '*All professions are an attempt to defraud the laity*'. Perhaps this is something of an answer to the question of why we have begun to consider spirituality in this way. Both academics and practicing managers perhaps sense the dawning of a new management fad, upon the back of which books and articles can be written and careers built. Yet Shaw's reference to the laity may be the clue here, spirituality, as we have already argued, is intensely personal, and is not bound by hierarchical considerations. The non-academic and the non-manager are as likely to reach a point of wisdom and understanding as the professional, indeed some would argue that they are more likely to do so, given their unencumbered condition with regard to the 'needs' of the organisation. Time and again Jesus is found to be placing simple faith above that of the 'specialist', one example will suffice; *'Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven'* (Matthew Ch 18 v.3).

Extraordinary science?

What the preceding discussions highlight is that for the most part, the spirituality in the workplace literature presents itself as new and radical. To re-emphasise the point, Steingard (2005: 230) for example refers to *'the spirituality in business movement'* and in an article entitled '*Yearning for a More Spiritual Workplace*' Marquez (2005) discusses the new insights of spirituality in the workplace and declares elsewhere that *'A new awareness has been stirring in workers' souls for at least 10 years now'* (Marquez, Dhiman and King, 2005: 81).

But others are not so sure that spirituality in the workplace is as new and as radical as many of its proponents claim Kennedy, M. H. (1999). Quattro (2004) argues that many contributors are reluctant to acknowledge either Classical management theory or the religious roots of the inquiry. In terms of Classical management theory for example, Quattro (2004) points out that Mary Parker-Follet had, in 1918, argued that we are often willing to sacrifice income for meaning, and Greenleaf called for organisational theology in 1977 and 1988. Pawar (2009) more recently point to the fundamental Organisational Behaviour concepts that underpin much of what is being written about under the spirituality in the workplace banner, such as Transformational Leadership and Organizational Citizenship. The dignifying aspect of work was pointed out in Buddhist terms by Schumacher (1976) and Buddhist scriptures are testament to that 2500 years ago Harvey (2000). Maslow (1968) reiterated the responsibility of managers and the organisation to provide work that facilitated self actualisation, and Senge (1990) argued that the learning organisation should be based, among other things, upon the spiritual mastery of the individual, and the confluence of spiritual themes with those of the learning organisation have already been noted Porth et al (1999).

Bell and Taylor (2003) argue persuasively that the workplace spirituality discourse, offers no critique of the structural conditions of capitalism and therefore aligns itself with Weber's (1930) acceptance of those conditions. *The Protestant Ethic*, (1930) they point out, showed how meaning and virtue were attained within the context of capitalism and the workplace spirituality discourse is similar. Others have been equally critical of the largely parochial nature of the work so far, ignoring for example the work to be found in the psychology of religion (Gibbons, 2002), and I would add that it has

also been reluctant to examine theological work stretching back centuries, even for help with the foundational idea of what the spiritual life is. In 2006 Cooney reported that as a result of his explorations of the literature, he ended where he started, with the ancient words of the scriptures. What is more, in the dearth of empirical work that characterises the inquiry, very little attempt has been made to listen to people for whom the tensions of living a spiritual life in the context of a self-supporting community, are a daily reality, (this being one of the main reasons for carrying out this work).

Quattro (2004: 228) argues that the presentation of the literature as new and radical is *'incomplete at best and at worst lacks academic integrity'*. In this reading the literature is perhaps, *'normal science'* not *'extraordinary science'* Kuhn (1970) and to borrow from Ralph Stacey (1993) will not lead to *'extraordinary management'*, but *'ordinary management'*.

Incommensurable with the dominant paradigm

The attempt to measure spirituality is related to the problems of 'implementing' it in the workplace. The underlying process of strategy is seen to be one of analysing, choosing and implementing followed by assessment of the strategy feeding back into further analysis (Johnson and Scholes, 2008). But in this regard Gibbons (2002) says the problems are threefold; first, there is a rift in the discourse between science and religion, secondly, the techno-economic context within which spirituality has to thrive favours short term financial measures above longer term non-material gain. And thirdly, the emphasis on instant gratification means we measure achievement by reference to our movement up the hierarchy and in material ways.

Capitalist philosophy states that it is the business of business to make profit Friedman (1979) and Argenti (1997) put forward some compelling arguments as to why a stakeholder approach to business is not workable. The dominant paradigm includes corporate law; it is the legally binding responsibility of corporate managers to manage the organisation in the interests of the shareholders, to do otherwise is to mismanage the organisation.

What this amounts to is the incommensurability of the sentiment of spirituality at work with the dominant paradigm, a point also alighted upon by on by Benefiel (2003). And a more subtle expression of the same thing comes from Kofodimos (1993: 6). '*Expressing intimacy is incompatible with an organisational context in which mastery, rather than intimacy is usually rewarded*'. This point is also made by Lips-Wiersma and Mills (2001: 7) who contend that people who express spirituality in secular workplaces may have their professionalism questioned. This they characterise as a *'tension between the need to belong and the need to express their individual spirituality'*.

We are faced, in this literature; with the idea that spirituality is 'good', but can it co-exist with the hyper-competitiveness of many people, in many organisations, in many industries, where the dominant metaphor is guerrilla warfare and military strategy? (see Michael Porter for example 1980 and 1985). For many recruiters to highly competitive industries, the talk of 'spirituality in the workplace' must be incomprehensible. How does an individual salesperson or strategist square aggressive competitive activity with the spirituality that features in this literature?

Dualistic

Assuming spirituality is absent

A further criticism of the spirituality in the workplace initiative is its dualistic nature and this, it may be argued is the result of its cultural heritage. Marquez (2005: 152) asserts that many organisations are *'unspiritual'* and Dehler and Welsh (1994) see spirituality in the workplace as potentially succeeding where downsizing and re-engineering have failed. Burack (1999) argues for the importance of the concept for all people in the organisation, particularly those in positions of high influence. Anderson (2000) takes a different tack and points to the cost of not giving due consideration to spirituality at work including what he refers to as sub-optimal decisions. The implication of this is that 'spiritual' is good and 'unspiritual' is bad, or that unspiritual organisations are not as good as spiritual organisations. Putting it differently, the literature appears to assume that spirituality is absent from most organisations, but others have been equally clear that this is not the case, and the evidence for this comes, perhaps, from a surprising source. Wagner-Marsh and Conley (1999: 297) cite Max DePree former CEO of Herman Miller, *'I see authenticity as an inherent value, a right, we're authentic before we get to the workplace'*. For Gull and Doh (2004: 135) *'Ones life and what one does in life are not to be compartmentalized; life can't be put on hold while one attends to material want'*.

There are those that argue that spirituality is already present, and that the main issue is not how to 'introduce' spirituality but; *'why do people suppress their beliefs in the workplace'*? Lips-Wiersma and Mills. (2001: 7). As already noted many people struggle to express their spiritual views in the workplace and lack of safety is the main

reason. There is, the authors say, *'a tension between the need to belong and the need to express their spirituality'*.

We are, it could be argued, already spiritual and it is our condition, not an academic discovery, nor is it our deficiency and this seems to be something of what Lee (1991: 225) was also saying ten years earlier, as she acknowledges the integrative nature of the spiritual, *'My feelings of my own spirituality are based upon putting myself behind everything that I do. How can I do that if I am split?'*. This implies the individual cannot speak of spirituality in the workplace as if it were something we switch on and off depending on where we are and what we are doing. It is worth pointing out here that Lee's (1991) contribution came years before the US deluge of spirituality in the workplace writing really took off.

But why does the spirituality in the workplace literature largely assume spirituality is absent from organisations? This question draws attention to some complex issues about how much of 'ourselves' we leave at home when we go to work. Traditionally, at least in the West, organisations have not even encouraged individuals to express themselves, emotionally, at work, much less spiritually. Henry Ford demonstrated the ultimate Cartesian split when he reputedly said, '*Why is it that whenever I ask for a pair of hands, a brain comes attached?*'. Aided and abetted by the work of Frederick Taylor, Ford set about creating an organisation that engaged the workforce not so much as sub-human, but as partially human, that is, only physical. The result, some might argue, is that we have succeeded in improving our material condition at the expense of our spiritual condition, a point made by Pope Pius when he spoke of the production process wherein *'dead matter comes out improved whereas the people there*

are degraded' (quoted in Schumacher, 1976) perhaps the reason for this lies in a deeper rooted feature of the Western mind than has hitherto not been addressed in this literature. The physicist, Fritjof Capra (1986: 19) quotes Heisenberg,

> *"The Cartesian, split wrote Heisenberg, has penetrated deeply into the human mind during the three centuries following Descartes, and it will take a long time for it to be replaced by a really different attitude toward the problem of reality".*

Organisations in this sense may be seen to impede, to a greater or lesser extent the reconnection (*religio*) of individuals to their spiritual nature and spirituality in the workplace literature needs to re-orientate toward the removal of impediments to the flourishing of what is already there, rather than to the installation of a quasi-radical idea.

Separating spirituality from religion

A further manifestation of the dualistic nature of the literature is the attempt to separate religion from spirituality. Marquez (2005: 890) states,

> *"An appropriate reminder at this point may be that religion should definitely be kept out of the picture, particularly in environments where representatives from various cultures, backgrounds, and religious convictions are employed".*

Others calling for the avoidance of religion in the workplace include Paloutsian and Park (2005) and Zinebauer and Paragment (2005).

For purposes of definition, there may be grounds for doing this, but the argument that religion should definitely be kept out of the picture appears to be grounded in the

assumption that not only is non-spirituality bad, but so is religion. Tischler et al (2002) says up to now we have avoided discussing spirituality in the workplace because it might be associated with proselytising, but the **insistence** on the word spirituality instead, might be symptomatic of the same fear and the result might be a humanistic stance that seems to bear little connection to the search for the transcendent people often feel. The stipulation also does not acknowledge the point that for many, the religious tradition to which they subscribe is, for them, a spiritual path. Nor does it address the probability, that, given time, the spirituality in the workplace orientation, would itself, accrue the features of any other religious tradition, such that spirituality in the workplace could spawn its own church and priesthood. Excluding religion from the workplace in favour of spirituality may point to considerable naivety regarding human organising tendencies and its attendant shadow, the 'protocol' suggested by Marquez (2008) seems testament to that.

Permitting spirituality and prohibiting religion is therefore tantamount to discrimination *'you can be spiritual here, but not religious'*. This very point is made forcefully by Hicks (2002) who argues for *'respectful pluralism'*. Chapter two argued that the word 'religion' usually means the institutional and it separated that from the religious impulse, which is closer to the word spirituality in meaning. While we may be moving away from institutional and collective interpretations in some places, and possibly for good reasons, we are not moving away from the religious impulse, (the spiritual). However, for the reasons discussed here, prohibiting the religious from a place in the conversation is seen as naive, discriminatory and unnecessary.

Summary

This chapter has presented a critical view of the spirituality in the workplace literature. More specifically it has demonstrated that a substantial proportion of the literature offers prescriptions which are incommensurable with the dominant view of organisational life. What is more, the underlying prescriptive basis of the literature retains a dualistic orientation which separates management from workers and the spiritual from the non-spiritual at both individual and organisational levels. In addition, the numerous prescriptive schemes offered have been criticized by others as potentially superficial and faddish. Even so, spirituality in the workplace writers frequently present the work as a paradigm breaking *'movement'* Steingard (2005: 230) and in this sense appears as *'extraordinary management'*, whereas the top down, universalistic, utilitarian, literalistic and functional tenor of the literature betrays its heritage as *'ordinary management'* (Stacey, 1993).

The literature also emphasizes the organisation over the individual, and does so by emphasising the performance of the organisation over the growth of the individual. Much writing appears to focus attention primarily on the 'needs' of the organisation rather than those of individuals, and in this way spirituality is seen as a something the **organisation** 'has' and not the **individual**. The organisation is reified (Brown, 2003) and spirituality is a seen as another management technique to be deployed in the service of the organisation. All this contrasts with the nature of the spiritual life as discussed in chapter one where it was demonstrated that the spiritual life is non-dualistic in aspiration, highly reflective, is an individual journey in communion with others, and focuses on the spiritual process, not on the destination. Those conclusions were arrived at by examining

the contributions of theologians and mystical writers, while this review has shown that those contributions are conspicuous by their absence in the spirituality in the workplace literature. And so too, is any attempt to enquire into the organisational life of people in self-supporting spiritual communities. This study takes it as self-evident that such experiences would have much to offer organisation theorists in general and the spirituality in the workplace conversation in particular. Chapters five and six attempt to do that by presenting the organisational lives of English Benedictine monks in Gloucestershire and Western Buddhists based in Cambridge. Before that however, chapter four will discuss the methods used and the underlying methodological position of that primary work.

Chapter 4. Methodology

Brewer (2000) reports that many text books on method now acknowledge the 'messy' and non-linear nature of the research enterprise. Reflecting on the methods that were finally employed to carry out this study, it became apparent that this was indeed, a messy, process, even 'chaotic' Davies (1999). From the choice of the topic to the 'choice' of the research sites, the data collection and analysis methods, the approach taken was mostly contingent upon what had presented itself, rather than any preconceived plan. This is not to say that I did not want the work to follow a preconceived plan, and much time was spent trying to make it do so. What follows is an attempt to 'tell the story' of how this 'knowledge' came into being. The story uncovers the process with its successes, wrong turns, limitations, serendipitous events and my reactions to them.

Following a brief reminder of the background to the study, the 'reason' for the choice of the topic and the two research sites, the chapter continues with a discussion of methodological issues. This is intended to uncover the basic ontological and epistemological assumptions implicit in the methods I ultimately used. To pre-empt that discussion, the view taken here, is that the researcher is embedded in the entire research process, emotionally and cognitively, and, in line with Hammersley and Atkinson (1983: 14-15) that embeddedness is, '*...not a matter of methodological commitment, it is an existential fact*'.

In writing this chapter I was confronted not only with the assumptions I made in regard to this research, but with those I make with regard to life in general. Research in this sense is not a detached process carried out in the library and the field, and the

assumptions I make about the research process cannot be suspended during the rest of life. Considering my fundamental views on research philosophy has made me more aware of their impact on my life choices, but the full and conscious integration of them with life and the revision of them, is a process which began before the research and will continue after it.

The next section on the process of the study begins with a discussion of the methods considered for the study and ends by justifying the approaches that were employed. In particular, it argues that the use of a reflexive methodology is a matter of personal obligation in highly reflective communities such as those studied here. The following sections deal with the approaches to secondary data and primary data respectively, the latter includes a discussion of the problems associated with being an 'outsider' in research sites of this nature. Finally, the chapter explores how I arrived at the conclusions I did, and the possible influences upon them, to the extent that retrospection will allow. The sources for this story include my research journal, the notes taken from academic reading and of course my memory.

Topic selection and the research sites

In his attempts to explain the reason for his research into the probation service Tim May (1993: 79) explains to his respondents that he is an *'outsider wishing to learn'*. I wanted to know about the lives of people living and working in religious organisations and get a little closer to the effect of the religious teachings on day to day organisational life, but why? For some, as Davies says, (1999) issues such as disciplinary culture and funding, influence the topic, however, I was very fortunate not to have these concerns,

particularly so because I was, and still am, teaching in a business school in the UK, where spiritual matters are not prominent in business discourse.

Armstrong (1993) says it is difficult to know where a research topic comes from, but like him, one thing is, for me, very clear; '*the main set of reasons for choice is to be found in the biography of the researcher*' (Corrigan in Hobbs and May, 1994: 179). Chapter one explores this and shows that my interest in religion goes a long way back. But Armstrong's (1993: 12) response to the question of his aim in doing the research was, '*I have no idea*', while I had some idea as discussed in chapter one, I had little idea of how I might progress. Initial research questions ranged from the esoteric to the impractical, however, despite the manner in which the topic selection was addressed, the research question became at this point; '*to what extent do religious teachings influence the management of contemporary organisations*'?

The sites 'chosen' for this study are introduced in chapter one, but are briefly reiterated here. Prinknash Abbey is a Benedictine Monastery situated in the Cotswolds about 6 miles from the centre of Gloucester as the crow flies. Its origins can be traced back to 681 AD, but it was disestablished in 1541 by Henry VIII who used it to provide deer for his hunting trips. It was re-established in 1928 when it was given to Anglican Benedictine monks from Caldey Island in Pembrokeshire. The Abbey in use at the time of the primary data collection was begun in 1939, but the Second World War forced a halt to building and the monks, who were received into the Catholic Church in 1913, eventually took up residence in 1972.

Windhorse: Evolution is a wholesale and retail giftware business based in Cambridge. It was started by Kulananda, a member of the Western Buddhist Order

(WBO) in 1980 as a market stall in London and today employs about 200 people almost all of whom are practicing Buddhists of the WBO. It supplies its own chain of retail outlets as well as other shops. It is run entirely along Buddhist principles (as interpreted by the founder of WBO, Sangharakshita) and most people working in the warehouse in Cambridge live in Buddhist communities owned by the WBO.

Methodological issues- from positivism to the post post modern

Brewer (2000: 2) states that, *'If 'methods' are technical rules that define proper procedures, 'methodology' is the broad theoretical and philosophical framework into which these procedural rules fit'.* Later he elaborates that this broad framework includes ontological assumptions (about what counts as real) and epistemological assumptions (about what counts as knowledge), and whether or not the researcher is conscious of these, he, or she, will make research decisions based on them. Issues which at first glance might appear to be innocuous and taken for granted, on closer inspection turn out to be the main influence on what will be discovered. For example, the choice of topic and research site, the research questions and the terms in which they are expressed, the methods chosen for the inquiry, the people selected, the data selected for analysis, and other more subtle points are the result of these assumptions. Furthermore, the assumptions we make may be diametrically opposed to those of another researcher, with the consequent impact on the findings. Thomas Kuhn (1970) referred to the set of assumptions a scientist makes as 'the paradigm' and famously drew attention to the probability that the scientist, having been schooled in particular practices, might well be unaware of them. I recognise that my research process and the text I produce, are the

result of complex and interrelated forces which include both my own psychological disposition and the social forces within which I live. In regard to the latter Hobbs (1993: 61) says this,

> *"The text is influenced at every stage of its production by the rules specific to the intellectual, political, and economic milieu within which the writer performs".*

My view is therefore that it is necessary to reveal, as far as is possible, the influences on the work presented. Before that however, I will briefly summarise the main methodological positions which have characterised social research, in order to situate this work more clearly.

Brewer (2000: 48) charts the historical development of social enquiry from its positivist beginnings to what he refers to as the *'post post modern'* approaches some now employ. Positivism, Brewer (2000: 31) says, *'believes the world to be an external, knowable entity, existing 'out there' independent of what people believe or perceive it to be'*. This he says has implications for research in that, the social world is seen as an approachable 'reality' that can be understood by the application of certain methods and ultimately the iteration of 'law-like' statements about that world. This has implications for the choice of methods, which, given the nature of the world posited, might include questionnaires and surveys yielding objective, 'hard' data, imitating the natural sciences.

However, the problem with these assumptions is that the researcher's own beliefs and perceptions are not acknowledged. Heisenberg's *'uncertainty principle'* (1962) demonstrates that even in the natural sciences, the researcher is influencing the data, it

seems even more likely to be the case in the social sciences where the researcher and researched are possibly closer and both are conscious and self-aware beings (Davies, 1999). The epistemological question as to how I can 'know' something seems, in the case of positivism to account essentially for the physical and yet the world's religions, the subject matter for this research, all seem to be trying to engage with the 'unseen'.

Brewer (2000) then points to the development in the 1960's, of the Humanistic model of social research (Hughes, 1990), which, among other things, attempts to acknowledge the role of the researcher in the production of knowledge. Based on a naturalistic methodology, the humanistic approach attempts to study the social world in 'naturally occurring settings' and focuses on what people think, feel and do in those settings.

Brewer (2000) says both positivist and humanistic models of social research posit the existence of an objective truth which the scientist is engaged in uncovering. By implication there is just 'one true telling' of the story and that the researcher is in a privileged position to tell it. This *'naive realism'* has been attacked by post modern ethnographers who identify two crises in the humanistic paradigm; first, a *'crisis of representation'* where the researcher is wrongly seen as being in a special position to represent 'reality'. Second, a *'crisis of legitimation'* in which, (since post modern critiques displace the researcher as a privileged individual inspecting 'reality'), there are no grounds on which to evaluate the work they produce. This gives rise to problems with claims of validity, reliability and generalizability. The post modern prescription for ethnographic work therefore includes, a continuous recognition of the existence of

multiple perspectives needing to be given voice (Hertz, 1997). This includes the researcher's perspective and should be addressed at all stages of the research process.

These forms of post modern critique have more recently been addressed by ethnographers who retain some allegiance to the realist position by arguing that the 'either/or' position is unnecessary. Thus *'critical realism'* Bhasker (1989: 49) admits the existence of an objective structural reality 'out there', which imposes itself upon people, but also recognises that people both respond to, and transform that reality. Similarly, Hammersley (1992) argues for *'subtle realism'* in which ethnographic work can be judged *'reasonably accurately'* in terms of its correspondence to this independent reality. Another post postmodern response is offered by Altheide and Johnson (1998) who suggest *'analytical realism'* in which, *'the researcher, the topic, the subjects, the sense-making process and the written text'* are placed *'at the heart of ethnography'* (in Brewer, 2000: 50). Subtle, critical and analytical realism acknowledge the continuous interplay between externally imposed structure in society and individual actors with agency. Given certain rigorous techniques, ethnographers can make claims of validity in terms of the plausibility and credibility of their work, by demonstrating the correspondence between the two.

Reflexivity in reflective organisations

In response to the *'crisis of representation'* I have tried throughout this work to give an equal voice to the different perspectives I encountered (including my own) and in that sense the work follows perhaps more of a post modern trajectory. The postmodern critique also argues that *'there is no objective and knowable 'real' world that can be accurately described'* (Brewer, 2000: 46) and there is, therefore, no way to ascertain the

validity and reliability of the work, nor to generalise from it, (the *'crisis of legitimation'*). In this work however, I concur with the critical realist position which argues that external social structures exist independently of individuals, but are, nevertheless, reproduced and transformed by individuals Bhasker (1989). In both of the religious communities discussed in this research, the people I listened to were consciously creating, transforming and responding to the structures of their belief systems; Buddhist teaching as interpreted by the founder of the Western Buddhist Order and Christian teaching as expressed by the Catholic Church, and more specifically St Benedict. Indeed, one of the central tensions this research identified is that of the constant interplay between tradition and change. While the structures are not seen by the people in these communities as immutable, in both Buddhism and Christianity there is, nevertheless, a transcendent and immutable reality; the Dharma and God.

Brewer (2000) makes a further distinction between naive realism on the one hand and post postmodern authors writing about subtle, analytical or critical realism on the other. These include layers of subtlety that make it difficult to locate this work accurately in one or the other. However, both postmodern and post postmodern perspectives agree on the role of reflexivity in strengthening the research. The current work has borrowed from all three in this respect.

The people in the two communities studied here are highly reflective, reflection is built into each and every day and perhaps even more. This has considerable implications for the researcher in such an environment and I will argue here that a reflexive approach to research in such reflective places is both necessary <u>and</u> a moral obligation.

The word reflection is characterised by a *'chaotic catalogue of meanings'* (Moon, 1999: 3), nevertheless the author identifies the key contributions of Dewey (1933) and Habermas (1971). Dewey, she says concerns himself with the nature and process of reflection and it *'...includes a conscious and voluntary effort to establish belief upon a firm basis of evidence and rationality'*. (Moon, 1999: 12). Others have added different components to the reflective process for consideration; Carr and Kemis (1986: 14) for example identify the capacity of reflection to reveal *'self-interests and ideological distortions'*. Hullfish and Smith (1961) draw attention to the role of imagination and Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) to the role of emotion in the reflective process. Habermas is concerned however, to reveal the nature of knowledge and its generation, and reflection is one means by which we do this.

Hertz (1997) says reflexivity is, concerned with how the selves and identities of the researcher and the researched affect the process. In this way the term reflexivity can be seen as a subset of reflection. Reflection is a multi-faceted process of knowledge generation and reflexivity is the individual reflecting on their influence over the knowledge generating process.

As noted earlier many would now see the response of reflexivity as inescapable, as part of our condition rather than a methodological choice (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983) and I concur with this view. May (1993: 78) states that *'We cannot escape the social world which we study; we are a part of it'*. However, the impossibility of objective thought in the social sciences should not give rise to capitulation by either bracketing human feelings or retreating into the methods of natural science. The feelings

a researcher has, in a particular setting, are to be woven into the text as a way of aiding the sense making process for the reader May (1993), this is what I have tried to do here.

Authors, by definition, want to communicate the authenticity of their work and one way to achieve this is through reflexivity. However, the utilitarian justification usually offered for the use of reflexivity is, I would argue, only part of the justification. Commonly, the justification for a reflexive methodology emerges from a teleological argument; that is, reflexivity is necessary to achieve the purpose of improving the data by making the partial nature of it explicit (Brewer, 2000). Reflexivity improves the quality of ethnographic work and more specifically, goes some way towards rectifying the dual *'crises'* of legitimation and representation. Put differently, the consequences of not acting reflexively are, among other things, a lack of authenticity. I would also add that this justification for reflexivity entails a form of triangulation. Triangulation has been described as 'cross validation of information by collection from different sources', (Taylor, 2002).[24] If I am being as reflective and reflexive as possible during my interactions with the people I am researching, and when writing my interpretations of their lives, and if they are also being reflective, alone, and in their interactions with me, then the result is perhaps 'authenticity' being approached from two separate sources. Reflexivity seen in this way forms the basis of a triangulated study with attendant implications for plausibility and credibility (Hammersley, 1990), but also recognising the subjectivity which is inevitably present in any research activity.

[24] Triangulation takes its origins from the reading of a map and entails the plotting of coordinates which locate a specific spot when they cross. However, I prefer the image of the crystal suggested by Richardson (2000 in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000) which are not only multi-faceted, but also allow for change and subtlety that perhaps the analogy to map reading does not. Researchers look at one face of multifaceted phenomena depending on what they bring and choose to look at in the research.

Another and little mentioned justification for the use of a reflexive methodology is the deontological argument; that is, reflexivity is an ethical obligation on the part of the researcher. I feel a moral obligation, a duty, to be reflective and, more specifically, reflexive, in my interaction and representation of the people I have researched, **because** of their willingness to be reflective in their own lives and in their interactions with me. This brings the researcher and researched closer together and forms a bond of trust which, though it takes time to establish, like any relationship, it affords the researcher and the respondents a level of connectedness which can only be good for all concerned. This is not to negate the benefits of being both a stranger and familiar at the same time in ethnographic research. Or as Pearson (1993: xiii) says the *'distance and difference'* between subject and object are *'the touchstone of authenticity'*. What has been argued here is that the 'choice', if that is what it is, of a reflexive methodology affords both functional assistance and ethical credibility to the work finally produced.

For the reasons outlined in the previous section, I have attempted to place before the reader, a candid account of how I came to interpret the experience of this research as I did. Roseniell (1993: 185)) points out that *'Reflexivity can be a frightening demand'*, and May (1993) reports the discomfort of reporting feelings, hopes and experience from the field; this has been my experience in writing this research. The environment, particularly at Prinknash, is conducive, if not designed for, such introspection and, given the protracted periods I spent alone, is perhaps unavoidable.

Ackers (1993) regrets yielding to the academic pressures she was under to leave out autobiographical material on the grounds that it was not likely to be interesting to readers. I had similar concerns and would add that there is a fine line between aiding the

sense-making process and self indulgence. Nevertheless, remaining detached and absent from the study was not an option here; it was clear to me from the outset that I was engaged in something which was personally meaningful, and that the extent of that meaning would influence the process, and the text ultimately produced. Intellectual autobiography is important too, a point made by Rosenneil (1993) I have attempted in chapter one to show some of the intellectual explorations that preceded this study.

The methods of this study

The notion of 'designing' the study suggests a level of technical rationality which was absent in this case. While I did consider the methods I was to use in collecting data, the nature of the research sites precluded so much that, for example, the in-depth interview, or what I have here called the conversation, was a given. In the previous section I attempted to identify the methodological positions I hold, but in respect of the methods used I am of a similar opinion to Pearson (1993: xi) when he says that the research process is characterised by few golden rules beyond simply, '*being committed to the maintenance, sustenance and adequacy if the information base and veracity in making it accessible*'.

Ethnography and its limitations in this study

Brewer (2000: 10) states that ethnography is seen in two ways; as qualitative research in general, what he refers to as *'big ethnography'* and *'ethnography-as-fieldwork'* or *'little ethnography'*. The latter he defines as,

"...the study of people in naturally occurring settings or 'fields' by means of methods which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without meaning being imposed on them externally".

This is the sense in which this research is an ethnographic study, I spent time in both communities, sometimes interviewing people, or having conversations, and at other times joining in with different activities, sometimes both together. Those activities included some time working with people, but also participating, when invited, in regular worship and devotional occasions. The nature of these communities, especially Prinknash, is such that there was always plenty of time for me to be alone and reflect on different experiences and conversations and to write these perceptions down. The study was to involve me in listening to people whose lives were being spent in pursuit of a religious ideal in the context of a formal religious institution. I use the word 'listen' to denote the emphasis I placed on letting people speak and giving their voices the most significant place, or as Saunders et al (2009: 142) put it, the ethnographic study attempts to, '*...describe and explain the social world the research subjects inhabit in the way in which they would describe and explain it'.*

A key feature of ethnographic work is the notion of separation which Armstrong (1993: 20) sees as an essential part of the ethnographer's capacity and he quotes Powdermaker (1966) saying ethnography is; '*intellectually poised between familiarity*

and strangeness and socially poised between stranger and friend'. And Pearson (1993: xviii) says,

> *"What is required of an ethnographer is neither full membership nor competence, but the ability to give voice to that experience, and to bridge between the experiences of actors and audiences, 'authenticity' and 'experience'"*.

However, the ethnographic study has limitations; as Armstrong (1993: 37) says; *'Every ethnography, then, is incomplete; it is only a partial truth...'*. This seemed to be even more the case in this research environment. How, I wondered, could I fully address the question I had set myself, when the people I had chosen to listen to, had, in some cases, been in the institution for most of their lives and experienced things which for many writers are beyond the use of language to express? More than once the respondents in this research indicated their surprise that anyone would attempt such an enterprise. I was also acutely aware that for some of the people I met, the reason for entering such an environment might be to avoid characters like me.

I was an outsider, and the separation between researcher and researched was clear for a number of reasons. First, I was not able to be in the field for long enough to become one of the people I was there to research. Most of the people at Prinknash for example, had been there a very long time 'going native' involved far too long an exposure than I could have undertaken. A second and related point is that 'going native' involves a change of mind, not just the space inhabited. A change of mind is what the people at these sites are there to achieve, and they expect it to be lifelong journey.

What happened at both sites was not *'deep hanging out'* in that, while I was often left to my own devices, there were certain places I could not go and times when I could not be present. This meant, for example, that there were facets of both communities which would remain unknown to me. At Prinknash this was very clear, and a matter of very long tradition. I was always a visitor; an outsider and in the Benedictine tradition this is an institutionalised matter. From the *Rule of St Benedict* we get the following; *'All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ...'* (Fry, 1982: Ch 53 v.1) However,

> *"The kitchen for the abbot and guests ought to be separate, so that guests - and monasteries are never without them - need not disturb the brothers when they present themselves at unpredictable hours".* (Fry, 1982: Ch 53 v.16)

From the time when *the Rule* was written to the present time, the guest has been a key figure in the monastery and formally separated. I was invited to the monk's cells on one occasion and while the monk's cells are almost identical in size and facilities to those of the guest, the sense of separation is heightened by the winding walk through the corridors to a completely different wing of the building.

At Windhorse the separation was equally clear; my presence and purpose having been announced via a newsletter. With only about one hundred people working in the warehouse and offices, most of whom lived in close knit communities in and around Cambridge, a new face was easy to spot, particularly a surprised one.

Case studies

Hammersley (1992: 84) defines a case study as *'...any phenomenon located in time and space about which data are collected and analysed'*. Yin (1994: 13) considers a case study to be; '*...an empirical inquiry that ...investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context...*'. Case studies are used when we deliberately want to explore contextual conditions believing that they might be highly pertinent to the phenomenon. The phenomenon under discussion in this work is that of the spirituality based community with an economic imperative, and the phenomenon and the context do indeed overlap.

One of the problems identified with case studies is that of generalization, there is no attempt in this work to generalize from these organisations to any other. The hope is, following May (1993) that the work will be put to some creative use by others. It does however; offer an alternative perspective on the notion of spirituality in the workplace by reframing the question to 'work in a spiritual place'. In doing this it addresses one of the gaps identified in the literature, which almost entirely excludes discussion of such organisations from its discourse, and certainly suffers from a dearth of empirical material. The two cases presented in this study are quite different in all respects except one; they both have as their most fundamental raision d'etre, the spiritual development of their members and both see the need to generate income as a part of this process.

The research process

Secondary data

Having read what came to hand in this field and identified what I felt were weaknesses in the literature, I carried out a more thorough review. The keyword list I generated pointed to the cross-disciplinary nature of this topic and this was another of the weaknesses evident in the spirituality in the workplace literature; a reluctance to engage the views of those from disciplines which I felt were clearly relevant. I have endeavoured, for example to include theological perspectives and mystical sources. This represents an attempt to demonstrate the pertinence of theological and mystical literature to the spirituality in the workplace discourse, rather than to produce a thorough going treatment of it. Further cross-disciplinary sources include contributions from the sociology of religion and from the science/religion debate including Richard Dawkins (2007) and his detractors, for example Armstrong (2009) and Polkinghorne (2003) and Losch (2005).

The secondary research also includes the use of documents produced by the organisations themselves. Documentation is a common way for a researcher to get a better understanding of how the organisation works. It tells the reader something about the way in which the organisation functions on the one hand, but on the other, it tells a story of how the organisation wants to be seen by its members and by those outside it.

At Prinknash documentation includes, *'The Rule of St Benedict'* (Fry, 1982) and '*The Constitution of the Subiaco Congregation* (Jones, 1988) of which Prinknash is a part. This latter document was described for me by Fr Francis, who authorised me to copy it, as *'their interpretation of the Rule of St Benedict'*. The implication being, that

while the Rule was adhered to in most respects, there were aspects of it which they felt, were less appropriate at this time and needed to be reinterpreted in the context of the 20th century. It has been used here to enrich my understanding of the community rather than subjected to a thorough analysis. Similarly used, were pamphlets written by members of the community over the years, exploring monastic life, for example, an anonymous booklet entitled *'What is a Monk'. (anon).*

At Windhorse the documents used include Newsletters produced for the people working in the community, as well as books written by members of the community and published for public consumption, for example Padmasuri (2003). The documentation produced at Windhorse was more voluminous than at Prinknash, which has its own story to tell. Internal documents I was given access to included weekly newsletters demonstrating, openly, the level of dissension, as well as housekeeping issues and even reaffirmations of commitment to the common project, which most people there felt keenly and expressed. I was also given a document by Subhuti (undated) (Subhuti was the person largely taking over from Sangahraktshita as leader of WBO), in our first meeting which dealt with the reorganisation of the WBO as a whole; a gesture I took as an indication of their willingness and intention to operate in an open manner. It was written in part as a response to the criticisms levelled at the organisation by *The Guardian* article referred to earlier (The Dark Side of Enlightenment, 27th September 1997) and partly as a response to the observation that the organisation was growing and needed closer attention to its structure and culture. This was also following the withdrawal of the founder Sangharakshita a few years earlier from day to day running of WBO.

Sangharakshita (1971) had long expressed the view that the Buddhist approach to life is a creative one and not a reactive one. Accordingly the members of WBO and FWBO saw their creative impulses in terms of not only the daily lives and their relationships with others, but also in terms of the consciously creative acts in the arts expressed in many different ways. This included various books written by people at different levels in the organisation Padmasuri (2003) and Kulananda and Houlder (2002) for example.[25]

Primary data

The 'insider'-'outsider' distinction

At this point a brief, but essential, digression is necessary which relates to the extent to which it is possible to know another person's life. This involves a distinction between what Pike (1954) referred to as etic and emic forms of knowledge. Emic knowledge is that which is meaningful only to the people that generated it. Etic knowledge is that which is generated by outsiders **about** that emic knowledge and is therefore meaningful to those outsiders in their own terms. This distinction is relevant here because the sense of being an 'outsider' was so strong in these two cases. Occasionally, research is carried out by people who have lived or are living the life being researched for example Roseneil (1993). But most social research is etic in that it produces knowledge about others and interprets that data from its own perspective; its

[25] Some took to sculpture (The Stupa) a photograph of which can be seen in Appendix Four, and one order member took it upon herself to create a garden on waste land in the corner of the car park as a way to express the same creative urge. These artefacts have been referred to in the text by way of illustration and again not subjected to thorough analysis.

own framework or paradigm, its own cultural norms and the researcher's own psychological predisposition.

For Harris (1988) etic knowledge is potentiality able to help us uncover an objective world by listening to the emic accounts of the native people of a given society. Durkheim, for example believed he was able to glean from the distant study of people's religious beliefs, that when they spoke of intercessionary prayer as a way to ensure good crops, they were 'actually' engaged in ensuring social cohesion for the society in question. Pike (1954) however, argues that etic knowledge gathering is a way to access emic knowledge and not an end in itself; thus the meaning of intercessionary prayer given by the native population (a way to ensure good crops) is assumed to be the case.

In this study, I have not claimed that I can interpret the words and actions of others in a way that is superior to the meanings they themselves have given me. That is not to say, given the nature and history of the participants' discourse, that I do not interpret those given meanings in some way, consciously or otherwise.

But further, the boundaries of this study must include the observation that in Windhorse and Prinknash at least, I cannot know these people's lives or enter intimately into their discourse. As Fr Absel said, *'I would need to live this life'*; I did not and could not. More specifically, the study is bounded because their lives, which in chapter seven, I have depicted as a moving between imaginal and empirical worlds, include ways of knowing, which have not been part of my life so far. My life has not included the deep tradition or spiritual praxis that Cottingham (2005) says is the starting point for spiritual growth. Fr Absel had been at Prinknash for seventy years when I met him, and the spiritual practice I have described in this study was part of his everyday experience for all

that time. Fr Mark and Fr Francis at Prinknash and Rijumati at Windhorse all spoke of experiences in community lives that I, (and they), understood to be beyond the capacity of an interview or even numerous visits to the field to convey. I cannot 'know' these lives, logically, emotionally or spiritually. All I have at my disposal is my capacity to interpret, in terms of what I might bring, which itself comes from my history and psychological makeup. In this study my interpretation turns, I think, upon the categorisations I began with during the data analysis, those may or may not be accepted or even understood or meaningful to either those I studied or to anyone else, but they are my interpretations.

My attempts to make sense of the lives of people living and working in these spiritual communities has resulted in the realisation that this is etic knowledge; outsider knowledge, outsider meanings which fall well short of the emic knowledge of the lives of the people I studied. In addition, the subtlety of this experience requires me to find a form of expression that is beyond my current abilities. I am attempting to communicate the experience of people living in these communities, but what these people know, I can only 'know'. They express what they know by living this life; through engagement with symbol and ritual, through identification with history and tradition (in the case of Prinknash 1500 years of tradition); I express what I 'know' with the *'sorry husks'* that words can be (Jung, 1973 quoted in Hauke, 2000: 213) and I am no poet!

Finding research sites and gaining access

Given the research interests I had; *'the influence of religious teachings on organisational life in religious communities'*, I began to look for communities in the West Midlands that might be interested in taking part. *The Buddhist Directory 2000* (2000) gave me a start in this and led me to the Buddhist communities in the area. I made telephone calls and found the first problem was one of language; it was very difficult to make my request clear to young monks either from Vietnam, Burma or Thailand. Other attempts find research sites in local temple or with local groups were confounded by either the language problem, the size of the community or, one case, the group's suspicion of me, given my attachment to a university business school. This was not a promising start, but finding appropriate research sites turned out to be less a matter of thinking, and more a matter of responding to what presented itself, a lesson in itself.

Pearson (1993: xii) tells us that negotiations for access <u>are</u> data. In this case the process of gaining access was interesting because it linked in unexpected ways to my past and also because, given the nature of these communities, gaining access told me lot about the communities themselves. The sites I eventually researched did not come to me through any systematic process of generating alternatives and criteria and making a choice, but rather through serendipity, good (and bad) fortune, coupled with 'following my nose'.

The story of my gaining access to Prinknash for example, was far from text book. I was browsing some magazines in Birmingham eye hospital waiting room (after splashing creosote in my eye) and came across a brochure for Prinknash Abbey in Gloucestershire (pronounced Prinage). The picture of the Abbey on the front cover

seemed familiar, and I eventually realised I had visited this Abbey as a tourist in about 1997, but the connections were stranger than that. In 1989 I was given a book by a Christian friend entitled '*Return to the Centre*' (1976) by Bede Griffiths, a monk of the Benedictine order, by then running an Ashram in South India. Griffiths was attempting to lead the life of a Sannyasi and the Ashram was open to all, from any faith and none. In 1990 I went to India to meet Fr Bede and stay at the Ashram, while there, I read Fr Bede's autobiography '*The Golden String*' (1979) in which I read that he had entered Prinknash in 1931, a point that failed to register with me while sitting in the waiting room of the eye hospital. Nevertheless, I did realise it a few days later and decided to approach Prinknash with a view to it becoming one of my research sites. I approached the Abbot by e mail, as suggested to me by whoever answered an initial telephone call, and he agreed to meet me, along with the previous Abbott, Fr Aldhelm, who had since moved on to another role within the Subiaco Congregation.

The notion of 'gatekeepers' in organisations and their effect on the research process is discussed by Fountain (1993). In Benedictine monasteries the Guest Master is a formalised role and has been for 1500 years, and at Prinknash this role is held by Br William. Br William was at different times an usher, a Personal Assistant to the Abbott, manager of boundaries and information desk, these roles he took very seriously. Fountain (1993) notes that gatekeepers can have varying effects on the research process, and therefore on its outcome, but this research was not obviously affected by Br William since, having gained permission to go to the monastery for an initial visit from the Abbot and subsequently to spend time there, Br William simply facilitated this. In short, the

formalisation of the role of Guest Master left the role of 'gatekeeper' with the Abbot, this does not mean Br William was happy with it.

I did not know what to expect at my first meeting with Fr Francis and Fr Aldhelm, but the meeting set my mind at rest that I was doing the right thing. While they were intrigued, if not bemused by my objectives, both Abbot and former Abbot were kind and generous with their time, and invited me to stay at the monastery to carry out the research. The white habits[26] they were wearing, for me, leant an air of serenity to the conversation, but also heightened the sense of the separation between us.

May (1993) points out that clearance at one level in the organisation does not mean clearance at another and Armstrong (1993) reports the tendency to feel able to approach anyone once the 'gatekeeper' has given the 'green light', and this was also how I felt at Prinknash. However, the experience of trying to arrange a meeting with Br William taught me an early and valuable lesson; namely that it is necessary to know something of the way in which power works within an organisation as quickly as possible. Fr Francis had given me a formal 'nod' to talk to the monks and spend time in the monastery, and I have no doubt that he and Fr Aldhelm spoke informally to the brethren about my presence and the reason for it, but who I spoke to was a matter between myself and the monks. Happily, for the most part they spoke willingly; Br William was an exception.

The discovery of Windhorse as a possible research site was less serendipitous, but not without its 'chance' elements. My first exposure to Buddhist teachings was in 1982, but in 1987 (and by now living and working in Birmingham), I had begun to attend

[26] The Monks at Prinknash had been given special dispensation from Rome to wear white habits rather than the Benedictine tradition of black.

FWBO meditation sessions, after about a year, the feeling that I had 'joined a club' did not sit well with me, for reasons discussed in chapter one, and I stopped attending. Nevertheless, WBO was uppermost in my mind as I looked for another research site. I made contact with Vishvapani, the PR officer and editor of '*Dharma Life*' and arranged a meeting. The suggestion to approach Windhorse: Evolution came from Vishvapani, but a full year later, and having not yet acted on Vishvapani's advice, another senior order member, if not the senior order member, Subhuti, suggested the same thing, this time I acted upon the advice and made contact with the head office of Windhorse in Cambridge and again, happily, they agreed to participate in the study.

My 'gatekeeper' this time was Sinhavacin who came across as an accomplished communicator; softly spoken, but crystal clear and comfortable with long silences, as many of the people I met during this research were. Following a telephone conversation, I discovered they were planning to hold a stand at an exhibition at the NEC in Birmingham. I rather bullishly suggested I meet them there and help out setting up the stand. Sinhavacin seemed surprised and mildly concerned about this but agreed, for me this was a way of demonstrating my willingness to fit in. But for Sinhavacin there was a problem; the work people in the organisation do, is part of their spiritual practice (indeed work as a spiritual practice was part of the raison d'etre of the organisation). I sensed his concern, but in the event I arrived and did my best to contribute, seemingly getting on well with those people working on the stand. They must have seen me in a positive, or at least a non-destructive light, because my request for permission to stay with one of the communities while carrying out the first of a number of visits to the warehouse or Uddiyana was granted. Again though, I felt this must have been an unusual request, also

because it might interfere with the community's process, living together in community is also seen as an integral part of the spiritual practice.

At Windhorse my presence must also have been discussed in the senior reaches of the organisation. They had good reason to be careful, if not suspicious, of my request for access.[27] Nevertheless, access was granted and again nobody was instructed to talk to me; the Newsletter (which Sinhavacin later sent to me regularly throughout the data collection time) records my presence as front page news as follows;

> *Some of you will already have come across an occasional visitor we are having at Uddiyana; his third visit will be on Friday. His name is Martyn Brown, and he teaches in the Business School at the University of Central England, in Birmingham. His particular interest is the way that religious beliefs and ethical principles can affect the management of organisations and he is doing research for a doctoral thesis on this question. He has decided to focus on Windhorse: evolution and a Benedictine monastery, Prinknash in Gloucestershire, where work is part of their practice.*
>
> *Martyn is keen to experience as much as possible of our lives while he is with us. On his last visit, he stayed in a community, joining us for meals and morning*

[27] These related to potentially damaging article in The Guardian (27th September 1997) claiming among other things that FWBO had all the hallmarks of a cult. In addition, the founder of the FWBO, Sangharatshita, had recently been accused of having a sexual relationship with an order member in the early years of the WBO. This was something that both Vishvapani and Subhuti had been open about in our first meetings. They were now actively considering how to further the order in terms of structure, leadership and culture; a process that they were sure would have a substantial impact on the same features of Windhorse: Evolution. Even though they were managed by completely different people, all were members of the WBO and Windhorse was a major contributor to the funding of the Western Buddhist Order.

meditation. He has also helped unload containers and pack orders in the Warehouse and helped set up the stand at the GLEE trade show. He also takes people away for short interviews. He is a very friendly chap, so please be welcoming and open with him if you talk to him. I generally arrange his timetable when he is with us. If you think you have a particular angle that would interest him, please let me know.

Sinhavacin

This did make some things easier; when, for example, I approached people in the warehouse asking for their time, only on one occasion did I feel any reluctance.

This discussion draws attention to another point; that the personality of the researcher is a crucial factor in the gathering of data May (1993), and I would argue this is the case, whether or not decision-makers have sanctioned your presence. The personality issue was very clear at both of these sites, as Armstrong (1993: 23) records, *'no amount of explanation'*, would be enough to gain access and continues *'If I was alright then my project was alright'*. Both Fr Francis and Sinhavacin implied that I had understood the nature of the site and the community and that this was enough for them to give me initial access.

This brings me to a further observation which has been noted elsewhere May (1993: 84)

"There was no end to the process of negotiating which led to a green light, after which 'true' data could be collected untainted by my presence".

Armstrong (1993: 18) refers to the need for the researcher to have *'cultural competence'*. I continuously felt the need to reaffirm that my presence was acceptable to them. Fr Francis' observation that I seemed to understand the place was in response to a direct question from me to ascertain that my presence was still acceptable to them, something I felt I needed to do at Windhorse too.

At neither site did I try to 'interview' anyone to begin with, but allowed my presence and their awareness of it to percolate through the community. Early conversations at Prinknash were arranged by the Abbot between him and myself. Only later, after I had been seen (but not heard) at meal times and wandering around the monastery and its grounds, did others make themselves known to me.

A still further observation is that, like May (1993) I realised that the people I was speaking to were somewhat adept at assessing personalities, and this is important. For some of the monks, the daily round included time with people outside the monastery in a pastoral role and those that were ordained were required on occasion to preside over services in local churches. In addition to, and because of, their introspective lives, the monks appeared to have some ability to empathise with people they had only recently met in a way that surprised me initially.

A discussion on gaining access to a research site would not be complete without some consideration of leaving it. Knowing when to finish the data collection had as much, in this case, to do with sensing when they had had enough of me, as when I had

enough data. While I felt sure they would tell me, subtly, if I was overstaying my welcome, they didn't, and even though I 'renegotiated' access regularly, I remained mindful that this was **their community**, perhaps more clearly so for being a monastery, and not a manufacturing concern. However formalised the treatment of guests, and for however many centuries, the guest remains a guest. Notwithstanding the problems this and other monasteries now have recruiting novice monks, becoming a monk is a long and difficult personal and community process involving the need for a match between the community and the aspirant. Rexroth (1974) in his discussion of the central principles of alternative communities and their ability to survive, notes the need for a stringent process for deciding upon who should be a member.

Data collection

The initial discussion with Fr Francis and Fr Aldhelm at Prinknash was in May 2002, in the same month I met Vishvapani from the Western Buddhist Order Preceptors College in South Birmingham. While the first visit to Prinknash to begin data collection was also in May 2002, I did not act on the suggestion by Vishvapani that I contact Windhorse until over a year later, when I met with Subhuti, also at the Preceptors College, when he made the same suggestion. This one year gap was primarily due to the commonplace, namely that I was working full time and bringing up a young family. The distance to the two sites and the nature of the research, meant protracted periods away from both work and family and was, in short, not feasible. This resulted in the data from the two sites being collected almost one after the other, with an overlap of about seven and a half months, during which I was spending time in both sites. On reflection, the chance to immerse myself in one religious tradition at a time was probably helpful. I

found both sites personally challenging, and the separation of the two experiences has, I think, contributed to the interpretation of the data.

The primary data collection therefore took place gradually in a little over two and half years, with the time spent at Prinknash starting in May 2002, my last visit being May 2004. The time spent at Windhorse began in October 2003 and the last visit was January 2005. In total I spent 22 full days on 16 separate occasions and much of that involved overnight stays and further opportunities to observe the people and the settings as well as myself. This amounted to over 500 hours spent in the primary data locations including initial meetings and overnight stays. The longest stays were 4 ½ days at Prinknash and 3 days at Windhorse, but the amount of time in hours and days was about the same in both sites, although that was not planned. The end of the primary data collection was, as I have noted, less a matter of when I had enough data and more one of sensing the right time to conclude the primary work. The sensitive nature of these sites was an important factor, and I feel now that I was fortunate to have been allowed access at all.

Brewer (2000: 59) states that the topic and the methods employed in ethnographic research often go hand in hand because ethnography is not a method, but a style of research, designed to *'understand the social meanings and activities of people in a given 'field''*. Similarly, the methods I used to collect data were, to some extent, determined by the nature of the sites themselves and the interests I had. There was no possibility that the data would come from handing out questionnaires, I was aware that the understanding I sought would only come from close contact with the people and their environment. The methods used were observation, in-depth interviews, conversations, self observation, participant observation and some documentation analysis. The combination of these, in

addition to the earlier point made regarding reflexivity as an obligation, means that the data is triangulated (Denzin, 1978) which as Brewer (2000: 59) points out '*is routinely a feature of ethnography*'.

Brewer (2000): 59) states that participant observation is, '*the gathering of data by means of participation in the daily life of informants*'. Interestingly May (1993: 90) records that participant observation might not be a matter of choice; '*They have a right to claim your participation because they have granted you access*'. And so it was for me; the most obvious example was the invitation to join the monks in singing at 5am in the morning, I was not expecting this invitation. Other opportunities at Prinknash included sharing meals (in silence), making incense, and time spent in the laundry room. At Windhorse the participation was similar in that I was able to join in with ritual and devotional activities, share meals (also in silence) and in the work by *'picking and packing'* in the warehouse, and attendance at a trade show. I have tried to weave these experiences into the data presentation chapters.

May (1993) reports that the researcher may have to join in, which in my case also meant a shift to memory as a way of recording data; to reach for a minidisk player or a note pad while sitting in the pews would have destroyed the moment, and the moment was what I was there for. The same thing was evident for Armstrong (1993) in his study of football hooliganism when *'running with pack'*, he says, taking notes and recording are not options.

For May (1993: 87) ethnographic research is about *'fitting in'* and recording what it means to fit in. If fitting in means becoming accepted as one of the participants then I did not fit in either at Prinknash or Windhorse; I was a researcher and more importantly a

PhD student and that was known by most. In the case of Windhorse I was in good company; at least two of the people I interviewed had completed doctorates and many more were accomplished professional people before joining Windhorse.

The other side to observation at these sites must recognise the amount of time spent alone (particularly at Prinknash), which further afforded me the opportunity to observe the people and the setting, as well as my own reactions, it also afforded me time to write it all down. Some of what is contained in the data presentation chapters is the result of these observations too.

What is more surprising is that the time spent alone, was also time spent participating. At Prinknash, like most monasteries, time is given over to communal reflection, and of course, to prayer. The Benedictine tradition emphasises the need for these, as well as private study which includes the study of material not directly to do with the monastery, the church, the Benedictines or even Christianity. Fr Stephen was well versed in Buddhist scripture, as well as that of his own tradition.

Prinknash has its own very large library in the basement which is stocked with both modern works and huge old texts bound in disintegrating leather. The library, like so much at Prinknash, encourages reflection; it is quieter than the rest of the monastery, and therefore very quiet, overlooking the Cotswolds and Gloucester in the distance. I spent some time in such places at Prinknash, and the result is, I hope, a text which uses observation and also self-observation to the same end.

The time for self observation at Windhorse was limited by comparison. Meetings were often arranged by my host, Sinhavacin, and frequently three or four, 'back to back' followed by a silent lunch and a similar process for the afternoon. That is not to say that

reflection was not part of the day for the people at Windhorse, but my experience was of less time spent wandering and thinking about the experience on site.

The idea of the in-depth interview is well established in qualitative research. Yet these 'interviews' seemed to be something else, again influenced by the setting itself and possibly by the lives the monks were living, the most appropriate form of 'data collection' seemed to be more akin to a conversation. After only a couple of attempts to carry out a more formal interview, the monks seemed happier to have a conversation with me, and the conversation also became my preferred means of trying to make sense.

The conversation as a way of making sense of other's lives has its precedent in a number of texts outside the formal academic arena, Gurdjieff for example, (1963) and Fritjof Capra (1986). In ethnographic work Roseneil (1993: 207) reports that the interviews she used in respect of her research into Greenham Common women were *'much like a long intense conversation'*. The 'conversations' I had were not spontaneous in so far as the respondent and I both knew I was there to illicit their views, nevertheless the style of a loose conversation was adopted and most seemed very comfortable with it. As May (1993: 85) has said; *'Interviews were more of a dialogue, which was not problematic, but beneficial'*. Rarely did I feel the thoughts being expressed fell well outside my remit, and in retrospect, what they had to say fed my responses and vice versa. They also became more meaningful when I came to transcribe, analyse and interpret the data.

May (1993: 90) quotes Ann Oakley (1990), *'There can be no intimacy without reciprocity'* and this was largely the case at both Windhorse and Prinknash. The people I met were willing to give to me in the absence of this reciprocity on my part, but I felt my

willingness to act in a conversational manner was important to them in that they were able to share more of their world, because I shared some of mine. This dialogue removed some, though not all, of the utilitarian feel of the research, without pretending that we were the same or there for the same reasons. Fountain (1993) records that the lack of control she had over the interview schedule when meeting with drug dealers was a limitation, but at Prinknash the lack of an interview schedule was a measure of the spontaneity of the encounters and, I felt, of the richness of the thoughts shared with me because of it.

Conversations were carried out using a rough guide as to what areas to focus on and no more; *'A point of reference'*, as Roseneil (1993) calls it. I made clear what I was broadly interested in at the start of each interview and reminded people of that when we met more than once. This broad interest opened out onto other topics as the conversations continued, and in most cases I felt this approach yielded richer perspectives than otherwise would have been the case. More than once at Windhorse respondents commented after the session that my 'style' had put them at ease. I had not considered it a 'style', but as a fledgling researcher was grateful for the encouragement.

At Windhorse a meeting room had been set aside for me by Sinhavacin via a simple booking system which worked on all but one occasion. With only one exception, the meetings at Windhorse took place in the designated room, giving the feeling that I was an 'outsider' waiting for 'clients' to visit me at times arranged by Sinhavacin. This 'production line' of encounters led me to wonder if I was being presented with a carefully managed face of Windhorse. However, the arrival of Jim Persouch with his less

complimentary views about Windhorse, as well as the freedom I had to approach anyone, wander and observe, allayed this concern.

The 'interviews' at Prinknash were conducted in a number of places. My own cell was one venue, either I would arrange a meeting at the cell or on a couple of occasions the monks would visit me. On these occasions the venue would be suggested by the monk in question and included an office to one side of the lobby and the guest block coffee room. I was also to be found chatting with monks while doing the monastery laundry, making incense and making cider, having coffee, and on some occasions, whilst walking around the monastery. Meeting monks where they suggested was an important part of the process, not only was I able to see places I might not otherwise have done, but the monks were, I feel, more at ease with me because I was willing to meet where they wanted to. These occasions gave me the feeling that life continued as it always had whether or not I was present, the sense of this being a 1500 year old tradition was palpable.

In both sites the data was recorded in a number of ways; conversations which had been prearranged were, with the permission of the respondents, recorded using a minidisk recorder, (after a few unsuccessful attempts to use a Dictaphone). The second manner in which the data was recorded was through the use of a research journal which I began to refer to as 'black books'; A4 note books, (only one of which was black), numbering three by the end of the work. In these books I was able to record everything that seemed relevant to me, and even that which I simply needed to 'get off my chest', such as emotional reactions to the work, both in the field and elsewhere.

Data analysis

The process of data analysis is seen by many as long and difficult. Brewer (2000: 109) reports the cries of ethnographers faced with the task, *'How do I begin? Where do I begin?'* I began, by transferring the minidisk data to CD's and used a small piece of free software that enabled me to skip forwards and backwards in 10 second leaps through the data. In this way I transcribed, in handwriting, every interview conducted word for word, (the first few interviews conducted early on a Dictaphone machine were also transcribed). This process took many weeks of detailed work and my research journal records that I felt unable to relax my concentration at all in that time for fear that I might lose something valuable. The transcriptions were dated and each comment indexed by its point on the file in minutes and seconds to facilitate future retrieval. I then read each transcription looking for key points being made, the criteria used were, (in no particular order), the interest to me, the frequency of being mentioned and possible similarity to other comments made. I recognise that my influence on the data began much earlier than this, probably before the project began, certainly in formulating the topic, and definitely during interviews and observation, but this was the first obvious point at which that influence was very clear.

The process yielded 137 comments made that I felt required attention. Each comment was coded, but these were single comments and so, through the generation of further categories, the comments were conflated into 38 areas of interest, a further iteration reduced these to 20 and a still further iteration reduced it to 7 broad issues. At each stage of this process the comments themselves were not lost, the coding enabled me to retrace to steps in order to find, and give further consideration to the original

transcription and to check and recheck my categorisations. This was partly done using Microsoft Excel to sort the categories at each stage. The seven issues which the process yielded were:

-Influence of religious teachings on organisational life

-Organisational change

-Individual development

-Economic versus spiritual tension

-Symbolism versus literalism

-'Inside' versus 'outside'

-Self versus 'other'

Further issues were categorised as

-Organisational reflection

-Aesthetics

-Miscellaneous

The comments were then reorganised, each under a specific category and referenced according to which page of the transcription and where it was filed.

In addition to the transcriptions of interviews, I also carried out the same procedure on my own observations and coded them similarly. These included the things I saw, the things people said, and the things they did. It also included my own observations of myself; what I did, what I said and what I felt. These observations were usually written in the 'black books' which have been my constant companions throughout

the study, and were written during the quiet times at the two sites, as well as during other times, as and when, thoughts came to me. The coding of this self-observation enabled me more easily to treat all the data in the same way. These issues were then re-examined (since they were still in the form of comments and observations) and eight broad themes were identified to be pursued during the interpretation of the data.

The themes were:

-The tension between economic and spiritual objectives

-Being and insider versus being an outsider. (this refers to the frequently used phrase, particularly at Windhorse, *'on the outside...'* which referred to people not working for Windhorse. This was less evident at Prinknash where I might have expected it to be more prevalent given the enclosed nature of the community)

-The tension between organisational change and tradition

-Decision making, management and leadership

-Self versus the other

-Individual development

-The influence of religious teachings on organisational life

-Symbolism versus literalism

It was from this final categorisation that the interpretation of the data was conducted.

Data interpretation

Brewer (2000: 122) remarks that, *'There is very little to be said about interpretation, since it is a creative enterprise that depends on the insight and imagination of the ethnographer'.* This appears to be the case, neither Davies (1999) nor Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) include a specific discussion on the interpretive process in their books. Rather, they subsume it with in a more general discussion on analysis, and this is perhaps as it should be, since as the process of interpretation in this research began in some sense with the data collection or earlier. Nevertheless, certain definable stages were undertaken in the process of interpretation and these correspond to some extent with those identified by Brewer (2000). In summary, Brewer (2000: 124) states that the interpretive process should include the following five stages:

- Check the researcher's findings with the respondents
- Adopt a critical attitude towards what respondents say
- Look for alternative explanations from those the respondents offer
- Keep the methods and the data in context since they are related
- Represent the polyphony of voices in the field

The interpretation of this data did all of these with the exception that I did not check my interpretations with those that contributed to it. This was chiefly because of time, but also because a number of the people who contributed to the study are, for one reason or another, no longer available to examine the interpretations I have made. However, the data presentation chapters have made extensive use of quotation in order to give the

respondents the major voice, and it is hoped this will go some way towards ameliorating the absence of a check on the part of those people.

The interpretation also melds with the analysis in that it represents a further distillation of the issues identified in the analysis. The interpretations offered in chapter seven are, I believe, in line with the stipulations suggested by Hammersley (1990), that they should be both plausible and credible. As discussed earlier, Hammersley (1990 and 1992) defends what he calls *'subtle realism'* on the basis that it offers reasonable interpretations.

In addition, I have attempted throughout the work to offer a reflexive account of the processes and my influence upon them. Again, I believe this assists in offering a credible alternative (though not as good) to having my interpretations checked by the respondents.

The themes offered in the interpretation chapter were arrived at in the following manner:

1. Re-examination of the literature reviews in chapters 1, 2 and 3 to identify the key points.

2. Identification of patterns in the spirituality in the workplace literature (chapter 3).

3. Identification of agreement and/or discrepancies between the literature reviewed in chapters 1 and 2 and that reviewed in chapter 3 (the spirituality in the workplace literature).

4. Identification of key points emerging from the data. (Chapters 5 and 6).

5. Identification of patterns in the data (Chapters 5 and 6).

6. Identification of agreement and/or discrepancies between the data and the literature reviewed in chapters 1 and 2.

7. Identification of agreement and/or discrepancies between the data and the literature reviewed in chapter 3 (spirituality in the workplace literature).

8. Identification of patterns **across** the spirituality in the workplace literature and the data. The patterns were organised into four groups according to their coincidence or otherwise. These are:

- The tension between individual and organisation
- The orientation to the present and/or the future
- The orientation to dualism or non-dualism
- The non-reified orientation of the case study organisations as compared with the spirituality in the workplace literature and conventional commercial concerns.

9. Identification of agreement and discrepancy between these groups across the literature and the data.

10. Identification of the themes across the data and the spirituality in the workplace literature. These were used to present the structure of the argument in chapter 7 (An Interpretation of Work in a Spiritual Place). Chapter 7 therefore represents a further iteration of the analysis of both the primary and the secondary data.

One final point should be noted here; my recognition of the centrality of the issue of reification in this research was not the direct result of the rather linear process outlined in this section, however, it was related. The centrality of the individual as the focus of organisational activity (rather than the organisation as the focus of individual activity) became clearer as the work continued. This observation was first made during the data collection stage of the research and became more evident during analysis, but it finally surfaced as a central issue during the interpretation stage of the work, giving some credence to the point made by Davies (1999: 193) that interpretation, *'is intrinsic to all stages of ethnographic research'*.

Summary

On a more reflexive note, I recognise my process has not been linear through this work (i.e. large question followed by smaller questions addressed through data collection and analysis, relating these to the theory and finally interpreting the relationship between the two). Rather it has been more of an implosion; disparate empirical and theoretical elements slowly coalescing and coagulating into a singularity. No single element was given primacy for a long time but allowed to 'live', 'out there', unrelatedly, only slowly moving towards the centre and beginning to relate to the other elements. I did not know what the singularity looked like, nor when, or if I would see it. This lack of confidence

was interlaced with occasional 'faith' that, as Sister Julian of Norwich said, *'all shall be well'* (Way, 1978: 64); faith that these disparate elements did relate in some way, what I needed was faith and patience; I frequently had neither. The work was difficult because the long periods of unrelatedness were disquieting and disheartening; sometimes leading to concern that I wasn't intellectually up to the task. I now see it was only partly an intellectual problem, but also and possibly mainly, an emotional and spiritual one, this is discussed in chapter eight.

This chapter has attempted to reveal the process of the research and the influences upon myself as I produced it. It began with a detailed discussion of the methodological basis, upon which the work was produced. This, I argued, was necessary in order to provide the reader with a firm foundation with which to evaluate the research. It continued with a discussion of the methods considered for this research and a justification for the ultimate use of reflexive ethnography and a case study approach. There followed a description of the research process including a discussion of the need for reflexivity when appraising a body of literature predominantly from a culture not your own. Further justification for the methods chosen for data collection, analysis and interpretation followed. The prime argument presented in this chapter is the need for reflexivity at all stages of the research process and particularly in regard to organisations characterised by an expressly reflective nature, such as those discussed in the two chapters that follow.

Chapter 5. Prinknash Abbey – the Benedictine experience

This chapter presents the experiences I had at Prinknash (pronounced 'Prinage') and the views and feelings of the people I met there. The monastery exudes a flow of time and tradition which was palpable as soon as I entered the grounds, much more so when I entered the building. The chapter therefore attempts to do justice to the subtlety of the experience, the character of the monastery and its surrounding land as well as the personalities of the people and my own reactions to the whole experience. The chapter is not written in chronological order, but is arranged to draw out the key issues found over about two and a half years covering sixteen visits ranging from four and a half days to a single day. The multiple day visits were at the invitation of the Abbot and on those occasions I stayed in the guest quarters, which I was to discover, are very similar to those of the monks themselves. These protracted periods in the monastery have, I hope, enabled me to express more than just the words spoken and the evidence of my eyes. The chapter has five sections which reveal the attitudes of the monks to the issues that initially, I drew attention to. These are: the purpose and meaning of the monastery, the tension between economic and spiritual imperatives, decision making, management and leadership, issues relating to organisational change and the role of symbol and ritual.

My intentions, which are developed more fully in chapters one and four, were to try to make sense of the nature of organisational life in a spiritual community. This, as has been discussed earlier, was the result of my exposure to the spirituality in the workplace literature, which appeared to pay little heed to the experiences of spiritual communities in its discourse. The issues alighted upon were always developed in

conversation and therefore also represent the interest and concerns of the monks themselves. However, they also represent issues that interested me, for example, at the start I began conversations with questions about the role of symbol and ritual in their lives, this was of interest to me at the time because I had recently read Pondy et al (1983) on *'Organisational Symbolism'*.

One further note relates to the extensive use of quotation which Brewer (2000) says is a common feature of ethnographic work. In this study the extensive use of quotation is designed to ensure the louder voice in this, and the next chapter, is that of the respondents, my interpretation being mostly confined to chapter seven.

The Purpose and meaning of the community

The *Rule of St Benedict*

Any attempt to understand the purpose of the monk's life at Prinknash cannot proceed without an examination of *'The Rule of St Benedict'* (Fry, 1982). Throughout the time I spent at Prinknash *'the Rule'*, as it is usually referred to, is used to justify and explain much of what goes on there. *The Rule* is perhaps the best known of a number of 'rules' written by different people setting up monasteries at the time including St Augustine (Brooke, 2006). It is essentially a small book setting out how the monastery should be run and why and it is tempting to describe it as something like a cross between a *'How to...'* manual for managers and an employee handbook, although I doubt the monks would see it that way. *'The Rule'* was, in Benedict's own words; *'a little rule that we have written for beginners'* (Fry, 1982: Ch 73 v.8). The purpose of a monastery is

implicit on every page of *the Rule* and so as a starting point in trying to apprehend the purpose of Prinknash we must begin with the *'little rule'*.

The following quotations from the Prologue of *the Rule* do as much as any to give a sense of what the monastery is for; devotion to the service of God, during this life, which is acknowledged as a difficult path (Fry, 1982: Prologue v.1-3).

> *"The labor of obedience will bring you back to him from who you had drifted through the sloth of disobedience".*

And,

> *"We must, then, prepare our hearts and bodies for the battle of holy obedience to his instructions".* (Fry, 1982: Prologue v.40).

Obedience is central; obedience to God, to the church and to the Abbot. This is a difficult requirement for those of us outside the monastic community to grasp, because it appears to contradict our 'rights', which the democratic system in England has (apparently) upheld for centuries. But this obedience is not designed to oppress, as the following quote from *the Rule* makes clear,

> *"Therefore we intend to establish a school for the Lord's service. In drawing up its regulations, we hope to set down nothing harsh, nothing burdensome. The*

good of all concerned, however, may prompt us to a little strictness in order to amend faults and to safe guard love." (Fry, 1982: Prologue v.45-47).

As Fr Mark later told me, this obedience is paradoxically designed to liberate.[28] In essence men come to live the monastic life in Prinknash in order to give their lives to God, this they do through work, study and prayer in accordance with the *Rule of St Benedict* and in relation to others. *'We are relational beings'*, as Fr Francis phrased it. [29]

The reflective community

The formal purpose of the monastery and its meaning to the people in it are almost indistinguishable at Prinknash. *The Rule* was quoted frequently by the monks, but the sense I gained was not one of an uncompromising conformity, but rather one of considered agreement, indeed, the stipulations of *the Rule* were modified when it was deemed appropriate. This was apparent from the existence of the *Constitution of the Subiaco Congregation* (Jones, 1988) and also in the willingness to drop certain traditions when appropriate. The meaning the monastery had was made clear when I spoke to Fr

[28] Musicians have also harnessed this by placing artificial restrictions around what they might play or compose in order to generate greater creative insight. The jazz saxophonist John Coltrane is said to have consciously played an improvised motif in as many ways as possible before moving onto another, his music is, for some, among the most imaginative ever produced and continues to influence young players today. The album *'A Love Supreme'* (Coltrane, 1964) is a very good example of this and is, coincidentally, by his own admission, Coltrane's testament to his own spiritual life. Arnold Schoenberg (2009) devised the twelve tone system of composition which, by choice, gave the twelve notes of the chromatic scale almost equal significance in the piece, with the result that there was no key centre. This produced music that was for some very difficult to listen to, but nevertheless had substantial impact on other twentieth century composers. The gypsy jazz guitarist Django Reinhardt had his restrictions placed upon him when his caravan caught fire rendering him virtually unable to use three fingers of his left hand. He went on to become one of the most influential guitarists in the jazz world, developing a style of lightening fast and melodic improvisation which today confounds guitarists with two fully functioning hands! For example, Reinhardt (1951).

[29] There is no notion of solitary living in the Benedictine tradition as there is in some other traditions such as Trappism. Quite the contrary, tradition has it that Benedict wrote *the Rule* for those who found it difficult to be hermits.

Mark who recounted his first exposure to Prinknash in 1970 when a school teacher brought him on a day visit. Fr Mark recalled that he left thinking it was rather commercial, but that he had a vocation. In 1972 he returned, and though he didn't like the building, he was in his words, *'bowled over by the community'*, he was 17 years old. This second visit so affected him that he believes he achieved bad 'A' level grades in French, Latin and History because of it. The monastery would not take a 19 year old, but he accepted the habit in 1975 took his first vows in 1976. He studied for the Priesthood at Downside and took final profession in 1979.

Fr Mark described the ages between twenty-five and thirty-five as *'a very difficult time because of my immaturity'*. He wasn't happy with the amount of physical work he had to do by contrast to Downside, where he was able to balance it with being a student. *'I needed permission to go anywhere on the estate'*, he said. *'It was partly because I was a novice and partly the culture of Prinknash, the novitiate is a desert, no visits, no phone, no internet, no contact with lay people, especially Sunday and only very rare visits from your parents'*.

Fr Mark's reason for being at Prinknash was now more bound to the community than his personal objectives, he hints at the concept of stewardship, *'I am using my intellectual and physical power to keep in motion something that I inherited and hopefully someone else will come along and take the work and develop it and change it and if possible adapt it for the needs of the next generation it's not my possession'*. Fr Mark acknowledges the connection of the monastery to communism in some sense, but argues that they are not happy with the idea of ideology driving the community, *'I am interested in the way people identify with human systems'*, he said. The bell rang and Fr

Mark left the room in a hurry, leaving the door open for me to follow him to go to Sext,[30] it was not the last time the bell would interrupt a conversation, I followed.

Later, I went down to the laundry to meet Fr Pat and perhaps do some work; Kieran was working there with James. Kieran is an Irish Liverpuddlian working as a nurse in Glasgow which he felt was his vocation rather than as a monk, he, like James, was a novice at Prinknash twenty years earlier and has much to say about the place and the people. He had not been voted to stay by the other monks at the time and, *'I have regretted my reaction ever since'*, he said, adding that he recalled, as a novice, playing football on the concourse. His regret explains to some extent why he returned so often to Prinknash to work and stay. Another reason was his health; he contracted Hepatitis B from giving a patient an injection and now takes 56 tablets a day. He looks unwell and his weathered face tells of a life lived hard.

'I learned so much here about the early morning and how to use it to make the day more meaningful', he said. *'Even now I stop what I am doing in the day and reflect for ten minutes'*. We fed the handkerchiefs through the ironing machine two by two and then the sheets and towels. Kieran and James and Fr Pat joke continuously about the pay and conditions, yet they were always there as volunteers. They left for a cigarette as Fr Pat and I continued the work and chatted, moving quickly to deeper issues, mostly

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[30] The description of the hours of the Benedictine day (Opus Dei – the work of God) which follows comes from Fr Bede Griffiths autobiography (1954: 149). The actual times that each monastery observes can vary and usually involve a much earlier start than Fr Bede suggests here. *"The whole day is divided into periods of three hours, and at the beginning of each period an "office" or service of prayer takes place by which that period of the day is consecrated to the service of God. The day, according to the Roman reckoning on which it is based, begins at six o'clock and at this hour the office of Prime is said. Terce (Latin "tertia hora") follows at nine, Sext (Latin "sexta hora") at noon, None (Latin "nona hora") at about three in the afternoon, Vespers (Latin "vespertina hora" or Evensong) at six, and finally Compline (Latin "Completorium", the hour which completes the day) at about nine in the evening".*

relating to my own spiritual search. Fr Pat spent twelve years as a missionary in India near Madras and it seems he met Fr Bede in the same year that I did, 1990.

Fr Pat was unwilling to preach and unwilling to claim universal franchise for Christianity. Like Fr Francis he was only willing to state his own belief that Christ was God and that he died to save all of us, *'Buddhas and Buddhists alike'*. The first time I met Fr Pat he was not wearing the habit and I was surprised when I saw him later by my own reaction to his wearing it, it was as if the uniform takes away all the humanness and all the contradictions that we all are.

Economic versus Spiritual Tensions

The business interests of Prinknash

There were twenty-five monks living at Prinknash and a number of them were unable to contribute in any significant way to the economic well being of the community. Prinknash has about four hundred acres of land, ten rented properties and the monastery itself. The retreat centre, St Peter's Grange, needed about £2 million worth of refurbishment. Other business interests include the bird sanctuary, cider making, incense making and the gift shop, they also have some investments. The reason for business activity is self evident, but the *Rule of St Benedict* also makes it clear that the monks must earn their living.

Fr Stephen and I were comfortable with each other from the start; he is one of the younger people at Prinknash and probably in his late 50's. He is well read and conversant with the work of Carl Jung, *'he is it as far as I am concerned'*, he said, and like Jung, Fr

Stephen was very interested in Buddhist, Taoist and Hindu thought. Fr Stephen however, has an interesting view on their business activities. *'We are in business because we live in a fallen world which means we have to live by the sweat of our brow as it says in Genesis. It is one of the realities of life in this world that we have to earn our living and this is very strong in the Benedictine tradition'.* Fr Stephen quotes *the Rule* to me; *'They are truly monks when they live by the labour of their hands like our fathers in the desert'. (Fry, 1982: Ch48 v.8).* He continued, *'We are not angels living on air we have to earn our living and that's good because – pardon the modern phrase – we have to interface with other people, not only with ourselves, but with the world of commerce which is part of our own reality, we can't just shut ourselves away and pretend that it doesn't exist'.*

Balancing ethics and pragmatism

Making a living is part of the stipulations of *the Rule*, but it is also a part of the spiritual endeavour and for Fr Stephen spiritual endeavour is also a very practical matter, *'the things of the spirit are of that which cannot be seen but which are extremely broad and very functional actually'.* Asked about a wealth of literature broadly known as 'spirituality in the workplace', Fr Stephen says; *'it's a sign of the times, we've had atheistic communism and materialism and it's found wanting. There's something else that needs to be looked at, it's very significant even if some of it is trivial, the very fact that we are able to discuss it without sniggering'.* I reflected that I may have been critical of the literature, but from his point of view as a monk, the literature represents a turning towards God, however naïve, a view echoed by Tacey (2001). Yet he recognises that it may be something else, *'it could be a diversion; just getting into another thing that makes money, the spiritual I like is free of charge'.*

While spirituality is free of charge, making a living in the context of a monastery does not mean being naïve, Fr Stephen said, '*We are very business-like; you won't find anyone more business-like than monks, we are not fools; that's what business like means, we can smell people a mile off thinking, 'oh there are some nice Christians we can take for a ride'*". Yet he recognises a tension, *'It's a bit grey because Jesus says we should give everything away, but Jesus was also into the truth of the matter and the truth is when we are dealing with business, there are certain conventions we have to play by which is why the Bursar has to be fairly worldly wise'*. He goes on, *'We would rather look at the reality of things, it would be irresponsible for us to let people take us for a ride because other people would suffer, people on the estate, our workers who we also have responsibility for and stewardship for. We have legal advisers just like anybody else'*. Fr Mark also pointed to the realistic attitude of the monks, *'We are in the modern world and the monastery has to play along to some extent, a charity cannot be charitable; we can't give things away, we can't give away property; we are governed by rules that govern charities to sell things for market value'*.

But Fr Martin considers the *Rule of St Benedict* as an ideal to which he aspires rather than a rule to which he must adhere, *'Ideally, I deal with market forces from a Benedictine position, but I can't do that all the time, I also consider where a person is coming from, what their agendas are before I make a decision. Most people give and take, but every now and then you meet someone who seems to give and take, but then they take advantage of you, I am not going to let them take advantage, negotiation has to be based on respect'*.

Fr Stephen argued that the requirement to be ethical is not only about being good, *'I'd say its enlightened self interest to act fairly, to trade honestly to try to get the third world up to a reasonable standard because in the end its better for everybody. We've found here that the less we grasp at money the more people give us; it just works. No malpractice, you get more in return, this is spirituality'*. This was indeed the case, when the plans for the monastery had been drawn up one of the things which prevented it being built was a lack of funds and a painting was sold to pay for the construction. Years later it was returned to the monks. Fr Stephen goes on to tie ethical behaviour to spiritual endeavour, *'If you are not ethical you can't be spiritual – no way... Because the way we behave is symbolic of the way we are inside. Jesus said it's no good scrubbing the outside of the oven, when inside its all corruption and vice; ... Doing business is not a spiritual endeavour in itself, but the way you approach it can be informed deeply by a spiritual attitude'*.

'What we are called to do is act ethically, so St Benedict says we mustn't over charge; if anything', he said, *'we should undercharge'*. Here again, Fr Stephen recognises the tension, *'but that might be an ethical problem because if we under charge too much we might undercut other people that's a modern ethical problem if you like'*. Fr Stephen seems here to be making a similar point to the one made at Windhorse, that competitive behaviour must not jeopardise the survival of others. Although Michael Porter (1980 and 1985) argues that having some competitors keeps the company on its toes, in the main, the view at Prinknash and Windhorse is different in this respect to conventional understandings of business.

Fr Stephen offers a guarded and teleological response to issues of lying to gain a competitive advantage; *'We would feel very bad about that, and also there is the natural selection'*, he said invoking the principle of market forces, *'ultimately you lose the business; when we let people down we lose the business, with the incense for example, we are very aware we are not the only fish in the sea'*. Fr Mark is less guarded; *'If sometimes behaving ethically leads to a competitive disadvantage'*, he said, *'so be it'*.

The spiritual life as an exchange relationship

Fr Stephen had already launched into what he regarded as business language for my benefit, discussing markets and products in respect of finding for new vocations. He justified this by saying that it was because I came from a business school, and in the same way he said he would adjust his language to suit a teenager or when in church. Here, he warms to his theme and considers both the business activity and spiritual endeavour as exchange relationships. *'Exchange relationship sounds better because a product is something you can put in a box, but prayer is not; prayer is a wild card and you don't know the outcome. ... Nevertheless we do believe in giving of oneself for a higher thing. You have to go through the feeling of losing something. Loss of ego or whatever you like to call it; loss of those things which we cling to and which keeps us from being free'*. Referring to monks in other traditions as well as the Benedictines, Fr Stephen pointed out that there is still a dependency and interdependency, *'The Buddhists offer a product, you give us the alms by which we live and then we will pray for you, a perfectly reasonable transaction. I think the spiritual life is ultimately a transactional thing, even martyrdom and giving your life for Jesus or anyone else, or God, you are not doing it for no reason, you are not insane I hope. You are doing it for a purpose; you have a goal in mind in*

other words, enlightened self interest'. He goes on to speak of St Theresa who gave her all and died at twenty-four of Tuberculosis, *'she was in darkness most of the last years of her life... But what kept her going through the darkness'*, he said, *'was a deep deep knowledge which had nothing to do with feelings, a deep deep knowledge that God was there, and heaven was there... Her generosity included the fact that she would stay outside heaven until everybody else had entered, which is very close to the Bodhisattva ideal'*.[31]

But business activities are circumscribed by the Christian requirement to 'minister well' to what he is in charge of, it must be, *'used well for the promotion of the kingdom of God'*, said Fr Mark. The notion of stewardship is clear, 'I *am not the owner of this, I happen to have the use of this for the time being – we as a community, but its Gods property something you have on trust, you have to use it in a way that will best bring about human flourishing'*. Fr Mark put it this way, *'this is not mine, we are just passing through, it's very hard to live like that, it's there to be used, but not to get attached to'*. Fr Stephen is more specific, '*Stewardship means we are given something to look after, in our case we were literally given this wonderful three hundred acre estate with a Tudor house on it in prime Cotswold land as a gift - it must be worth a lot of money. That puts a lot of responsibility on us to manage it well. Each individual monk needs to know that both the job he does and the place he lives in are just given to us for a time, like a child is given to a parent for a time and these things are passing away'*. Fr Martin had another view on Stewardship, *'my purpose in running this business is to make sure there is food on the table for the men here, they are my children and my family'*.

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[31] Fr Stephen here uses Buddhist terminology. The Bodhisattva ideal is said to be particular to the Mahayana Buddhist tradition and refers to the commitment of the aspirant to remain outside Nirvana until all sentient beings have achieved Enlightenment. For a fuller explanation see Santideva (1997).

Spirituality and non-dualism

For many at Prinknash as well as Windhorse, a very prevalent view was that the economic and the spiritual are not separate. Fr Aldhelm pointed out that *'If you don't survive you can't do anything spiritual'*. Fr Martin makes the point in a less practical way, *'St Benedict said look after the tools of the monastery as if they were the sacred vessels of the alter. So what he is saying is treat your practical life with the same reverence as your spiritual life and vice versa; that is the wisdom of St Benedict, everything we do has the same value. For Benedict there is only one life not a spiritual life and a practical life... there are no extremes in the Benedictine life it's about balance. Separation of the spiritual from the practical makes no sense to us'*. For Fr Absel also, the economic and the spiritual could not be separated, *'we divide it for the conversation'* he said simply; *'but it is all one'*.

Fr Martin went on to explain that the spirit is all encompassing and indicated that it is his choice as to how he will engage with it. *'We are spiritual by nature, but you can be torturing people in Iraq and you are doing that from your spiritual nature, but I don't want to live my life like that, I want my life to be good.* Then, perhaps surprisingly, he offers a view that sounds very like the Buddhist conception of Karma, *'there is a physical body with life in it which is directed by another principle. When I die I take with me the things that I have done even though my body is dead'*.

The same non-dualistic orientation was evident in the way Fr Martin saw his work within the monastery, he has a particularly demanding set of roles, but he said, *'I would give all of myself no matter what job I did here'*. The jobs the monks do are varied and some have more contact with 'outside' than others. Fr Martin is the Bursar and has other

responsibilities too, his role is largely one of dealing with the business interests of the monastery and he has an assistant. *'He can work eight hours a day'*, said Fr Martin, *'but I couldn't because I have all the other duties too like prayer, community duties like cooking and listening to confessions and serving so I can only do about five hours a day. If I didn't have prayer I wouldn't be able to cope. My weekend isn't a weekend off; my life is quite intense, you constantly have to balance what is happening now, with what you have to prepare for'*. Nevertheless, Fr Martin says he found a way of working which seems to embody the essence of monastic life; reflection, *'I expect difficulties to come, its part of life, but by reflecting on your day and the crises that happen they fade away; you build up an experience that it's not a big issue'*.

Even though Fr Martin was clearly a busy man he offered another very interesting insight into managing his life. Spirituality is the whole of life and paradoxically even though the Benedictine day is divided strictly into certain duties and observances he doesn't separate the parts of his life, its all one, *'If my spirituality isn't diffused in my whole being I am a split person, so wisdom has got to be spiritual, practical and physical'*, he said. The point is further emphasised by reference to other people, *'Some people have a spiritual life as they have a social life, I only have one life and it is integrated with the premise that I believe in God and have stewardship of life, and I have an eschatological goal and because I've got that, I can conduct my business in a detached way'*, a very similar to a comment made by Rijumati at Windhorse.

Decision Making, Management and Leadership

Decision-making as if people mattered

The heading for this section is borrowed from the subtitle of Schumacher's influential book, *'Small is Beautiful'* (1976) and was chosen to amplify the idea that decision making in many organisations is a process undertaken as if the ultimate aim was the wellbeing of an abstraction (the organisation). At Prinknash (and Windhorse) decisions are made with the wellbeing of the people in the community in the forefront.

The formal decision making process is clearly laid down in *the Rule* and Fr Francis explained it as though memorised, *'The Abbot can make certain decisions but he's obliged by the Rule of St Benedict to consult the brethren'*. Yet Fr Stephen points to the less formal side of the process, *'it's not a democracy, but the will of the community is a powerful thing'*. There are certain constitutional things the Abbot cannot do; for example, he would have to go to Rome to overturn a vote and also has to obey canon law. Nevertheless, Fr Stephen continues, *'the Benedictine way is to counsel not council, the Abbot has to command respect as well as or instead of obedience. The Abbot does not want to be elected but will serve if asked to do so'*, he said, invoking the concept of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977). The insightfulness of St Benedict in respect of decision making and leadership was well expressed by Fr Stephen, *'we listen to everybody even if they are talking gobbledegook and quite often stuff comes out of that'*. Humility is important here, but the corporate world might appear to emphasise humility as weakness, not strength.

Speaking about his election as Abbot, Fr Francis said, *'I had no intention of becoming Abbot; when I came, that was the last thing I would have thought of, but events*

took place and we had an election and I was elected by the community, it was their choice. We pray that the Holy Spirit had something to do with it, but I accepted it on the belief that it wasn't simply that the community had chosen me but it was God's will'.[32]

God's Grace entered the conversation frequently and even though Fr Francis was reluctant to define Grace he did say, *'The only power that can make a change for the better, a positive change is God's Grace or God's love or God, don't ask me to define Grace, but it is God acting in us and through us, of ourselves we can't do anything but make mistakes because we are fallen creatures, and we can't do anything positive ourselves without Gods help'.*

The use of the words 'help' intrigued me; where does responding to God stop and acting of their own volition begin? The question was misplaced and Fr Francis quoted a Jewish prayer which he is fond of, *'"Lord help me to my feet, I can fall down by myself",* and he elaborated with a phrase that has stuck for me ever since; *'What we have to do is to act as if everything depended on us, but believe that everything depends on God. And by that I mean that you can't simply sit down and say, "well, I'm here to seek God I'm going to spend all my life in prayer, praying to God and do nothing"'.*

The problem of attracting novices to the monastery was a good example of the view of Grace that Fr Francis spoke of, *'The monk is a witness above all to the outside world. He doesn't have to justify his existence, he's there as a witness to the world, in the past one has found that that is sufficient to attract people, but it doesn't seem to be sufficient now. So we going out a little bit more try and make ourselves known to see*

[32] The idea of reticence or even reluctance to take the role of spiritual leader is also present in the Greek Orthodox tradition. See Metropolotan Anthony (1986).

whether people will come and try the life, but ultimately it's up to God, communities come and go'.

Fr Aldhelm held a similar view, he came to Prinknash as a result of reading Bede Griffiths (1954) autobiography, *'The Golden String'*, (as in part I did) and often says *'that's the way things are'*, yet he adds, *'if we don't survive we can't engage in spiritual activity'*. But like Fr Francis, he felt spiritual life could continue outside the traditional monastic community.

This acceptance of the will of God seems different from fatalism or predestination and resignation, just a positive acceptance of God's will, going with the flow or the Tao. Later, Fr Francis said they were, *'monitoring the inner landscape to see what to do in order to fulfil the story of creation'*. With the exception of Br Giles there is a willingness to talk about the demise of the Abbey from its former glory; acceptance not resignation, acknowledgement not capitulation.

Fr Francis and I rushed together down to lunch signified by the bell. But our conversation was not the central thing of any day, the times of communal prayer, worship and eating have been in place for 1500 years and for the monks at Prinknash the work of the day meshes seamlessly with the life of prayer; *Opus Dei, 'the work of God'*, the distinction is tenuous at most.

Consultation at whatever level is given another interesting twist by Fr Stephen, *'The Rule says the Abbot has to share his burdens with the Deans, he needs people to share the burden with'*. Consultation here is a means by which all voices are heard, but also a means by which the difficulties of leadership are shared. Consult because you should do, and **because you need to**; a constitutional requirement and an emotional

necessity. The humanity of the Abbot is further underlined by Fr Stephen, *'The Rule says let not the Abbot complain of the lack of financial means because ultimately his role is the care of the souls within the monastery, if he does that, the Rule says, the other things will be added to him...* He is also, Fr Stephen said, *'a fallen human being and he needs to work with his own brokenness. Any Abbot with problems would soon know, the brethren would tell him...* At Prinknash at least, the Abbot is seen very much as another man, *'If you feel angry about something go tell the man, or if you feel deeply sad go and tell the man, he is there to be dialogued with. He is our spiritual father, it doesn't have to be the Abbot; it could be any guy in the monastery, it doesn't really matter if it isn't functioning because God may be in this bit of brokenness'.*

The informality of the dialogue was emphasised on more than one occasion by Fr Damien. On a separate occasion when standing in the Chapter House[33] Fr Damien tries to shock me by likening the Abbot to a doll, *'we dress him up and we sit him down here'* he said. I wondered if he had been passed over for the Abbot's role. As if to support my guess he begins using language not usually expected of a monk or a priest, he likes to be seen as a radical; *'I don't give a fuck about....'*, and later the same language while discussing some decision made by the Bishop while the Abbot stood beside me, the Abbot laughed gently, this looked like a challenge to his authority, and not in keeping with the respect the Abbot is traditionally accorded, and which the other monks give to Fr Francis, *'balls to the Bishop'*, Fr Damien added.

[33] The Chapter House is traditionally where discussions between the brethren take place and traditionally begins with a reading of a chapter of the *Rule of St Benedict.*

The focus on the individual in making decisions was also evident in the assignment of roles. Fr Stephen is the Infirmarian[34], *'we have a full time nurse here and I am his line manager that's very much a managerial role'*. Fr Stephen is also the novice master although he said he was not sure management was the right words for that role, *'I'd say accompaniment'*, he said. But he makes a clear distinction between what can be managed by reference to numbers and what cannot, *'When it comes to matters of the souls they can't be managed in the way matters of money, matters of agriculture can, its not like that. God's the primary manager and I'm just his instrument in discerning and helping and encouraging and admonishing and whatever it is that needs to be done with the individual concerned within the novitiate'*.

The Rule was quoted again in regard to management, Fr Stephen said, *'St Benedict says you should watch over them with minute care, I think watch over is better than telling people what to do. It's not that if you do this, this and this you get to this point, it's not of that order because God is working in their lives in a way that I cannot know, and sometimes you have to sit back and let God do that. I have to let them go through different things and not stop them through my need to make things neat and tidy'*.

Who does what job also has formal and an informal elements to it, Fr Stephen explained, *'When I took on the role of the Infirmarian the Abbot asked me who I wanted as an assistant and I thought about it. There was monk who was helping to clean up one of the older guys and look after him without being asked and I thought 'yeah that's who I would like; its good for him because its exercising part of his personality. If the Abbot had not wanted that I would have gone with it; I might have asked why, but in normal*

[34] The Infirmarian is a role undertaken by a monk and involves making sure the sick and elderly are cared for, though the Infirmarian may not be medically qualified themselves.

situation that's how it works'. But the job is not the central thing, it is how it is done that counts. *'We don't have jobs for life we normally keep a job for a few years, the only job for lifetime is the one of being a monk. In a sense the job is not that important, we should take the job and hold it lightly, do it to the best of our ability'.*

Organisational Change

Balancing survival with spiritual goals

The monastery had, at that time, been there for seventy-four years, but this was a *'spring chicken'*, as Fr Francis pointed out. They were facing some difficult challenges, not least among which was getting new people to join the monastery, coupled to the increasing age of those that were there. Already the ways in which the monastery made enough money to survive had been shifted away from more physical activities like animal farming. Things were going to change, as in any organisation, so how does their faith influence their attitudes to change? *'Good things happen and bad things happen'* said Fr Francis. *'The community is getting older and the issue is one of survival'.* He reflected on a community of Sisters in Oxford which had to close because they were too small. The Sisters all moved separately to other communities, which, he said, was sad, *'but the communities welcomed them and it all worked out'.* He seemed to be hoping that should the same happen to the monks at Prinknash, that if necessary, they would similarly move to other communities and be welcomed, but it was already apparent to me that such a parting of people from people, and from Prinknash, would be difficult for the monks. Br Giles for example was openly disheartened by talking of the future.

Fr Francis spoke a lot of *'keeping the balance'*, and attributed that phrase and the balance they had struck to Fr Absel. Fr Absel certainly represented continuity, but also wisdom, others spoke of Fr Absel in these terms too. The sense of connection with the past is very important at Prinknash, the obvious connection with St Benedict and *the Rule* is somehow made real for them by the presence of someone who was there almost from the start, and who remembers the struggles and the triumphs, the idealism and the pragmatism, that sustained them this far.

The balance wasn't always struck and Fr Francis recalled a time when the pottery was soaking up the funds of the monastery which was not only a sustainability problem, but also a legal one (as a Trust the organisation cannot speculate with Trust funds). The pottery was losing funds but they kept putting more in to keep it running. *'It was a case of the tail wagging the dog'*, he said. *'The goal of the community is the Brothers trying to live as God wanted them to; in community and in devotion to God. The pottery episode led to a loss of sight of the goal. It was leading us, not God and not the Rule'*, he said. They eventually sold the pottery and now it is still run on the site as a going, if struggling, commercial concern. *'We were able to pull back to the goal'*, he concluded.

For Fr Stephen, the Benedictine tradition had also survived because of the attitude to change in *the Rule, 'I think that's why the Rule of St Benedict has been so successful, they say the rule of St Benedict has been the biggest influence in the shaping of Europe because it's so adaptable, never changing and going with the latest fad are equally a death knell'*. Asked what enables the monastery to walk the fine line between change and faddism, Fr Stephen indicated again that decisions are made according to overriding spiritual objectives, *'one: dedicated men seeking God which is the primary purpose of a*

monk's life and two: discerning whether this course of action is helpful or unhelpful in our quest for seeking God. Seeking God is the way and the end process which we walk by and God is the goal we seek; something 'out their' and 'in here', when you realise you have got something you stop angsting about it, you see more clearly the more we tread in faith, it's a process of unknowing', he said, alluding the 13th century text *'The Cloud of Unknowing'* (Wolters, 1978).

The balance between change and faddism was also addressed by a willingness to interpret the traditions as and when they deemed it appropriate. Fr Stephen elaborated, *'In Benedictine history and our own folk history things get dropped sometimes, some of these things became absolutely pointless and they get dropped naturally in time'*. By way of example of things being dropped Fr Stephen spoke about the ritual conducted when someone goes away on holiday, *'If you go away for one or two weeks'* he said, *'you would kneel in the middle of the church and receive a chant like "Gods speed", and when the old Abbot died it was just sort of quietly dropped. The Rule is the norm and obviously we adapt it because this is the twenty first century; it can become more modern or more archaic'*.

To me a monastery is a place firmly rooted in the past, a distant past, the ritual and the symbolism, the tradition and the repetition all woven together to form the fabric of a rich heritage. Yet critics of the church might point to the outmoded language and restrictions on behaviour as an indicator of an institution in demise, unable to relate to people in the twenty first century. But for it to survive for this long there has to be some more subtle considerations, for example keeping the hubristic propensity in check, Fr Stephen said, *'We always need to keep our eyes on the impermanence, because that is a*

big danger in that we get into empire building...; we try to become the biggest and best monastery'. But again, it is tempered by the spiritual objective, *'Ambition can creep in, there is nothing wrong with ambition per sa, but we must be ambitious for the higher gifts; as St Paul says there is a sort of ambition which is destructive to the spiritual quest'.*

Balancing survival with the present moment

While survival is important the balance is struck between that and living in this moment, 'The *problem is not one of survival but one of making the lot of those who will die better',* said Fr Stephen. He talked about his role in nursing Fr Chris in his last years, which I surmised was recent. The feeling of Fr Stephen's discussion was that the survival of the monastery was important, but the primary objective was seeking Gods will, **here and now**. This is how he puts it, *'the community objective is not just survival which focuses on those not in the community yet, but also on those who have given to the community already. Those 'leaving' the community must be cared for as they leave. This means the monastery is a place where people prepare for death, we look for meaning in life, because we don't understand death and emptiness'.* This discussion highlights the notion that organisations might be seen as place where we search for meaning in the face of death (Sievers in Hassard and Pym, 1990) and Becker (1973) and this is perhaps more obvious in a religious community.

An organisation, in Fr Stephen's view is there to help people with their lives, their uncertainty, one means by which they might fight their demons. So the time they spend in the community and the way they leave it all counts, not just its survival, but the reason for its survival; it is the way people live it, and leave it, not survival for its own sake.

The focus on the present was also apparent in my conversation with Fr Martin, *'people outside are under more pressure than I am because they have to have something in* ***this*** *life for their efforts; a car, a house, something for the children; but for me, all I have to do is do everything consciously'*, he said, reminding me of the Buddhist emphasis on mindfulness.

The emphasis on impermanence

Fr Damien had known he wanted to be a monk from the age of three. Having spent some years in music publishing (pop, jazz and church music) he came to Prinknash to recuperate from a broken foot after falling down some stairs. *'I was bowled over by Fr Aldhelm'*, he said. *'I told him I would like to try out the life and he replied, "have you ever lived in a lunatic asylum"? My friends said I wouldn't last two days'*, he said with some pride, *'now its twenty-two years. I am a drug addict'*, he added unconnectedly, *'it's diabetes, I take the drugs and hope'*.

Asked about the future of the monastery Fr Damien said, *'Our Lord never said anything would last forever, my community is a vibrant community whether it survives or not is entirely beside the point; the world needs vibrant communities'*. I was struck by his use of the word 'my' as if it was the one thing he did possess. But also by the word 'vibrant', which seemed to emphasise the present moment. He continued, *'The monastic community is an ever changing thing and commercial organisations that do not change cannot survive'*. 'Yes', I thought, this is something I had felt myself; the Catholic Church has 'survived' for 2000 years and even though there are many who foretell its demise and oblivion, I wonder if this is too simplistic. I also wondered if the people there felt the modern corporation could learn anything from the monasteries. Universities emerged

from monastic tradition and still retain some of the titles, Dean and Bursar for example, and there is evidence that the modern corporation is, in some ways, symbolically and ritualistically similar to organised religions, albeit unconsciously (Pattison, 1997). But Fr Damien was not happy with the connection, *'the commercial world cannot learn anything from the monasteries'*, he said, *'they already have borrowed a lot'*, I replied, tentatively disagreeing, *'the only way is the Catholic Church'* he continued, ignoring me.

Balancing the pace of change with spiritual goals

That evening in the guest coffee room James and Kieran expanded on their own views on the future of Prinknash. James felt the future was not a problem, *'The Brothers'*, he said, *'would have to rethink the buildings as the community got smaller'*, but *'it's not about the building, or about numbers but the community itself'*, he said; a point made earlier by Fr Damien when he referred to *'his vibrant community'*. Interestingly, they are facing the opposite problem to Windhorse who are struggling because they have *'too many friends'*. James argued the community would always have the option to move in to St Peters Grange[35] and let this go as a university campus (which is almost what happened 2007). He and Kieran remarked, as Fr Francis had, that they both knew of smaller communities with monks and nuns moving into council houses taking jobs and working with people on estates, indicating a shift away from the big monasteries in the hills.

'It is a spiritual community', Kieran said, *'whatever happens it is the will of God; the Holy Spirit will move things to a new challenge'*. Here again is the question of the

[35] St Peters Grange is the original Abbey building on the same land and still owned by Prinknash, and traces its roots back to 1121.

balance between doing something, and, or, doing God's will. Trying to answer that is to try to measure God, but there is in this community, a recognition of the mystery of life, and for them the answer lies not in man's ability to control things. I wondered how a commercial organisation would deal with this threat of extinction. For Kieran the increasing business attitude of Prinknash is a point of concern. Faced with a question about economic survival Kieran responds; *'Pluscarden*[36] *does it okay; the point is God and the life of a monk is at the centre, it is a place of spiritual growth and it should continue to separate itself from the world'.*

There is an air of excitement about the possible arrival of up to six novices, *'nobody knows, but there are two definite ones'* James said. Kieran feels all the Brothers see the need for *'new blood'.*

Symbol and Ritual

The symbols of the liturgy and the working day

I rose at 4.45 am to be in church for Matins at 5 am and wondered if the monks left it that late. The experience of being up so early to go to church was a strange one, even stranger was going back to my room only to return to the church again at 6.30 and again at 7:30 am. At Matins, most of the monks filed in pairs bowing or kneeling before the alter and peeling off to the left and right to their seats. The church was cold at that time in the morning and, predictably perhaps, I was the only person in the pews again. I reflected that I couldn't hope to 'understand' the lives of the people living here; a few

[36] Pluscarden Abbey, with which Kieran was familiar is near Elgin in Scotland.

days at a time over a few years would not give me much insight I thought, into the experiences of men who had committed themselves to this life and its austerity.

I returned to my room and wrote some of these words, the bell rang again at 6.19 am for Lauds at 6.30 am. The bell controls a great deal of what happens at Prinknash and an 'outsider' might well consider this to be oppressive, but that was the point; the bell was one of a number of ways in which the Brothers attempt to learn to listen to God rather than their own voice. 'Obedience' sounds like an antiquated word to me yet here the monks voluntarily submit to *the Rule* and the bell and the Abbot; there must be more to it. Again, I walked out of the front doors and down the slope to the church, and again took some part in the service standing and sitting when the monks did, trying to follow the Latin in the book Br William had given me, but giving up in favour of the feel of it, as before.

Following an earlier conversation and prompted by the bell, Fr Damien filled the subsequent rush to the church with further explanation of the role of symbol. *'I think that St Benedict says that when one hears a bell one must put everything down and go and do something like prayer or eating together or what ever. People can become very preoccupied with their work and there comes a time when they must stop it and go and do something else, like be with the family. St Benedict is saying there is a place for the things which preoccupy us, but they are not so essential that one cannot go and do something else. I remember the telephone system was being changed here one day and I was concerned that they would change in a way that I didn't want; we had to go down to sing the next office in the House Chapel and I noticed that I was completely and utterly transfixed all the way through it with my problem, its interesting to notice how*

preoccupations take over'. This was Fr Damien taking about what the Buddhists refer to as mindfulness, and in the Benedictine tradition, wresting the mind back to awareness is achieved through almost constant reminders through the day, most of it regulated by the bell.

The physical symbols

When asked about the symbols in the monastery, few described anything other than religious symbols, Fr Damien came closest seeing symbols beyond the religious *'Well',* he said, motioning around him with a sweep of his hand and a smile, *'the building,'* and after a long pause continued, *'it represents to me the presence of God'*, then after another long hesitation; *'it is a consecrated building which has the presence of God in it, God's presence is in everything, in you and me, but this whole structure is created as a symbol of God's presence here in this place'.*

Fr Damien decided on the spur of the moment to take me on what he called a *'symbolic walk',* and strode out of the room without instruction for me to follow; I did. He showed me the inauguration stone in the Chapter House, the seats and symbolism of the seating arrangements which he related to the North American Indians having a Powwow, the painting of the architect and a benefactor's photograph.

We walked on to the robing room where Fr Damien showed me, with some pride, the various robes and explained the different occasions on which they are worn. The stunningly beautiful robes were made all the more significant for Fr Damien by the huge cost of making them, *'they cost thousands'* he said, and instructed me to follow him to the monk's quarters. We wound our way up staircases to parts of the monastery I felt I shouldn't have been in, until we reached a dark corridor which smelt like a home for the

elderly. Fr Damien opened a door which he announced was his cell. The cell was the same size as my guest room, furnished with a single, but sumptuous bed and a book case crammed with interesting titles. Fr Stephen had spoken about the monastic cell too, *'we are brought to Grace by sweating it out in a cell, the cell is central. We do what we do and the rest is in Gods hands for better or worse, we live by faith not by sight'*. The *'symbolic walk'* was cut short as Fr Damien whisked me out, again, to the sound of the bell.

Fr Absel and I had been interrupted the day before by a monk looking for his tobacco and today, after lunch, the same monk introduced himself to me. *'Hello'*, he said, with big toothy grin, *'I am Br Gilbert'*; he was far more lucid than his appearance and movement would have suggested. His knees were not good, but his sense of humour was crystal clear. *'I did a seven year apprenticeship in printing for a firm making metal boxes'*, he told me, and launched unconnectedly into how he would not like the rat race. He was never at Caldey,[37] but came directly to Prinknash in 1948. The booklet Fr Aldhelm had given me, *'Our Purpose and Method'* by Aelred Carlyle (1987) and published in 1987 was, he said, written for the monks that were then young and strong and he lamented that it was not easy to use it now, because it was too hard for the younger monks. Br Gilbert was now in his mid 80's and had in his younger years designed and overseen the construction of the stained glass window which acted as a backdrop to the alter. He had asked the Abbot at the time for permission to design the window, but both the Abbot and the architect, were *'dead against it because they knew of a church where the stained glass window virtually blacked out the room'*. Br Gilbert

[37] Caldey Island Pembrokeshire Wales where the community had started in 1906 (following a smaller community on the Isle of Dogs started in 1896). The Abbey at Caldey Island was sold to an order Cistercian monks in 1926 who still occupy it now.

persisted and the Abbot eventually relented, *'he washed his hands of it'*, he said. I asked Br Gilbert to show me his work and he agreed, *'if I can get permission'*, he laughed, but it may not have been a joke, perhaps he was remembering more stringent times. The design eventually worked well and now gives the Abbey Church a deep splash of colour. Br Gilbert describes it as abstract, but points out with some pride, a depiction of the key to St Peters Grange and the fish and cross in other parts of the window. The whole thing is held together by an epoxy resin, a trick he learned during a nine month stay at Buckfast. *'The French concrete doesn't flex'* he said. As we spoke a woman came into the church and asked if it was alright for her to bring the Yorkshire terrier she was holding into the church. Br Gilbert said yes, and as she walked away she remarked upon the beauty of the stained glass windows, it was not difficult for me to say, *'you are looking at the designer'*. *'Really'*, she exclaimed, *'I would be happy if I could die and leave something like that to future generations'*, I cringed, Br Gilbert chuckled, he would.

Br Gilbert went on to tell me of a monk who came to stay at the monastery for recuperation and; *'when he was a little better we felt a small job would help him, so I taught him the design process and he eventually designed a single window which was included in the final design'*, Br Gilbert was pleased with that, and the contribution of other monks who had worked on the church. *'Br Patrick'*, he said, with affection, *'he designed and built all the wrought iron work and Br Chad who is no longer with us, he built the pews and the organ and other woodwork'*.

For Br Gilbert, the building had symbolic significance, but this time, because the monks had been closely involved with its construction. The church particularly symbolised his connection with the monastery and the people in it. But for Br Gilbert

being at Prinknash brought its difficulties too. *'It's an unnatural life'*, he said, *'especially regarding a wife and children, when you get to middle age and realise you can't have a wife and children you feel over the hill'*, he said, gesturing with his hand to indicate a car going over a hill. I felt grateful for my experience of a partner and children and reflected on how close I was to middle age before they came my way. Fr Francis described Br Gilbert as *'a character'*.

The role of symbol and ritual in the growth of the individual and stability of the organisation

The Opus Dei – the work of God, is carried out seven times a day, are of course richly endowed with symbol and ritual, but how does this influence their lives? Fr Mark bravely attempted to explain his own process (for that is what it is). *'To begin with you think this is a kind of nice ritual and it gives you a nice feeling; it's something you want to do. Then you go through a period of "this is a drag and a bore", there's never been a day when it's not been done, even when you're ill and half of us are in bed with flu; it's like a grinding engine'*. He went on to explain that the engagement with ritual then takes on a life of its own. *'Actually my experience of maybe the last ten years is that you are going through that, and suddenly the words explode with meaning. But it's more than just communicating words; you get into this sort of mantra like level; repetition itself which induces a state and in that state you become more open to a bigger and more universal dimension; that's how I experience it – you could almost be saying three blind mice you know, am I making sense or does this all sound like romantic bilge? In that state you become open to a universal sort of spiritual state'*.

The process is long and difficult and requires a leap of faith, it belies the impression given by the regularity of the monks day and the habits they wear which seem to devoid the person of any of the vicissitudes of a 'normal' life. The impression was that engaging with the symbolic requires faith because the 'results' are a long time coming; there are no guarantees and no worldly benefits. Fr Francis said, '*You are touching that energy in the cosmic Christ, that love, it isn't productive in any streetwise sense, it doesn't get you any money, but somehow touching the mystery is central to our lives; the only energy that heals. This is the big question, being open to it, because I could resist it, and I do resist it, the whole dialogue is in that, the more I can be open to that, the more I then become an instrument of peaceful feelings*'. Fr Stephen said something similar, '*The only way you are going to express mystery is through symbol not sign, symbol is so much deeper. Sign points to something out there, symbol actually partakes of what it symbolises*'.

But the engagement with symbol and ritual is not only a path to the transcendent it also has organisational implications. Speaking of the novice monks Fr Stephen said, '*They have to live the culture, the bowing et cetera, they don't know why, but it sometimes helps things run, I don't know why, it acts as a sort of glue for the community to work together; that is imposed on them*'.

Fr Aldhelm dropped by to see me, he was the Abbot of the monastery before Fr Francis and is held with some respect by the Brothers, some had said he was a 'more spiritual Abbot' than his predecessor. Fr Aldhelm had taken a different role in the Subiaco Congregation which involved him in significant foreign travel to visit other connected monasteries.

Fr Aldhelm also attested to the processual nature of symbolic engagement, *'The liturgy is an outward expression of something going on inwardly and a gathering of people in a common action, commons words. It's a symbol but its expressing something real; the transformation of the bread and the wine into the real presence of Christ. It's not something you are aware of day by day, but its something that is in here'*, he said motioning to his chest, *'and it's changing'* he added.

Fr Francis was keen to point out to me that engagement with symbol had a greater purpose and made a clear distinction between symbol and sign, *'I think the symbol points to something deeper; we must always remember that we mustn't stop at the sign; people can go for a perfect liturgy doing everything by the book, all the rubrics, perfect psalmody, perfect music and it becomes a show, its just a theatrical show and it stops there. One has to go through the symbol to the reality beyond; a liturgy that might not be perfect to the observer, is much more enriching if the people participating in it don't see it as a show out there, but something which they participate in and give themselves to, it's seeing through the window to the greater reality beyond'.*

The idea emerges, that the faith of the individual is in the process, and less in some predetermined goal, but also the engagement with symbol is not seen as an automatically pleasing thing to do. Fr Francis explains, *'I hope that through ones faith, and it is a matter of faith, that entering into the liturgy one is taken up by it if you like, it's not something we necessarily feel or experience in a way that we can express. A lot of the time it's simply routine...'*

Mystery and the limitations of the symbol

For some the complete mystery is never to be reached by the human being, yet symbol and ritual help you along the way. Fr Damien asked me if I knew what an icon is, *'yes'* I said trying not to think of the little boxes at the top of my computer screen. He continued as if he was about to launch into an impromptu sermon, *'The icon was painted whilst the painter was praying. The wood was blessed before hand, and when you look at it, it's something that really draws you in to a reality beyond it. Now that is a symbol'*, he said didactically. *'When you look at the light of a candle in darkness, it draws you into the light and that could mean a whole number of things to you.* He continues, *'Mystery is something that you are drawn into, but aren't able to get to the depth of because the further you get into it the further you get into the mystery'.*

He went on to offer what sounded like a well used example of the endless mystery, using an example from his days at Oxford, he referred to a sign at the end of a railway platform which read, *'Danger do not go any further'.* Fr Damien makes his point, *'It means that you cannot enter into this mystery of God or whatever you want to call the deity. You enter into this experience, but you can only go so far'.*

Summary

I felt privileged to have been able to spend time in this place, with these people. The sense of tradition was always evident even though as Fr Francis said, Prinknash was a *'spring chicken'* as monasteries go. There was also the connection to the Catholic church, about which I knew very little except perhaps that it appeared to struggle with

change. I therefore, unexpectedly found attitudes to change in the monastery to be mostly about achieving a balance between tradition and moving with the times, yet always with the caveat that they are there to seek God's will, and carry it out to the best of their ability. As Fr Stephen pointed out *the Rule* may have been so influential because it encouraged this balance. Similarly, decision making is largely carried out in line with the stipulations of the *Rule*, yet there is also a clear informal element to it acknowledged by all the monks and the Abbot, such that the consultation process is seen as a formal requirement **and** an emotional necessity.

In regard to economic activity again a balance is being struck. *The Rule* makes clear that the monks are required to earn their own living, which itself is seen as a spiritual activity, indeed most argued there was no separation between these two, Fr Martin, for example, said *'I only have one life not a spiritual and a business or social life'*. The same attempt to find a balance can be seen in the monk's views on business dealings. On numerous occasions I was told that monks are not called to be taken advantage of, yet at the same time they are required to act ethically and, according to *the Rule*, to *'give a lower price'*. While the indication was that the monks do not see themselves as easy targets in business dealings, they nevertheless did not engage in business language, (except when Fr Stephen used marketing language in respect of attracting novices to the monastery, *'because I came from a business school'*).

This chapter might give the impression that Prinknash is a perfect community, but there was very little reference to conflict or power games. Perhaps they chose not to share that with me and perhaps I did not dig deep enough, but the only hint of any dissatisfaction came when listening to Fr Damien, but he did not tell me about it, and I

don't think he would have if I had asked. Disagreement and conflict is dealt with, as are many things in the monastery, in accord with *the Rule* and in regular meetings in the Chapter house where a chapter of *the Rule* is read, and, as Fr Damien indicated the business of the day is conducted. Beyond that, as Fr Stephen said of the Abbot, '...*go and tell the man, he is there to be dialogued with'*, and further, *'it's not a democracy, but the will of the community is a powerful thing'*. The informal appears to nestle beside *the Rule,* and *the Rule* appears to accommodate much of what the community needs in terms of organisational process.

Symbol and ritual are present in every moment of life at Prinknash as might be expected. Communal engagement with symbols and rituals are clearly a form of 'social glue', but it is also, and crucially, a means by which the individual is able to develop spiritually. Perhaps one of the most poignant moments for me, possibly in the whole project, was one in which one of the Brothers, at 5 am, raised his hands in prayer in an enthusiastic sweeping gesture that suggested this was, for him, the only moment that mattered. Symbol and ritual at Prinknash, are means by which the individual can partake in the mystery of life. In Chapter seven a more detailed consideration of life and work at Prinknash is offered.

Chapter 6. Windhorse: Evolution – the Buddhist experience

Windhorse: evolution is quite different from Prinknash in most respects. It only has a twenty-nine year history, the central building is not a monastery, or even a temple (though it is accorded the same respect by those that work there), it is a warehouse with offices at the front. (See Appendix Two) The people in it are all practicing Buddhists and members of the Western Buddhist Order (WBO), most are ordained into that order, some are not. The business is giftware and has retail activity through its own shops mostly in the UK and some elsewhere in Europe, as well as wholesale activity supplying other retail outlets in the UK. This chapter has been approached somewhat differently to the previous one on Prinknash, partly because Windhorse is so different, but also because my experience there was also very different. I spent less time alone and reflecting on the experience, mostly because the day was managed more closely.

Perhaps it is reasonable to suggest that in any organisation or community certain tensions will arise and that it is the way those tensions are managed that determines the character of the organisation; Windhorse: Evolution is no exception. These tensions and their accommodation is the main focus of this analysis. Windhorse was started by Kulananda as a market stall in 1980 and grew fairly quickly. Kulananda was, and is, a Buddhist in the Western Buddhist Order which was itself founded in 1968 by Denis Lingwood, an Englishman who, on ordination took the name Sangharakshita. Sangharakshita's early encounters with Buddhism culminated in him being ordained into the Theravadin monastic order in India in 1950, and he came to set up the Western Buddhist Order in 1968 to make Buddhism more accessible to Westerners, and in doing

so he set aside many of the central tenets of Theravadin Buddhism.[38] One of the most obvious adaptations was the willingness to engage in business activity in order to be self-sustaining. Theravadin Buddhism according to my host, Sinhavacin, separates business out completely from spiritual matters; each monk owns only three robes, a bowl and a needle. Windhorse then was set up as a 'Right livlihood'[39] business with very close links to the Western Buddhist Order, indeed, the profits, then as now, go to a large extent to funding WBO, although there have been some significant changes.

The Windhorse: Evolution warehouse, affectionately named by them as Uddiyana[40] stands on the outskirts of Cambridge on an industrial estate like any other and amongst various other businesses including a Toyota car show room and, next door, Bookers wholesalers. The front of the grey metal clad building is spanned across its width with large windows through which those working inside can see the very large and mostly empty car park. Before coming to Uddiyana they had been working from a much smaller and older building nearer the centre of Cambridge, which had proved too small for their expanding business activities.

I worked for a couple of afternoons, 'packing and picking' to fulfil orders for customers. I am sure that being allowed to do this was a concession on their part; it takes time to train someone to do this and there are some quality control issues which would have been suspended to facilitate my performing the role. I was given an order, a

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[38] Earlier attempts to bring Buddhism to Britain in the early 20th century, he claimed had been largely academic as opposed to practical. (He was referring to people like Christmas Humphries forming what was to become *'The Buddhist Society'* in London in 1924 following the publication of Edwin Arnold's poem about the life and teachings of the Buddha, *'The Light of Asia'* in 1915).

[39] Right livelihood refers to one of the elements of the Buddha's *Eightfold Noble Path* (See Appendix Three).

[40] Uddiyana is the name the people at Windhorse gave to the warehouse which Padmasuri (2003: 227) describes as *a mythical Tibetan kingdom that was once a meeting point for different cultures".*

shopping trolley, and some basic instruction and let loose in the warehouse to fill my first order. Metal racks reaching 40 feet into the roof of the building were filled with wooden pallets containing everything from incense to Buddha statues, and from Piggy Banks to photo frames.

The Purpose and meaning of the community

Formal purpose

The unusualness of this organisation was to make itself more apparent over the next few years and although I had some idea it was to be an interesting experience for me, I couldn't at this time have known how interesting. A reasonable starting point in trying to appreciate its strangeness seemed to be to be to look at its stated aims, but I was quickly to realise that while the stated aims were well known by all the people there, and were crucially important to them, they were only part of the story of why they were there. The goals of Windhorse are frequently recited as if memorised, perhaps the best illustration of this might be to cite the single occasion when one of the three main goals of the organisation were 'forgotten' by one of the order members. Nagavira[41] repeats the goals in an almost mantra like fashion, *'To generate money for the business and the movement, to provide the opportunity for Buddhists to work together and ... I have forgotten the third one'*. This he remembered after prompting from me (providing the opportunity for developing Buddhist practice). These same three goals were repeated by

[41] The Buddhist names used here are those given to member of the Western Buddhist Order upon ordination and are usually chosen to reflect certain qualities the individual is deemed to have by their preceptors (those who oversee the individual's ordination).

many people regardless of the position they held, suggesting the central objectives of the organisation were at least remembered, if not internalised and they were usually spoken with some enthusiasm and conviction.

The reasons for being there

While the stock answer to the question of the purpose of the business was readily recited, discussion of the reasons as to why individuals were there yielded a different, yet related set of responses. One thing is certain; it is not the money, the standard 'support package' for all people at the time was £46 a week. One reason often cited was that Windhorse, is an experiment. Vajraketu is the managing director, he chairs the Management Forum which then had ten people in it, *'It's like a board of directors'*, he explained, but the use of the word Forum was clearly meant to convey something more consultative. *'I also do a significant proportion of the buying, I suppose it sounds strange, the managing director still doing the buying but I manage to delegate about a third of it. I keep an eye on the financial side of things and I am involved in a lot of the legal work too; the business is owned by a charity and I report to the trustees about that'.*

'Windhorse is an experiment', he continued, *'a Buddhist experiment'* and I remembered the book the General Manager, Rijumati, had suggested to me after dinner in his community's house the night before, Rexroth (1974) on *'Intentional Communities'* Rijumati had been intent on finding out what other 'experiments' had been carried out and with what success. It is an interesting way to see an organisation, not as something that knows where it is going, but as something discovering where it is going in a conscious manner. Rexroth (1974) concludes that most of these experiments dating back over 2000 years ago to the Essene community on the banks of the Dead Sea have

ultimately failed and for quite specific reasons. The essence of the notion of experiment emerged during my conversation with Vajraketu, as he outlined the problems they are working with, and their approach to it. Following Sangharakshita, his argument is that the teachings of Buddhism are relevant today and can be used to good effect in commercial concerns, but that does not mean that all the stipulations of Buddhism need to be applied in a modern Western organisation. The question seems to be what can be re-examined, and what should be retained, and it is these questions that occupy the whole organisation for a lot of the time, particularly now.

For Vajraketu, the option of living as he feels the Theravadin Buddhists[42] live was not viable in the West. *'The begging bowl business, for one thing'*, Vajraketu said, *'I don't actually think it's viable. Maybe some of us could just about get enough to eat, and actually be able to live like that, being a Buddhist isn't a digital thing, well you know, one minute you know you have wants and needs, and then the next day you become a Buddhist and they all fall away'*. I recalled the emphasis on the spiritual process at Prinknash, *'I don't know how many of us could actually live that simply. That's one aspect and the other is that the Western Buddhist Order is trying to work out how to be Buddhist in the modern world'*. Sinhavacin expresses a similar view about the application of the Theravada Buddhist tradition into West, *'There are other parts of Buddhism that make a subsistence living, but here it doesn't work, for the Dharma to fit into the West it needs to function in a self sustaining way'*.

[42] A discussion of the different schools of Buddhism is beyond the scope of this work and is anyway open to some interpretation. Broadly however, Theravada Buddhism is seen as the older school and is found in place such as Thailand and Burma. It is sometimes referred to as *'the lesser vehicle'* by Mahayana practitioners ('the greater vehicle') because of the latter's emphasis of the Bodhisattva ideal, Mahayana Buddhism is found in Tibet and Japan for example. For a very detailed discussion see Della Santina (1997)

This implies it is the WBO trying to exist in an alien world, but most of the people in the Order in England are Westerners. The order is now all over the world, but its origins were in the UK and the Preceptors College, as they refer to the people and the place where senior order members live, is in South Birmingham. These are people, whose origins at least, are in English culture, adopting and now adapting an Eastern religious tradition to their own needs. The people in Windhorse seem pleased to be able to challenge some preconceptions about what Buddhists are, as Vajraketu said, *'We interact with bankers and lawyers and accountants and property people, and all sorts of people and we are probably the first and only Buddhists they've met. And while we do have rather short hair, we are not shaven headed, walking around the roads, we are not weird, I think that's a little benefit in breaking down a few peoples preconceptions of what Buddhists are like, although again it's not why we did it'.*

My own experience of Theravada Buddhist monks living in the UK is that they have arrived at similar conclusions regarding the viability of traditional Buddhist lifestyles but have addressed them differently. The Theravada Buddhavihara[43] I am familiar with; now in Abbots Bromley, North of Birmingham, possessed a mobile phone, photocopiers and computers, all for the stated purpose of spreading the Dharma in Britain and supporting the Thai community in the West Midlands. But the monks themselves own only the items mentioned by Sinhavacin. Furthermore, at least one community in Hertfordshire, Amaravati, though led and populated largely by Westerners and owing its origins to The Forest Sangha[44] from Thailand, nevertheless continues daily alms rounds. Many Buddhist communities make a living from offering meditation classes, yoga,

[43] Buddhavihara refers to the Buddha temple and is a term mostly used in the Theravada tradition.
[44] The Forest Sangha refers to the community of monks seeking spiritual Enlightenment through living in the forests of Thailand.

vegetarian cooking classes and a host of other small ventures designed to allow a modest standard of living for those living in the community. One of many differences is that at Windhorse the amounts of money being made are much larger; turnover in 2002 was about £15 million. The money is not used for the personal wealth of the order members, nor is it only intended to support the community of people working in it. Much of the money generated is given away each year to what they democratically decide, are appropriate causes. [45] For some Theravadin Buddhists I have spoken to the 'experiment' has gone too far (Phramaha, 2003), but whatever the roots of the idea to experiment with a Western friendly version of Buddhism, the ethos of experiment is firmly embedded in the daily activities of Windhorse.

Teams, friendship and trust

Teamwork is also central to the daily operation of the business, more specifically a term Windhorse people are pleased to have coined, *'Team Based Right Livelihood'* (Padmasuri, 2003). The Buddha's Eight Fold Noble Path[46] includes *'Right Livelihood'* and the people at Windhorse have taken some pride in having added to this, the notion of team work. Julian added to this an interesting dimension, *'the most important thing here is that it is not work its play, I'm happy here and very comfortable about what I am doing. With teamwork it is easier to see it as play and playfulness'*. This leads to another element of people's reason for being there, friendship. The idea of friendship though is perhaps not as it normally considered. While friendship in the normal sense is clearly evident, friendship at Windhorse is also institutionalised, the idea of 'spiritual friendship'

[45] At the start the money generated was given to the founder Sangharakshita to use as he saw fit.
[46] See Appendix Three for a description of The Buddha's Four Noble Truths, the Eight Fold Noble Path and the Ten precepts and their positive counterparts.

is a powerful driver in the organisation. Frequently, the Buddha's own words were used to support this idea and more than once the story was relayed to me, of the Buddha when asked by his closest companion if friendship was half of the spiritual life, was corrected by the Buddha (Pali Canon. *Upaddha Sutta* (Suttra No. 45.2) quoted in Piyadassi, 1964: 32).

"Don't say that, Ananda, don't say that, admirable friendship, admirable companionship, admirable camaraderie is actually the whole of the holy life. When a monk has admirable people as friends, companions, & comrades, he can be expected to develop & pursue the noble eightfold path".

This story is taken very seriously and the concept of *Kalyāa-mitratā* is a formal part of the organisation's activity. *Kalyāa-mitratā* Sinhavacin told me, translates as *'Beautiful Friend'* and one senior manager remarked that she was a manager and a spiritual friend and these were equally important to her. I wondered if this was anything like a mentor but Sinhavacin made a distinction, the *Kalyāa-mitratā* , he said, does not have as much of an idea of what is meant to emerge from the befriended, whereas the mentor has an idea of what the desired outcome is. Being a friend to someone is both formal and informal at Windhorse and has a scriptural basis. Attendant to this is the notion of trust, people mentioned trust in a number of contexts and has a substantial impact on the business. Rijumati is the General Manager and has an equal role in the running of the business though more closely allied to operational matters. On trust he says, *'People accept my attempts to improve things probably because of trust and*

respect. I have to be firm sometimes but on the whole I don't get much resistance, and I think that's because it's based on mutual trust'.

The same idea emerges many times as a contributing factor in the successful running of the business on a day to day basis. It is a concept which is gaining some currency in organisation theory literature too, for example Lane (1998) and Mollering (2006). At Windhorse trust is based on the recognition that all the people there subscribe to the Buddha's teachings which are encapsulated in the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Noble Path, and the Ten Precepts and their positive counterparts. The relevant precepts include for example, not lying and not engaging in harsh or frivolous speech. Rijumati and Vajraketu's confidence is, by their own words, based on the idea that all people there subscribe to these precepts at a minimum.

Ordination

A further reason people have for being at Windhorse is to prepare for ordination into the Western Buddhist Order. This is a process that some mentioned can take as much as 10 years and as little as 2 years. While many mentioned that preparing for ordination was an important part of what Windhorse does, few mentioned it explicitly as their own reason. There seems to be unspoken recognition that Windhorse is a place you go to work and prepare for ordination. There is a very clear formal process for ordination, but the actual process is more informal. Julian, who had asked for ordination 18 months before we met and had been a practicing Buddhist for 2 ½ years, told me it was mostly to do with the *'inclinations and motivations of the individual, something's holding them back,* he said without elaborating. The idea that the institutional arrangements might have an impact on the ordination of individuals was not mentioned

by Julian, but for some, ordination had another side to it. One non-ordained member felt that the ordination process was almost a control mechanism. Jim Persouch was quite vocal in this respect, and is worth quoting at length, *'For me spiritual practice comes from the heart and the guts not from books, symbols and ritual, so if another imperative cuts across that, it's a problem, people are anxious that they are not yet ordained - a great deal of anxiety - They are afraid to speak up about certain issues because they are afraid they might get a cross against their names. Whether that happens or not is not the point, the point is that the cart is before the horse, this should be a place for growth, not ordination. Ordination should be carried along with the spiritual growth aspect. This is an issue here'*. And again, *'Conflict resolution is not dealt with as squarely as it should be here; people bury it because of the ordination process'*.

There was clearly a problem for Jim here; the problem appeared to me to be one of individual versus organisation tension. The Western Buddhist Order has had a very specific process of ordaining people and this process has all the feel of a club to it, perhaps for Jim the sense of an exclusive club. Even if this was not the intention, it was the feeling, and one with which I was familiar from my one year attending Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO) meetings in the early 1990's. The desire to stratify the people in the organisation is justified in part by those who would argue that in Buddhism at least, there is an acceptance that some people are more spiritually mature than others. This is not regarded as a less than politically correct stance, but rather a demonstrable fact, and it is therefore justifiable to have those more experienced leading those less so. However, perhaps hierarchy, especially spiritual hierarchy, brings out of some people, the

very attitudes which the spiritual imperative seeks to eradicate; dualism, and partiality, for example.

Some of these points were leading Jim to consider his future there and he was indeed planning to leave, *'I've been here 15 months'*, he said, as if that was enough of anything, *'I speak my mind'*, he went on, *'and it's apparent that that is an issue'*. He gives a telling example; he has a problem with the *'attitudes towards women'*. Women are seen as having lesser spiritual abilities than men and they are seen as an impediment to men's progress on the spiritual path. It is possible that for all the radical reworking of Buddhist observances, the founder of WBO, Sangharakshita, had retained this 2500 year old tradition regarding the spiritual status of women, and that this was now evident in WBO and Windhorse. Jim goes further, *'the senior order member at Padmaloka*[47] *sees women as sneaking lying cheats, he's not there anymore'*.

For many however, ordination is a source of great happiness, Guhyavira, for example, said, *'I have experienced so much happiness since being ordained'*. Sinhavacin explains part of the formal process, *'Your Private Preceptor witnesses your personal 'going for refuge'*[48]*, you would do it if you were the only person on in the world doing it and your private preceptor witnesses that. You are welcomed into the order by a Public Preceptor who may or may not be the same person. The preceptor doesn't know more, it is a matter of the depth of practice'*. But how do you recognise Preceptors you can trust? *'Experience, how they behave, hearing what they say, seeing what their concerns are, I trust that they are further on the path than I am. The more I think about it the more mysterious it becomes. It slowly emerges who your Private Preceptor will be. We have*

[47] Padmaloka is the name of the FWBO retreat centre for men in Norfolk
[48] Going for refuge refers to the formal commitment to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha and is for most practicing Buddhists reaffirmed daily.

got one order member who was ordained as a man and now he is a woman, and is Kalyāa-mitratā to a man, with another man as his other Kalyāa-mitratā.

Community living and practicing the dharma

Yet another reason often cited for being at Windhorse is that it is a good place to practice the Dharma. This may well be related to the hope of being ordained into the wider movement. Vajraketu for example, '*These are good conditions for Buddhist practice. It's a harmonious environment, I am not saying we don't have difficulties and problems as well, but you know our warehouse is a relatively positive atmosphere, we have no music, it's fairly kind in language, not very harsh, we're not in an atmosphere of office politics in the same way, trying to get one up and gossiping. So the atmosphere is quite supportive of people to be open, friendly in communication, support one another, it's more like being part of a family as it were'. 'The Sangha*[49] *at work'*, as Sinhavacin put it.

The community is clearly important to everyone in the business, in all parts of the warehouse and offices the sense that all are involved in a community activity is palpable. Quite apart from the warehouse itself, the people at Windhorse largely live in Western Buddhist Order communities in similar parts of Cambridge. The early mornings will see the Windhorse van moving from one community to another picking people up to take them to Uddiyana for the day's work. Even at 8 am, and perhaps not suiting my own temperament, the van was humming with conversation and laughter. Padmadipa speaks of the *'Buddhist village'* around the Newmarket Road area of Cambridge, *'You go out the*

[49] The Sangha refers to the community of Buddhists, in Theravada Buddhism it refers only to the community of monks.

door and constantly see other Buddhists, it feels like a community and that has a supporting sense to it'.

But the communities are more than a feeling of living and working together, Rijumati said, *'As a director, as a manager, I could be working in a company earning, £150 an hour or something, but it probably wouldn't be anything like as meaningful to me as being part of team working together and seeing each community will have stronger members, they've got lots of robustness and a lot to give, and those who are struggling a bit and need support. You know, we feel like we are all helping each other to move on together, rather than the stronger ends up with the most powerful jobs and the weakest are at the bottom of the pile all the time; which if you leave it to the law of the jungle that's what you get I suppose'.*

And Vajraketu said, *'We could get a job in what we call 'the outside' and give the money to the movement but we prefer the idea of working together'.* The practice is seen as much more powerful because it is done in the collective, it involves some sacrifice, but for Rijumati at least, this is a trade-off he is happy with. He states, *'Working together is a very important reason why I'm happy to give up some personal preferences. It's not always like that, you know some of the things that are essential to collective endeavour are actually quite a joy to me; for instance my community meditates together each morning, I might meditate earlier, or later or what have you, the fact that we all meditate together requires, some compromise of personal preference, but actually that's something I really enjoy, I like the sense of brothers practicing together'.* There is recognition that living and working in this and any other organisation involves some tension between the individual and organisation but one which is gladly accepted.

The phrase *'work as a spiritual practice'* is frequently spoken of and implies there is little or no separation of the spiritual from the mundane. Rijumati, for example, says *'This is one of the great joys of work as a spiritual practice; what's holding someone back from being effective in their work often correlates with what they need to do to become a more creative happier individual and that's when your work can be a reflection of your spiritual practice'.*

Padmapdipa argues that working, especially in this context, is an extremely effective way for Westerners to develop spiritually. *'Right livelihood is a pre-eminent practice'*, he said, and continued, *'actually I disagree with my other Buddhist brothers about this, I think it is actually better than going up a mountain and meditating for 10 years. It's eminently suitable for westerners in the 21st century as a method'.* For Padmapida work is a method to reach the enlightened state, which is as valid for Westerners, if not more so, than extended solitary retreats which are not a feature of WBO, who go to retreats for a few months at most.

For most people there, the personal intention is to work on their own spiritual development. Julian for example said, *'I want a better life for me and others, more integrated, breakdown the subject, object dichotomy. I am making the attempt to realise a Buddhist ideal of acceptance, love and awareness, equanimity and perfect mindfulness, working towards that I consider myself to be an idealistic. Buddhism is a very difficult spiritual path. Here it is very intense, all my friends are Buddhist and all attached to this project'.*

While it is clear that people see the work they are doing as a way to grow as individuals and to support the growth of others in the organisation, there is also a wider

consideration of spreading the Dharma, yet it is often stressed that this is not evangelising. Padmadipa tells me, *'I find it meaningful most of the time, it's a process not a finished thing, I see it as useful to my spiritual development that's why I am here. I also feel it's tied up with a bigger world, I believe in a certain subtle way we are changing the world by doing this, so it's changing me and changing the world. Rather like an incense stick perfumes the world with its perfume'.*

Economic versus spiritual tensions

The business was very successful, in fact it grew very fast between 1986 and 1999/2000 and they eventually concluded that it was too fast. Shuddhakirti seemed quite sure what the success was the result of, they were, *'ahead of the game in selling gifts of this nature, and they had good buyers'.*

The most obvious manifestation of the tension between these two is in the problems of size and growth. Vajarketu described an almost textbook perception of the problem. When he joined the business he said, *'there was just one community and everyone ate at the same table, where decisions could be made without fear of non-consultation because everyone was present. Now there are 14 – 15 communities and if we forget to tell people we should have told they can get pissed off, it was fairly universally agreed that, well, this is going too fast'.*

Greiner (1972) makes this very point regarding dinner table decision making, as organisations get bigger so they face a number of crises, which if addressed, will lead the organisation into a period of growth based on a new form, yet there is no guarantee the organisation will survive the crises. Greiner's (1972) first crisis is just the one Vajraketu

refers to at Windhorse. In discussing management in the voluntary sector Charles Handy (1988) quotes Landry writing of the *'Perils of the tyranny of democracy'* (in Handy, 1985: 5) a point not lost on Rijumati who remarked how much easier it would be to run a dictatorship, but, he said, *'that would be a horrible place to be'*.

The problem identified by Greiner (1972) and experienced directly by Windhorse, is primarily one of communication; as the business grows, so different forms of control are needed and these bring with them different problems of communication. But at Windhorse the senior managers at least, were acutely aware of the roots of the problem. Organisational culture, Vajraketu reflects, *'I think somewhere that got locked into our way of doing things a little bit, got locked into our way of doing things as we got bigger. Even before the dinner table the sense of a common project was so strong we didn't even need to articulate it. Now we are a bit more strung out and we need to work a bit harder on it that's why we got Ratnagosha*[50]*, with hindsight we should have done that a couple of years ago'*.

I wondered how this growth problem became apparent. Sinhavacin recounts the way in which he perceived it, *'Having not been in the business for very long'*, he said *'I vaguely knew we had reached a point where the spiritual community was getting stretched out'*. For him, and for many others, the first issue was that the community was getting stretched out, not that there were business issues. *'Personal connection had not grown the way the business had. I remembered thinking what's going to happen now, and others were saying the same sort of thing. We didn't have a Management Forum*

[50] Ratnagosha is a senior member of WBO who has agreed to join Windhorse in order to offer a link between spiritual and economic objectives

then, but the directors were talking about the same thing too, and then made the decision to consolidate the business'.

The problem of size and the rate of growth of the business, led to communication problems which were very much a part of the dialogue through the Newsletters. But the real concern relating to size and growth was that of the conflict with the spiritual goals of the organisation. Since the spiritual aspiration includes working together, and living together, the concern was that as the business grew so those spiritual aspirations would become subordinated to economic concerns. Vajraketu said, *'I'd say we have got two primary goals in the business; one is to make money, to support Buddhist activities, and the other is to create an environment, which will support our spiritual practice, and I'd say they got out of balance, it wasn't that ideologically they got out of balance, they just practically got out of balance, because when you are growing very fast, you are trying to make money, and it's difficult.*

One of the problems identified by Vajraketu was that as the communities grew more numerous, there were people coming into the business that did not know the people at the centre, whereas before, everyone knew everyone else, a point mentioned by others particularly members of the Management Forum. Dirangama, for example, felt the experience of growing was exciting but, *'you don't know everybody, you can't'.* Vajraketu felt that new people needed to feel connected to the business, and the vision via those at the centre, and it would be tempting to interpret this as his needing to feel in control and losing it, as the business got bigger, again a point made by Greiner (1972). Indeed, Greiner (1972) is also clear that one of the attendant difficulties faced by organisations as they grow is that owners, and later the managers, resist devolution as the

organisation grows, even when it is clear that it is necessary. Nevertheless, at Windhorse the problem was perceived as being one of relationships being adversely affected, rather than one of control being lost by some people. Vajraketu explained it like this, *'We base a lot on friendship really, and so when you come and join the business, you are explicitly joining a network of friends. But actually it got to the point where the network of friends was so overloaded, we didn't actually want any more friends'*, he said laughing. *'You know, we couldn't fit any more in, cause it was so busy running a business and keeping with the friends that we'd got, so here you are, coming into a business that is posited into a network of friendship, where actually people were too busy to befriend you'.*

The problem led to another conflict between economic and spiritual goals; a network of friends is a mainstay of the organisation's self identity, but Rijumati indicated more than once that the business was now needing less friends and those who were there needed to have certain skills, he states, *'I believe we are about 5% to 10% overstaffed at the Uddiyana because we have been running one big happy family and friends just pile in and do it all, we haven't been thinking about efficiency and productivity in a way that a business paying full market salaries would, now we are paying some market salaries and so we are up against it in the market place, so I think we are overstaffed'.* The market salaries Rijumati referred to were for the few people who were working there without being committed to the Western Buddhist Order. He continued, *'What we were effectively offering new people was not up to the standard. We were not getting anywhere, we got to the point where we were not meeting that standard, by quite a long way, and that was very unsatisfactory. And of course, had we continued to grow, it would have gotten worse; so in the end, one will never know. I suspect we would have*

collapsed under our own weight, because we'd just become a business, and a business that wasn't paying people very much, and yet wasn't also providing them with anything meaningful either'.

The perceived problem appears to be that by allowing economic goals to predominate, the prime objective of the growth of individuals and meaning was perhaps being compromised. For Vajraketu, the problem is one of time, and a clear distinction between management and leadership. People who he felt they should have been concentrating on the spiritual development of individuals were stretched in keeping the business running. Vajraketu reflected, *'The main people here, the people who could perhaps have provided the kind of leadership which would have kept them in balance, were actually consumed by the practicalities of running a fast growing business. We had to take on more and more people to run the business and actually in the heart of us we didn't want to do that. We wanted to create an environment to support Buddhist practice and invite people into it, so in that sense we do want to grow, what we were effectively doing through inviting people into it because we needed their labour, ...we didn't have the time to engage with them, in any way that was satisfying for us or for them. So, if you like, we started taking on labour, rather than inviting people into our community'.*

The conflict between economic and spiritual goals also manifests itself in terms of the support package that is offered to employees. As noted earlier, people are paid a certain amount (£46 a week at the time) to cover living and leisure expenses. The package is the same for everyone regardless of role, yet provision is made for some to be paid more depending on their circumstance. So, for example, Dirangama told me she was, for a few years earning more that the managing director because she had three

children. The problem however, was for someone to qualify for more support they had to ask and this caused some tension, people felt awkward asking for more support. Sinhavacin expressed something similar when he had to ask for a regular salary during the course of this study because he needed to move out of a community in order to care for his girlfriend suffering from a degenerative condition. Asking for more made people feel in some way they were not satisfying the spiritual goals of the organisation. Dirangama attests to feeling guilty when she had to ask for more to cover, *'a huge dentist's bill. Your sense of worth is tied up with how much you are worth, why aren't I doing this myself'.*

The resolution of the problem of asking for more support came through an Open Forum during which both the amount of support and the asking for it emerged as a problem for a number of people. The decision was taken to review the support package and set up guidelines so that up to a certain point people did not have to ask at all.

Decision making, management and change

The economic versus spiritual tension discussed in the previous section appears to be the most pressing issue for all of the people I listened to. Other issues addressed by the different people in the organisation seem always to refer back to this one in terms of the problem itself and the attempts to resolve it. Clearly the organisation had to change in some way, but in the first instance the decision was made to consolidate the business rather than grow it further. Decision-making appears to be of a highly consultative nature as opposed to democratic. Senior and lower level teams have the capacity to make operational decisions and these feed into the Management Forum. One innovation which

emerged from the crisis of size and growth discussed earlier was the Open Forum, an attempt to engage all the people at Uddiyana in a consultative exercise. These discussions also feed into the Management Forum as do the comments in the Newsletter. Both the Newsletter and the Open Forum appeared to be genuine attempts to manage the business in an inclusive and consultative manner, consequently, the decision to consolidate the business seems to have been taken with the blessing of most people in the organisation, and in his role as General Manager, Rijumati pointed out that, if there was anyone who was reluctant to take this course of action, it was him.

A range of consolidation measures were taken, Vajraketu explains, *'We stopped growing in the last 3 or 4 years and we were then digesting the previous decade's growth. We stopped new initiatives, that was the main thing, stopped opening new shops, we stopped starting new van runs, and we said we were not going to numerically take on any more people, so that acted as a sort of brake in itself, it was a little bit bumpy, making the transition'.*

Later, Vajraketu told me, *'we are still consolidating, but now with a view to growing, before we were afraid the wheels might fall off'.* And Rijumati was more optimistic by then too, *'I've got 3 – 4 talented people with entrepreneurial skill, so we can grow a bit'.*

The problem of people feeling the lack of consultation and communication was addressed in a number of ways, partly through a reduction in the size of the Management Forum, in order, *'to make it more creative'* and also by instigating more senior and middle management meetings, but, Vajrakatu pointed out, *'we don't use those terms'.* However, decision making was not only about the business, the issue of size and growth

was seen by most to be an economic/spiritual one. As with Prinknash it seemed that the spiritual objectives were likely to be the casualty and therefore, even though many people said that the spiritual and the economic could not be separated, they were about to be separated formally with the appointment of Ratnagosha as 'chairman'. Vajraketu explained; *'I wasn't providing the focus and leadership in the place as a spiritual community as distinct from a business, I was aware of a role I wasn't fulfilling'.* Ratnagosha spent the first few months talking to everybody in the business, *'that's what I should have been doing, Management By Walking Around'*, he laughed, *'I've been a bit of a distant figure. In the past people may not have known why I was doing something but would always assume I had a good reason. I assumed trust was there but I ought to earn it a bit more'.*

One of the points which surprised me most in both Windhorse and Prinknash was the willingness to change, or even drop altogether, what might have been regarded as basic principles of the community. I, like many people, have a tendency to see religious organisations as being at least partially populated by people with somewhat rigid views and wanting to maintain the purity of the original vision. Yet here, and at Prinknash, (though in a different way), I found the willingness to at least hold up for scrutiny, even the most basic tenets of the community to see if they fitted with the current situation. This was characterised by a few people as pragmatism, and it emerged in a number of responses as a powerful driver of decisions in Windhorse.

Vidyavajra justifies this willingness to be flexible concerning what were earlier fundamentals of the business ethos and, for example, in regard to ethical behaviour, he said, *'That's part of the difficulty of running a business, if we were too hard and fast with*

ethical principles we wouldn't function as a business'. This is almost certainly a problem faced by all commercial concerns; if there were no business implications from being ethical most would choose an ethical route. From my perspective this seemed like an acceptance of the humanity of the situation.

Sinhavacin offers a Buddhist justification for this, *'Buddhism is tremendously pragmatic, you just do what works'*. This chimes with the often made distinction between East and West; the latter will emphasise context to get the meaning of a situation, whereas the former will emphasise the contract, the 'letter'. (Hall, 1976 and Hofstede, 2001). Sinhavacin quotes from the Pali Canon; *'if it leads to enlightenment then it is the Dharma'*. He interprets this for me, *'if it works it is the Dharma and if it doesn't it isn't'*. Sinhavacin, said, *'you don't have to get the ethics perfect before acting'*. Ethical behaviour is seen as an aspiration continually strived for and reaffirmed. Attendant to this is the idea that it is acceptable to relax higher ideals when times are hard. The principle of 'single sex teams' for example was being relaxed in the accounts team because the work load was too much. Similarly the issue of employing non-Buddhists has been experimented with when necessary (with mixed results).

Still, different people see different things as being fundamental to the organisation. Rijumati, seems to have a less stringent view of what can be changed. He argues that the heart of the business is not affected by the re-examination of what he called the basic criteria of recruitment; being Buddhist, living in a community, working in single sex teams. The difficulties of running a commercial organisation on Buddhist principles are well known to most people at Windhorse. Padmadipa pointed out that there are two sides to running an organisation along Buddhist principles, *'It's a strength*

and a weakness', he said, *'with business decisions at any level you have to consider two things instead of one thing. In an outside business you look at things primarily using business models and a business paradigm and even the human consideration is dubbed the "human resource", it's looked at as a resource with peculiar properties. Whereas when you are engaged in work in the way that we are you have to consider the business side and also what you are doing and the implications of your decision spirituality, and that is not always easy so business decisions constantly have spiritual consequences'.*

Symbol and Ritual

Vajraketu also indicated that the feeling some people had about the lack of communication from management was addressed partly by doing more of something that was very evident throughout my time at Windhorse, *'We promote a lot of collective Buddhist activities which contribute to a sense of belonging'*, he said, *'for example the Stupa, every full moon we do a little ritual, they don't address things conceptually, but they help us all to feel part of things'*. Vajraketu was of course, already part of things, and the rituals, though something done by all Buddhists working there and fundamentally part of all religions, was here, being openly invoked as a way to promote the common project and the feeling of inclusion, what Durkheim (1915) called *'social cement'*. But the *'we'* of which Vajraketu spoke was not management arranging a specific Buddhist ritual designed to inspire the sales team to greater heights (like a weekend of paintballing under the guise of team building). The Buddhist rituals were frequently, if not mostly, arranged by non-managerial people announced through Newsletter and attended by anyone.

Different rituals occur daily and less frequently in the communities themselves, as well as in Uddiyana, and may include the entire workforce or, more often, in the teams within which individuals work, including those in the warehouse among towering shelves, pallets and packing cases. All the teams perform a short Puja[51] at the end of each day and this includes a number of teams in the warehouse. Everywhere I looked, alongside photographs of families and friends, there were images, little statues and small shrines, beside, and on top of computer screens, and on shelves in the warehouse, as well as in rooms designated for meditation. But the specific artefacts were chosen by individuals for a specific reason in terms of spiritual recollection. What was clear was that engagement with symbol and ritual, individually and collectively had the dual purpose of promoting social cohesion and also of facilitating the spiritual growth of the individual. What is more important is that in both places this engagement is conscious on the part of all people there.

Ratnavyuha occupies a management role which deals with what might be called a human resources function. He explains the role of symbol and ritual in promoting social cohesion, but in doing so demonstrates the commitment he has to recognising the meaning others gain from the symbols they engage with. For him, individuals are using Buddhist symbols which work for them as individuals. He explains it like this, '*Well, as a sort of a manager here, I guess symbols help in the sense that one is trying to communicate and relate to others here on the basis of Buddhist practice, that's the common denominator of all of our lives. So in that sense you can appeal to the Dharma and the archetypal symbols to communicate and to try and enter into more deep and*

[51] Puja refers to a devotional ceremony which can be short or long. (See Windhorse Publishing (1987) Puja for a fuller description)

meaningful communication with others. Communication has to occur through those sort of symbols sometimes, because actually, life's got an emotional component which isn't easily embodied intellectually, so symbols and concepts kind of appeal to the intellect and symbols appeal more to the emotions. There's lots of people here who have a heartfelt response to the Dharma and you need to relate to them on that basis, so you have to be in touch with your own at first, your own archetypal symbols and also you kind of have to relate to theirs too'.

For Vilasavajra the symbols are a reminder, as they are for many at Windhorse, a trigger he says and offers a specific example, 'In *the Tibetan tradition you imagine a vast clear blue sky, the Shunyata, out of which a Buddha arises which symbolises the potential for the enlightenment of the human mind and we try to come to into a relationship with that'*. Recognising his work is similar to that of someone in any commercial organisation he goes on to point out that he does his work from a spiritual perspective and, *'Without the symbol and the ritual it would be very difficult to keep in perspective the significance of it. It's an ongoing connection with a higher aspiration and it's very difficult for people to attain that without the symbol and ritual'.*

I wondered what symbols they were aware of which were not Buddhist and the response was to draw attention to the non-Buddhist facets of the organisation and work, and invest them with Buddhist meaning. Sinhavacin for example saw the open plan offices and the fact that he sits beside the MD, the lack of a rigid hierarchy and that most people earn the same, as examples of Buddhist emphasis on community. He also pointed out in passing that this lack of emphasis on status 'symbols' means that *'the normal symbols don't work around here'.*

Work as a spiritual practice

At Windhorse the most potent symbol was that of the work itself. The phrase *'work as a spiritual practice'*, was frequently used in conversations, and the evidence that it was taken seriously was clear. The last place I expected to find spiritual practice was in the warehouse, but I was to be surprised. The offices at the front of the building were a largely predictable office environment, the proximity of the work places and perhaps the communicative nature of the work were familiar, yet quieter. But the warehouse was quite different. The 40' ceiling and concrete floors offered a reverberant acoustic and atmosphere like a cathedral; I could hear quiet voices and squeaking shoes, but see no one. The similarity to a cathedral did not stop there; the warehouse is dominated near the centre by a 23 foot statue, a Stupa,[52] to be more specific. The Stupa was being built by one of the men working in the warehouse, he used to be a stonemason and, like others, was preparing for ordination and had been for a long time. He was pleased with the Stupa, and so was everyone else in the organisation. The Stupa is only visible from certain positions in the warehouse and walking up and down the aisles, I would unexpectedly find myself staring up at it as I turned a corner from one aisle to the next. On a later visit I discovered that it had been decided to hold a day of meditation during which at least one person would be sitting in meditation amongst the metal racking to one side of the Stupa for the whole day. This would be undertaken by more than one person in a sort of shift arrangement, almost like a vigil. Misha, a Swedish man in his early twenties and preparing for ordination, was doing this when I arrived, others continued to work around him observing no more and no less silence than was normal.

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[52] The Stupa is a dome like structure which traditionally holds Buddhist relics. (See Appendix Two).

The work itself is seen as part of spiritual practice at Windhorse (as it is at Prinknash though the same term is not used). Paradoxically, this is clearest in the warehouse among the towering shelves, as opposed to the offices. A central practice of all Buddhists is mindfulness; a constant attempt to be aware of ones thoughts, actions and feelings. Vidravajra for example discusses his role in the warehouse, picking and packing, *'My current job is not very demanding mentally so the tendency is to drift off sometimes. But being present to how I am responding emotionally, even to what I am thinking about is useful. What I actually feel about something, rather than what I think I feel about something'.*

The intensity of this effort on the part of individuals is something I noticed very soon after arriving at Windhorse for the first time. Knowledge of where I was, and what they were endeavouring to do was part of this, but there were constant visual reminders of what they were trying to achieve as individuals, and as an organisation, mindfulness being one of them. I wondered about the intensity of this every day. Yet over a few days I felt less tense and was more able to enjoy the silence. This was what was important to them, and there was no question that the working environment was different as a result of this. My early attempts at 'picking and packing' were not good; I frequently could not find the items on the list and had to ask for directions. I wandered up and down the long aisles trying not to interfere too much with other people's work, but sometimes my meandering became too embarrassing and I had to disturb someone. Disturb is the word, it was quiet, given the work going on there, no voices were heard shouting, no radio blaring, men walked slowly up and down the aisles filling shopping trolleys with items from the pallets, crossing things from lists and stopping occasionally for a quiet chat.

This was noticed by others from outside the community too, for example lorry drivers coming into the building to drop deliveries, who were, I was told, initially at least, bemused by the absence of a loud radio and the *'page three'* posters I had experienced as an apprentice engineer myself 26 years earlier. Vidravajra goes on, *'I didn't anticipate there would be such a radical turnaround in the way I've been practicing, but actually it's been proving to be that, in the sense that I've moved into another environment which has challenged me, and brought up old patterns. I've had to look at them and work with them creatively instead of getting stuck in this which tends to happen. Not run away from responses I'm getting, just sit with them and try to get to know them a bit. Working in the warehouse allows you to do that because it doesn't require you to use much mental thinking, sometimes you get these little insights into how you approach certain aspects of your life'.*

Vidravajra seems to be using the work experience to consciously reflect on his mental state. The reference to *'certain aspects of life'* makes it clear that work is an activity that contributes directly to his experience of life, especially when consciously engaged with. He talks about his suffering and notes that it is he that causes the suffering (Dukkha)[53] *'So I am noticing my own Dukkha signal'* he says, with a laugh as if embarrassed by using jargon with me.

The idea that work is a spiritual practice surfaced a number of times, Vajraketu for example, says the task is not as important as the process – the way we do it. *'I think to understand us you need to get a pretty good idea of what work and spiritual practice means to us. Even though we are trying to run an ordinary business, it is there in*

[53] Dukkha is the Pali term for suffering

everything that we are trying to do, everything we do well, and everything we don't do well, are related to that. I think that one interesting thing is that it makes the task and what we do very secondary, which again to outsiders often seems odd, even to other Buddhists you know, there is value in the task itself. If you work in the warehouse and pack boxes, the actual fact that you are packing boxes is a pretty small part of your approach to working life. The task is not that important, its how you do it, and how you relate to the people you do it with. That would not work for everybody, but I think it's quite significant for us'.

Sinhavacin also recognises the significance of symbol in his work, but feels it is now so much a part of his life that it is difficult to speak about it, *'I feel it does'*, he said, *'but it isn't an easy question because it is all tied up with my identity, by my seeing myself to be Buddhist and knowing myself to be Buddhist. It's not like taking medicine where you apply a particular thing to a particular situation'.*

Non-dualism

A further manner in which the economic and spiritual tension is accommodated is by not separating them out. Padmadipa justifies the argument that these are not separate by reference to the symbolic. *'The work itself is symbolic, I am involved in a creative and symbolic process including the work itself, I wouldn't cut the two notions up. The nature of the work is symbolic, so I think it's of crucial importance. If you can't really understand it like that then some way or another you are going to come to grief because obviously you are going to be working for other motives and will begin to gripe about pay or what have you. You can only really understand yourself as a spiritual practitioner*

in a complete way if you see your working life as symbolic rather than work with a bit of symbolism chucked on top'.

This is a very clear exposition of the non-separation argument. He goes on to point out that non spiritual organisations would also have a whole range of symbolic situations which would give purpose and meaning, but the people there would not necessarily be conscious of it. Others argue the same point slightly differently, Nagavira for example, sees the separation of economic and spiritual matters is spurious, *'If the business isn't being successful on a business level then it is not being successful on a spiritual level, because it may have to decrease in size. Business and spiritual practice should coincide, not one over the other. I can imagine there are tensions and I am glad I don't have to make those decisions'.*

For Nagavira, the growth of the business is important because it facilitates the spiritual development of more people, the spiritual imperative is again, the overriding objective. Nagavira's image of the two is one of coincidence and mutual reinforcement, *'My needs and those of the organisation are co-dependent'*, as Vidyavajra says. But it wasn't always that way. Sinhavacin recalls that in earlier times spiritual goals were given a higher priority over profit needs, but he says, *'You can't separate the two because if we hadn't made any money to give away we would conclude that we had failed spiritually'.* This is the very same point made by people at Prinknash.

During these occasions the spiritual goals of the individual and the organisation are continually reaffirmed in a number of ways; the newsletter for example, the Open Forum and frequently during interviews. While some argued that the spiritual goals and economic cannot be separated, nevertheless the spiritual is ultimately what most would

place above the other. For example, while Vajraketu argued *'We can't separate the business from the spiritual community'*, he nevertheless goes on to put Buddhist principles at the forefront, *'The thing that caused us sustainability problems was the supply of talented and committed Buddhists. We could have restructured the business in the late 1990's and hired non-Buddhist talent and we could have continued to grow. Sustainable to us means as much, if not more about the spiritual aspect as it does the business aspect, it's more important to create something where we can work together'.* But it goes further for Vajraketu, because when he says Buddhist talent, he means Western Buddhist Order talent, a further constraint on the recruitment of new people. The Western Buddhist Order has over 100 000 members worldwide, many in India. Given the emphasis on people and not roles, the organisation faces a continual problem of finding people who can do the work deemed necessary.

The management of the economic/spiritual tension is also achieved by an interesting ethical justification for diversification. Dirangama argues, *'Diversity is about survival for most, but here it is because I might be tempted to act unethically when push comes to shove'.* In terms of competitive behaviour Dirangama says they are happy to act competitively, but not to the point where it jeopardises another company's survival. The diversity of activity for her is a way of reducing the possibility of unethical behaviour because it becomes unnecessary, if your own growth and survival can be assured by some other activity. It enables them for example to give a higher price to producers. For her, most businesses spread risk in order to reduce threat to the business, whereas they do it to reduce the need for manipulative behaviour.

One way in which the tensions between economic and spiritual goals are managed is through the clear ordering of the priorities. Julian for example was emphatic, '*The bottom line here is not profit it is supporting a thriving Buddhist community, providing funds for the other parts of the movement, spreading the Dharma and providing and example of a Rightlivelihood business*'. For Julian the objectives are very clear, they focus on the collective and less on the individual, yet for most the development of the individual is axiomatic, as is the subordination of profit as a goal. There is an emphasis on people and experience and less on abstraction, and this point touches directly on Buddhist teachings. Many Buddhists commentaries, particularly those written by monks and nuns, attest, as they do in other religious traditions, that the growth of the individual is always through spiritual practice and supported by study and the community. A specific remit of Windhorse is to support the spiritual development of individuals working there.

While some seem to be saying that the spiritual and the economic cannot be separated, in practice substantial moves were being made to do just that formally. Whereas the management team including Vajraketu had both business and spiritual leadership roles, Vajaraketi noticed how little time he had to fulfil both roles and so moves were made to appoint a prominent order member, Ratnagosha, as chairman with a specific remit to develop the vision of the organisation. Vajraketu's recognition that communication was suffering as he tried to do both roles was the impetus behind this move. So there is a formal move to separate the economic from the spiritual, but it would be wrong to suggest these are hermetically sealed boxes. The management of the spiritual in Windhorse appears as structured as the business.

Summary

At Windhorse the formal purposes of the organisation are memorised in almost mantra like fashion, but the purposes of the organisation are much more varied and given free expression. Some of the clearer expressions included that Windhorse was an experiment, a place to practice the Dharma, live in community with other Buddhists in friendship and a place to prepare for ordination into the WBO. Perhaps one of the most striking things about the people working in Windhorse, as in Prinknash, was their conscious engagement with symbol and ritual. I emphasise conscious, because almost everyone I spoke to, was fully aware of what symbol meant to them, and why they engaged with it; to help them develop as individuals and to give the community a sense of cohesion. Furthermore, the symbol and ritual was freely developed by individuals who might have anyone of a number of Buddhist images near their workplace and engage in any number of different devotional practices, sometimes alone and often in the community.

While the tension between living according to Buddhist principles and running a commercial organisation are known to most people in the community, there does appear to be a clear ordering of priorities which emphasises the spiritual imperative over the economic. This places people above abstract goals to the extent of choosing not to grow the business for a period, something all were agreed upon. Business language was more evident here than at Prinknash, and that may have been because most people are fully engaged in some aspect of the business. However, the language was still tempered by the desire to see Buddhist principles enacted, Dirangama for example, said, *'Diversity is*

about survival for most but here it is because I might be tempted to act unethically when push comes to shove'.

Decision-making at Windhorse is edging towards democratic, though that was as a result of some disquiet about the lack of consultation in an earlier time. Even where there was discord, the opportunity to express it was present. Jim for example, felt that when he spoke his mind it was, *'apparent that that is an issue'*, but there was no attempt to prevent him saying that to me. Interestingly, the lack of consultation was seen by most, as due to the pressures of time, rather than being politically motivated. Trust was mentioned frequently and more specifically, trust resulting from the knowledge that everyone there is a practicing Buddhist, and is therefore cognisant of the precepts of Buddhist life. What is also clear in this community is that the spiritual life is seen as something lived with others, but each is responsible for their own development, people provide companionship and the means by which individuals can grow. A detailed interpretation of the experiences of the people at Windhorse is offered in chapter seven.

Chapter 7. An interpretation of work in a spiritual place

The purpose of this chapter is to interpret the case-study data in regard to the aims of the study, (to explore the nature of organisational life in self-sustaining spiritual communities), in relation to the literature explored in the first three chapters. The chapter is organised into three sections relating to the critical observations made in chapter three regarding the spirituality in the workplace literature. Each section begins with a reminder of the critical observations made in chapter three, the first of which deals with the managerialist tenor of the literature, and concludes that far from being managerial, these communities adopt a consultative, if not democratic, decision making stance which is characterised by flexibility and pragmatism. Furthermore, while the spiritual life of the individual is seen to be of paramount importance in these communities, the development of the individual in this sense, is not seen as the responsibility of management. These communities also demonstrate reticence in regard to action which has not been subject to considerable reflection, both communally and in solitude. Finally, the managerialist tone of the 'crusaders' discussed in chapter three also does not include any recognition of the role of symbol and ritual in its discourse, yet what is found in these communities by contrast, is a continuous and conscious engagement with symbol and ritual as a means by which the community is held together, and by which the spiritual development of the individual is accommodated and facilitated.

The second section discusses another critical observation made in chapter three, that the literature has a tendency to adopt a dualistic stance in a number of ways, separating spirituality from religion and separating the spiritual life from other aspects of

life being the main ones. This is also found to be quite different to the communities studied here, where the spiritual life is expressly about the aspiration to non-dualism.

The final section identifies the reified nature of the spirituality in the workplace discourse, where the 'needs' of the organisation are placed above those of the individual and abstract goals are given primacy over the needs of individuals. Similarly, and by implication, the future is afforded greater significance than the present. Again, this is found to contrast sharply with the experiences of the people in these two communities, where people in relationship to others, the present, and direct experience are emphasised over abstraction, the future and theoretical knowledge.

Non-Managerial

Chapter three demonstrated that the bulk of the literature reviewed had a distinctly managerial tenor to it. Tying spirituality in the workplace to the performance of the organisation, for example Neck and Milliman (1994) rendered it almost automatically a management concern and therefore of academics in the field too. It was further argued that there are difficulties with drawing management into such a role, in particular it was pointed out that management may not be best equipped to take on a role as spiritual guides in organisations (Maccoby, 1995) and (Judge, 1999), and that the dominant paradigm under which most managers in commercial concerns operate is incommensurable with that of the spiritual orientation being proffered (Kofodims, 1993: 6). Concerns over the extent to which the spirituality in the workplace initiative might become a source of discrimination (Bell and Taylor, 2004), favouritism and even fanaticism had been present from the outset (Cavanagh, 1999) and (Hicks 2002). All this

has led to some authors voicing concerns of a, nature in consequence (Atkinson, 2000 and 2004), Morgan (2005), McCarty (2007), and Schley (2008).

These characteristics of the literature also led to the observation that, being a management function, spirituality in the workplace was being conceived as yet another cause for action, potentially strategic action, rather than the reflection that chapter one argues is a central feature of the spiritual life. The literature, in allying itself to management so clearly, is, for some, in danger of being faddish (Gibbons, 2005) and potentially a set of dangerous platitudes rather than the radical movement it presents itself as.

Finally the literature simply does not address the role of symbol in organisational life. Given that the body of work on organisational symbolism, arguably beginning with Pondy et al (1983) is now an established field of enquiry, and given that all spiritual traditions embrace some form of symbolic practice, this comes as something of a surprise. Examining theological work suggests that engagement with symbol and ritual is a central part of the spiritual life, if not the beginning of it (Cottingham, 2005).

Consultative, flexible and pragmatic

Managerialism is not a feature of the two communities studied here, to begin with, decision making in both communities appears to be undertaken more in a consultative, than an autocratic style. At Windhorse the rapid growth of the business led to a gradual erosion of the consultative culture that had emerged from the beginning and although most were sure this was not a conscious attempt on the part of management to operate in a more autocratic manner, there was dissatisfaction with the lack of communication, which was accepted and addressed by managers in a number of ways.

The use of the term 'management forum' was consciously adopted to emphasise the consultative nature of decision making and the community wide meetings even gave the impression of the community moving more towards a democratic style. At Prinknash the decision making process was largely laid down by *the Rule,* yet, as already noted, the willingness to interpret that 1500 year old document in the light of contemporary times was evident in a number of ways. This flexibility and pragmatism was noted by Fr Stephen as a possible reason for the longevity of the tradition. The consultative nature of decision making at Prinknash was clear in Fr Stephen's words as he described decision making,*'it's not a democracy, but the will of the community is a powerful thing* and further, *' the Benedictine way is to counsel not council'* he said.

Spiritual development – the individual in communion

What was very clear in both communities was that the spiritual life of individuals is not seen as a management responsibility, what <u>is</u> prescribed, is the path rather than the destination. At Prinknash, symbolic and ritualistic engagement is required, and a matter of long tradition (which is still open to contemporary interpretation). Similarly at Windhorse, the formal purposes of the organisation were well known to all, but the meaning the community had for individuals varied considerably and was freely expressed. This was so, even when that meaning conflicted with the views of the majority, as in the case of Jim Persouch whose sense of the meaning of the organisation was being subverted by what he felt was the excessive emphasis on the ordination process rendering it a potential political tool.

The lack of managerial prescription was also evident at Windhorse in regard to ritualistic practice, again, certain practices <u>were</u> prescribed and expected, for example

early morning meditation, carried out in the community houses, and a short Puja at the beginning and end of each day at the warehouse with others. However, beyond this, practice is left to the individual (and is anyway, seen as a continuous process not confined to certain times of the day). People had their own images and symbols around their workplaces and these were there to help them with their **particular** practice, yet all within the broad compass of Buddhist teachings, and more specifically those of the founder of the Western Buddhist Order, Sangharakshita. At Windhorse the notion of the spiritual friend is taken very seriously, but as noted it is not seen as a teaching, or even a mentoring role, but only as an accompaniment, a word also used by Fr Stephen at Prinknash as his way of describing the management process.

The emphasis on individual meaning and on personal and communal reflection indicates the primacy of the individual in the process of the organisation. But here, a paradox emerges; while the spiritual life is seen, not as the responsibility of management but of the individual, (often conducted alone and for some a frightening struggle), it is nevertheless, in communion with others that the aspirant finds their spiritual self. In the novel *'The Sea The Sea'* by Iris Murdoch (1999) this paradox is explored via the main character Charles Arrowby, as he retires from the theatre to lead a simpler life, only to discover that the real meaning of his life is, and was, contained in relationship to others. In chapter three it was observed that both Jesus and the Buddha experienced difficult and tempting times, alone; Jesus in the desert and the Buddha under the Bodhi tree, these experiences testify to the frightening and solitary nature of the spiritual quest. But in both cases they return to the community with their new understanding as did both Moses and Mohammed.

In these two communities the need to balance the individual's needs and those of the community appears to be struck by an express recognition that the individual needs the time and conditions to engage in spiritual practice, both alone and in relation to others. Neglecting this point would, for many in these communities, be antithetical to the spiritual life and the meaning the community has for them. Relationships are litmus to spiritual progress and this is why those at Windhorse place so much emphasis, both formally and informally on friendship; spiritual friendship, and frequently invoke the words of the Buddha to justify doing so.

Not only is spiritual growth seen as an individual journey in communion with others, but in both cases **interpretation** of the spiritual life is left to the individual to find, there appears to be little or no attempt to prescribe religious meaning, but rather to require the individual to engage with faith in symbolic practices, the meaning of which is for the individual to find. While, as Fr Francis said, it does not always feel great, especially at 5am in the morning, it is seen as necessary to push through the difficulties associated with engagement with symbol and ritual. This point emerged frequently at Prinknash, Fr Mark testified to a period in his monastic life of boredom, but then, years later the words, *'suddenly exploded with meaning'*.

This is quite different from the underlying tenor of the spirituality in the workplace literature where management is presented as the initiator of spiritual growth for employees. In 1956 W H Whyte's famous book defined *'The Organization Man'* as *'one who subverts his individuality to the organization that employs him'*. In reading the spirituality in the workplace literature I was struck by the extent to which this appears to be the chief implication in much of that literature. A number of contributors appear to

place the organisation in the place of a spiritual institution, and more specifically, management in the place of spiritual guides.

Erich Fromm's (1994) contribution suggested that people fear taking responsibility for themselves and will *'escape from freedom'* in a variety of ways, depending on their upbringing and some people who have become aware of the nature of this research have said to me that they think monks attempt to 'escape from the world'. This is undoubtedly a danger, and one that the people I spoke to were well aware of, but my experience of spending time in these communities, is that they are taking full responsibility for themselves in a way many of us, myself included, would find very challenging indeed, and probably recoil from. Spirituality in the workplace writers on the other hand, often appear to be placing organisations and management in positions to facilitate this very thing; namely the subversion of individuality to the organisation, as Whyte wrote of 53 years ago.

The journey is an **individual** one, undertaken in the company of others, the nature of the spiritual life is interpreted by the **individual,** in the company of others. It is the relationships that afford the organisation meaning, not the formal purposes and certainly not abstractions like maximising profit or 'return on capital employed'.

Action and reflection

A further manifestation of the managerial tenor of the literature is its emphasis on action, evident in the work of many authors in terms of the attempts to implement a more spiritual workplace, for example Marquez (2006), Smith and Rayment (2007) and Pawar (2008). What is apparent in the two communities presented here however, is not the emphasis on action, but on balancing action with reflection. In the case of Prinknash

reflection is related to the idea of Grace, which does not mean doing nothing but, as Fr Francis said, *'What we have to do is to act as if everything depended on us but believe that everything depends on God. And by that I mean that you can't simply sit down and say, "well, I'm here to seek God I'm going to spend all my life in prayer, praying to God and do nothing"'.*

The attempt to balance action with reflection was evident in a number of ways at Prinknash, Fr Francis referred to *'monitoring the inner landscape to see what to do in order to fulfil the story of creation'.* Reflection as already noted is both individual and communal, at Prinknash the monks attend to the Work of God at specific times and always have done, but in addition, they spend a lot of time in their cells, where, as Fr Damien said, they *'sweat it out'.* Benedictine monks emphasise work, study and prayer, and, given the intensity of this, it does seem inappropriate to call it reflection, contemplation might be more appropriate. What I have simplistically referred to as reflection includes prayer, meditation, worship, devotion and other ritualistic practices undertaken alone and in the community. Yet, reflection was a word used by Kieran, as he said, he still stops what he is doing for ten minutes each day and reflects, even twenty years after leaving the monastery, for him, it makes the day more **meaningful**. Fr Martin said, *'If I didn't have prayer I wouldn't be able to cope'.* He referred to prayer as one of his duties, and the rigidity of the Benedictine day, and the weight of 1500 years of tradition, certainly explains to some extent why Fr Martin felt that way. The bell, which regulates so much of Benedictine life, was for the monks, a sign of the reflective moment; a time when whatever else is happening, a monk stops and engages with the Work of God.

Reflective practice, whether individual or communal, facilitates the balancing of apparently opposing tendencies, for example to balance the needs of the individual with the 'needs' of the community. But it is not always successful, as Fr Damien recounted when explaining his preoccupation with the phone system during communal prayers which he said he hadn't been aware of until later. For him, the reflective moment was a way to bring him back to his spiritual purpose; to God. With the exception of the deference to God, the people at Windhorse would not have difficulty accepting the role of ritual and symbol bringing the mind back to clear attention.

My own experience of being at Prinknash was of protracted periods alone, in my small room, reading and writing, and of course reflecting. I would not claim that this was anything like the intensity I believe the monks experienced, it was nevertheless, a time of peacefulness and a chance to think about what I was doing there and why, on the one hand, and occasional loneliness on the other; I missed the trappings of a 'normal' life. Br Gilbert said something similar, and I felt the humanity of it through his words. Being in an environment like a monastery and surrounded by monks wearing the habit most of the time, tends to deflect attention from their humanity, but I suspect they experience all the same things as I do; boredom, anger, jealousy, tension and anxiety. But they, and the people at Windhorse, differ from me, at least in regard to the intensity with which they deal with these emotions.

Non-Dualistic

Chapter three demonstrated that the literature has a tendency to separate features of organisational life, firstly it tends to separate management and workers, this is evident

in the work of Marquez (2005) Dehler and Welsh (1994) and Burack (1999) all of whom, by implication, assume that the spiritual workplace begins with a **management** initiative. Even though Marquez (2008) later argues that the spiritual workplace might be implemented by the workers the separation is still there. Management and workers are also very clearly separated in Brandt (1996) for example, who suggests that the time might be right to extend spirituality to the lower level workers.

A further separation is more explicit, and it is present in the assertion, by a number of authors, that in implementing the spiritual workplace, *'religion should definitely be kept out of the picture'* (Marquez, 2006: 890). This separation, of the spiritual from the religious, was also contested on the grounds that for many, if not most people, their religious tradition is, for them, a spiritual path. While some authors have been uneasy about the possibility that spirituality in the workplace may become grounds for discrimination (Bell and Taylor, 2004), there is also the possibility that the discrimination will be, not only between religious traditions, but between the 'spiritual' and the 'religious' perspectives. It is argued here that the attempt to separate the spiritual from the religious in the literature is not helpful and others have voiced similar views (Hicks, 2002).

A further dualism apparent in the literature is the separation between spiritual organisations and unspiritual organisations. The notion that the workplace is *'unspiritual'* (Marquez, 2005) is contested by others for example Gull and Doh (2004) Lips-Wiersma and Mills (2002) and Lee (1991). This was discussed in chapter three and in addition, the point can be made that if spirituality may include religious affiliation, but not necessarily, and if the spiritual life is about both individual endeavour and

relationship to others, then it is entirely possible that **any** organisation might be said to be a spiritual community. This would be the case whether or not the organisation has been subjected to the attention of academics or organisational leaders expressing the need for more spiritual workplaces. Individuals in conventional organisations may also see the organisation as meaningful because of the connection to other people and its capacity to help them grow as individuals, possibly spiritually and emotionally, and not because they subscribe to an abstract organisational goal.

Integration

The dualism that is evident in the literature is not present in these two communities, for those people, the spiritual life is non-dualistic in that it does not recognise a spiritual life and a work life. These two are seen as indivisible and a central principle emerging from this study is that people in these spiritual communities do not seek separation, but integration. The aspiration is always to live the non-dualistic life, Fr Martin said to me, *'For St Benedict there is only one life, not a spiritual and a practical life'*, Fr Absel talked of *'climbing a ladder to reach the unitary way'*. This non-dualism was also identified in chapter one as a key feature of the spiritual life and is supported by the people I met in these communities. The evidence for this is clear in the discussions I had regarding business ethics for example, ethical behaviour is not seen as separate from the satisfaction of economic needs. At Prinknash Fr Stephen said he had noticed the more they give away the more they get in return. Very clearly, Fr Martin said, *'If my spirituality isn't diffused in my whole being I am a split person, so wisdom has got to be spiritual, practical and physical'*, a point echoed in the literature by Lee (1991). This is a difficult orientation to live, and whereas for many, myself included, even recognising the

fragmentation of life is difficult, in these communities, it is both recognised and consciously addressed, daily. At Windhorse, following Buddhist teaching, morality is inextricably linked to wisdom via contemplation, and the law of karma excludes any unethical practices because it is deemed to be the cause of future problems.

The separation between management and workers has a distinguished history in conventional management literature. For Adam Smith, the 'discovery' of the division of labour as a fundamental driver of *'The Wealth of Nations'* (1970) was a major break through, but the division of labour of which he wrote, was a utilitarian inspired observation which did not recognise the whole person. In dividing the task into very discrete chunks and assigning the chunks to individuals, he sentenced the latter to express only a small part of what they are.

The dualism implied by the concept of the division of labour presages the division of management and worker made very clear by Frederick Taylor (1911). Taylor is reputed to have told workers *'you are not paid to think'*, such a sentiment separated the management from the workers, but it also separated the mind from the body, revealing Taylor's Cartesian heritage. The notion that workers were only there for their physical capacity and not for any creative, imaginative or even decision making acts, was cemented by Ford who was reputed to have said, as stated earlier, '*How come when I want a pair of hands, I get a human being as well?*'. This gross form of the Cartesian split has been a significant part of management thinking since Taylor and Ford, but more recent and inclusive thinking would see it as a significant waste of talent and energy, but the advantages of self-organising control (Stacey, 1993) are not merely academic or utopian ideas, but have been seen to work in practice (Semler, 1994).

Yet we still largely fragment people's lives as if they were a human resource to be deployed like any other inanimate object. The splitting of management from 'worker' (and I have argued here, mind from body) that has been achieved by Cartesian thinking are specific examples of a societal fragmentation that some have discussed at length (Fromm, 1994), and (Habermas, 1971). When Marx (1963) wrote of the alienation of people (1963) and the separation of the worker from the means of production, he was beginning a line of critical thinking in social research such as Labour Process theory (Knights and Willmott, 1990) which continues to the present and appears to have little trouble finding subject matter.

The more recent discourse on work/life balance (Lamont and Lamont, 2003), (which also has its detractors, Gambles, Lewis and Rapoport, 2006) would I suspect be a strange concept to a Benedictine, in so far as the Rule of St Benedict is largely about not splitting them in the first place. At Windhorse the frequently used phrase, *'work as a spiritual practice'* could as easily be *'work is a spiritual practice'*. Dualism is part of the problem and not to be dealt with by a series of techniques, quite possibly fostered by the company, to help individuals to strike a better balance. Work is life and life includes work.

Separation and analysis are taught to children very early in their lives and become unquestioned assumptions about the way life is (Senge, 1990) But it may be the case that the work/life balance that is apparently being sought, is an attempt to reunite something that for children, is second nature. Young children see a trip to the supermarket as an adventure and a chance to experience another aspect of life, not a chore (that comes later). They might giggle at the plight of Humpty Dumpty who apparently needed to be

reassembled by *'all the king's horses and all the king's men'*, but we now seek to reassemble the Humpty Dumpty of our lives into a reasonably balanced whole, and it is apparently at the institutional level that this is to be instigated in the form of company work/life balance programs and now spirituality in the workplace, (reconsidering the managerial tone of the literature discussed earlier, it is instructive that the reconstruction of Humpty Dumpty is seen as the responsibility of the institution of royalty).

Perhaps we should be glad that the fragmentation has been noticed at all, but I would argue that we do not need techniques for creating a work/life balance, but recognition of the need for integration, which implies offering work that individuals can make meaningful for themselves, as made clear by Maslow (1968). Perhaps we are less prepared to live our lives in BT's cheap rate (after 6pm and at weekends) preferring to take from, and contribute to, life at all times, rather than when the company says we can. St Benedict, at least was aware of this 1500 years ago, which casts some doubt on the notion of progress. In short we want our work lives to be as meaningful as our non-work lives; integration rather than balance. This might sound idealistic but, at a minimum there are perhaps, lessons to be learned from the alternative communities studied here.

Symbol, ritual and the non-dualistic aspiration

The literature under discussion in chapter three makes virtually no mention of the role of symbol and ritual in the spiritual workplace. This omission, it could be argued, might be because the field is in its infancy and is as yet unable to take advantage of the work already done in the field of organisational symbolism for example Pondy et al (1983). However, given other omissions noted so far, such as the paucity of theological reference and the lack of empirical work in self-sustaining spiritual communities, the

omission of symbolism from the discourse might also be related to the desire to *'keep religion out of the picture'* (Marquez, 2006: 890). Symbolic practice, which for some is the beginning of spiritual growth (Cottingham, 2005) is a feature of all religions and develops over long periods of time, if the *'movement'* (Steingard, 2005: 230) wishes to disallow religion in its discourse, then the avoidance of discussion relating to symbol and ritual is an unavoidable corollary. Perhaps more importantly, the avoidance of such discussion points to a tendency towards functionalism and literalism and therefore fits very well with the managerial tenor referred to earlier.

However, as chapters five and six showed, the role of symbol and ritual is central to the functioning of these spiritual communities and also to the spiritual growth of the individual. Psychic images are, for Jung, symbols of a deeper reality, but words like 'symbol', *'are slippery terms in postmodern times* Hauke (2000: 194). Hauke contends that while Jung's early work was *'utterly modernist',* his later work expressed ideas of a more postmodern nature, and his justification for this point is to be found, among other things, in Jung's distinction between 'symbol' and 'sign'. In Hauke's (2000: 192) own words, for Jung,

> *"If an expression stands for a known thing, even if this expression is commonly called 'symbolic', it is not a symbol but a sign. If an expression stands for an unknown something, which, therefore, by definition cannot be expressed or represented more clearly in any way, then such an expression is a symbol".*

The distinction between symbol and sign may appear to be a semantic digression, but this is the sense in which Jung understood symbols, and the sense in which it is used here. At Prinknash both Fr Damien and Fr Stephen at Prinknash, were well aware of the distinction, as were most people at Windhorse. Fr Stephen said, *'Jung is the man as far I am concerned'*. The engagement with symbol identified in this study is not mere language, indeed, as has been argued in chapter two, language is woefully inadequate to express the spiritual dimension and in Jung, the reason is that language is mere sign and the spiritual is expressed in symbol.

Language is important here, except for the one occasion that Fr Stephen broke into business language because of the business school I had come from, there was little or no attempt to use business language. Instead, the monks seemed happy to use the language of Christian belief and more specifically the *Rule of St Benedict,* for example Fr Damien said, *'Our Lord never said anything would last forever'*. This contrasts so much with the language of the business school where sometimes the language takes on a quasi-religious character, terms like 'bench marking', 'market share' and 'growth' are seemingly on everyone's tongue in most meetings and for many are a convoluted and even hollow, refrain (Bowles, 1997).

Symbol and ritual are an integral part of life in both these communities, at Prinkash for example, every day is broken into periods of ritual through the performance of the Work of God, and further ceremonies take place during the year. Symbols confront the visitor and the monks at every turn, not just in the church, but everywhere including the refectory, the Chapter house and the Crypt church (a smaller church in the main building). At Windhorse similarly, the symbols are everywhere but interestingly

are often decided upon by the individual, a particular Buddha image is chosen by the individual for a specific reason. In addition there are communal symbols like the Stupa in the warehouse and the life size Buddha statue which confronts any visitor to the warehouse at the front.

In both these communities engagement with symbol and ritual has two purposes. First, symbolic and ritualistic practices act as *'social cement'* as Durkheim (1915) argued. At Windhorse, this engagement is done formally through a dedication of merits of the work to all sentient beings at the end of each working day within the teams. Different teams and informal groups also meet for meditation sessions at lunch times, though this is entirely an individual matter. At Windhorse the newsletters and other forums also provide an opportunity for people to reaffirm spiritual goals. Private meditation is also a feature of the lives of people at Windhorse and rooms are set aside for this. In addition, money is set aside to pay for people to go on retreat which also involves both individual and communal practice. At Prinknash, reaffirmation of spiritual goals is a continuous act and achieved by communal and solitary prayer and worship.

Second, while the notion of consolidating the community through symbolic practice was expressly important to the people in this study, such practice was also seen as a vehicle to facilitate the spiritual growth of the individual. Whereas for Durkheim, (1915) Freud (1977) and Marx (1963), religion would be jettisoned, (as people mature in one way or another so they have less need for the *'social cement'*), here, symbol and ritual are as essential to the individual, as eating and sleeping. Symbolic practice enables the individual to move closer to an understanding of his or her deeper self which then feed their social encounters.

What is interesting is the **conscious** engagement with symbol and ritual in order to bring about a reflective or mindful state. Mindfulness is explicitly at the centre of Buddhist life, one of numerous meditation techniques used by people at Windhorse (and indeed all Buddhists) is the 'mindfulness of breathing', a practice devoted to bringing clear attention, which it is hoped will eventually manifest in greater awareness of mental states outside of the ritualistic occasion. Conscious engagement with symbol and ritual is seen as an attempt to be in touch with the unknown, and recognises that not all things can be concretised and literalised. This has a considerable history, the thirteenth century English mystical text, *'The Cloud of Unknowing'* (Wolters, 1978), prescribes the same thing. Engagement in symbolic and ritualistic activity on a daily basis in these two cases is an attempt to reveal, and integrate deeper psychic images.

Cottingham (2005) argued that praxis is at the heart of the spiritual life and engaging in such practices is done in faith and eventually leads to deeper understanding and meaning. Again, the gradual nature of spiritual growth was referred to frequently in both organisations. Jung (1973, Vol. 8) pointed to the reality of the psyche and engagement with myth as the way to this deeper insight. Far from being child-like stories to be left behind when the individual matures, mythological engagement is for him evidence of maturing. In these communities symbol and ritual facilitate reflection, and therefore influence heavily the person's experience of the community. For most people in these two communities, conscious engagement with symbol and ritual in faith is a mature response to the religious impulse as well as *'social cement'*.

More can be said about this second role of symbol and ritual, the role of facilitating the spiritual growth of the individual. Conscious engagement with symbol

and ritual is a means by which the individual is able to integrate the 'known with the unknown', to live an undifferentiated life. My own process in writing this section may help to explain this more fully.

This study involved me working in two 'loops'; a theoretical one and an empirical one which were to 'come together' in this 'interpretation' chapter. It was a slow process only crystallizing in the final 'write up' stage of the work. I frequently found that the intensity of developing ideas and writing them in what I felt was an engaging manner could be enhanced by stepping away from the desk and the main task, and reading something (anything) that, while related to the study, was not directed to the main work of the day. It was important that I did something related to the study, but away from what I was currently working on in order that my mind did not 'come off the boil'. What I chose to read during one of the 'breaks' was a matter of what looked interesting or even what was nearest to hand at the time.

While considering my process through the study, I chose for my unscheduled break to read a passage from '*The Gospel of Mary Magdalene*' (Leloup, 2002). In his introduction, the translator, Leloup (2002: 15) comments on what he calls the *'creative imagination'* to which the *'Gospel of Mary Magdalene'* gives testament. Creative imagination, he says must be distinguished from creative thought, in that the latter commonly understands the imagination to mean *'the realm of fantasy, a world of merely subjective beings or things'*. This use of the word imagination as illusory thought, is not the creative imagination explored by the writers of the ancient texts and sacred scriptures. Leloup (2002) argues that these writings emerge from, and occupy, a place which is real, and as Jung (1973, Vol. 8) said, the psyche is real, an objective reality. It is this imaginal

faculty that Mary experiences as she speaks to Peter and Andrew of her vision of Jesus after the resurrection. Leloup (2002: 18) goes on to say that in this sense, *'The imagination is the sympathetic response of the invisible and the visible of the spiritual and the physical'*.

I did not immediately recognise the connection, but a while later, on returning to the 'problem' of my research process, a connection was made. I believed myself to have been moving between theoretical and empirical worlds, and here was Leoup explaining that through creative imagination, Mary Magdalene was able to experience a real world between the physical and the spiritual. Perhaps this is what the people in these two organisations were doing. We are in business, Fr Stephen had said, '*because we live in a fallen world*', yet the day to day activity was dominated by continuous attempts to do God's will. I now saw the rituals and the symbols and their conscious engagement with them, as an attempt, not only to engage with the imaginal, but in doing so, to **integrate** the spiritual and the physical through creative imagination, in other words to live an undifferentiated life, non-dualistic, *'climbing the ladder to the unitary way'* as Fr Absel put it.

The story of this study became at that point the story of their attempts to engage the imaginal faculty such that the physical, fallen world, and the spiritual world became one; non dualism or as Fr Martin said, *'I only have one life'*. I have said I came to this realisation about the imaginal world via the Gospel of Mary Magdalene; I now wonder why I picked up this particular text for my break.

The literalistic tone of much spirituality in the workplace writing does not address the symbolic and ritualistic in any way. In avoiding this facet of the spiritual life the

literature misses a central feature of that life, namely the attempt to lead an undifferentiated life through engagement with symbol and ritual.

Non-Reified

The final critical point noted in chapter three was that of the reification of the organisation in the spirituality in the workplace literature. The literature reviewed in chapter three, appears to do this in a number of ways. Firstly, the literature largely stresses the goals of the organisation, authors write frequently of the influence of a more spiritual workplace on the performance of the organisation, and one executive even argued that his attendance on a retreat run by Fr Tredget (Overall, 1999) was aimed at improving the bottom line of his company. Indeed, some pointed to the difficulty of persuading companies to 'implement' 'spirituality at work' initiatives in the absence of these bottom line benefits.

There are many examples of the performance related emphasis, for example, Neck and Milliman (1994), Butts (1994), Maynard and Mehrtens (1993), Chappell (1993), McCormick (1994), Brandt (1996), and Mirvis (1997). It is also seen as facilitating the change process (Dehler and Welsh, 1994) and (Neal et al, 1999), it may assist in financial decision making (McCuddy and Pirie, 2007) and also in improving customer relations (Pandey et al, 2009). Recurrent issues also include the prescribing of organisational goals and mission statements and definition and measurement (Beazley, 1997; Heaton et al, 2004; and King and Crowther, 2004)

Such an emphasis also leads to the assumption that it is the organisation which is spiritual, rather than the individuals within it, which has been questioned by Brown

(2003). As a corollary to this, it becomes possible to write 'about' organisational spirituality, rather than 'know' organisational spirituality and write from that direct experience. The problem of intellectualising the spiritual experience has been discussed in chapters two and three. But there are authors working in this field who are reticent about attempts to enunciate the spiritual experience at all, Konz (1999) and Dehler and Welsh (1994) and others are cautious about attempts to define it, for example, McCormack (1994). There is a sense in which the spirituality in the workplace literature is condemned to talk 'about' the spiritual experience because the agenda appears to be one of operating on something outside of the self. Writers call for more spiritual workplaces but do not appear to examine their own spiritual life; intellectual activity is, in this sense separate from the subject matter. Yet, as shown in chapter four, many authors writing of methodological issues argue that we should be situating ourselves in the research work we do. This reflective and reflexive orientation is particularly difficult in terms of a researcher's spiritual experience; as I have discovered, and is developed further in chapter eight.

The question of whether a collective can be spiritual is a difficult one, but it might be illuminated by asking whether an organisation can be anything in this sense. Can an organisation be happy? Can an organisation be constructive or destructive? Can it be environmentally friendly? The argument in chapter three suggested that it is not an organisation that is these things, but the individuals within it, and the abstracting of the 'the organisation' deflects attention from the very human actions that take place within its context. Individuals are happy and sad, and individuals are constructive and destructive. The problem of the reification of organisations is well expressed by John Steinbeck in his

novel *'The Grapes of Wrath'* (1939: 34) Steinbeck draws out the conscious and unconscious processes of giving the whole organisation human capacities like loving and hating and needing and having. I quote Steinbeck at length here to make the point,

> *'Some of the owner men were kind because they hated what they had to do, and some of them were angry because they hated to be cruel, and some of them were cold because they had long ago found out that one could not be an owner unless one were cold. And all of them were caught in something larger than themselves. Some of them hated the mathematics that drove them, and some were afraid, and some worshipped the mathematics because it provided a refuge from thought and from feeling. If a bank or a finance company owned the land, the owner man said: The Bank - The Company - needs - wants - insists - must have - as though the Bank or the Company were a monster, with thought and feeling, which had ensnared them. These last would take no responsibility for the banks or the companies because they were men and slaves, while banks were machines and masters all at the same time. Some of the owner men were a little proud to be slaves to such cold and powerful masters. The owner men sat in the cars and explained. You know the land is poor. You've scrabbed at it long enough, God knows'.*
>
> *'The bank is something else than men. It happens that every man in a bank hates what the bank does, and yet the bank does it. The bank is something more than men, I tell you. It's the monster. Men made it, but they can't control it'.* (1939: 34)

Reification of the organisation might also signal a problem when discussing 'spirituality in the workplace' or 'spirituality at work'.

A final form of reification evident in the literature emerges from an emphasis on the performance of the organisation accrued from developing more spiritual workplaces. This implies a greater concern for the future than the present, and, by implication, focuses more on the destination than the journey. The spiritual organisation is a means to another end, the 'organon' in organisation is still prevalent, hence my persistent use of the word community rather than organisation. Not only is that the way the people I met refer to themselves, but also community at least implies a human interpretation rather than the detached instrumentalism of the word organisation. These examples of reification do not find support in the communities presented here.

In contrast to the emphases in the spirituality in the workplace literature the people in the two communities presented here do not appear to reify the community, that is, they lay far greater emphasis on the individual creating the meaning of the community for themselves, they emphasise the present rather than the future and direct experience is seen as the main way of 'knowing' rather than intellectual knowing, these are points to be developed below.

The emphasis of meaning over purpose

In chapter two, it was argued that the search for meaning is a central activity of all human beings, not only that, but meaning is an entirely subjective notion. While the formal purposes of these communities are well known, the meaning the community has for the people in it, is given at least an equal voice. This is not to say that the formal purposes of the community do not contain meaning, but what was evident was that these purposes are freely given wider interpretation by individuals. At Windhorse the meaning of the organisation was more varied than at Prinknash, including sentiments like being

involved with an experiment, community living and practicing the Dharma. This may be a result of having only 29 years of tradition behind it, as opposed to the 1500 year old traditions of the Benedictines. Kieran, an ex-novice at Prinknash, felt the community is expressly a place where people can search for meaning. At Windhorse, meaning was expressed in phrases like; *'Windhorse is an experiment'* (referring to Team Based Right Livelihood) *'a place to prepare for ordination', 'a place to develop friendships'* and *'a place to live together as Buddhists'*, and *a place where people are able to practice the Dharma'*. In both cases the work itself is seen as a spiritual practice. *'Work as a spiritual practice'* was an often used phrase at Windhorse and at Prinknash the same idea is expressly part of the *Rule of St Benedict.*

There are many opportunities for individuals to express what the organisation means to them. This is particularly the case at Windhorse with numerous forums, newsletters and discussion groups which appear to be entirely for that purpose. While it is less the case at Prinknash, the opportunity to discuss the issues of the day is present, and *the Rule* even makes clear the need to enter into consultation with younger members of the community. On a formal level, Fr Damien explained the Chapter House and its function and even the historical seating arrangement for discussion. Fr Stephen however spoke of the informal opportunity to express views, referring to the Abbot he said; *'go and speak to the man, he is there to be dialogued with'*.

The willingness to foster such expression, particularly at Windhorse is based on trust; as Vajraketu said, trust is central to his being able to make decisions on behalf of the organisation. The freedom to be both critical and supportive of people and decisions is clear from examination of newsletters. This suggests that while non-managers trust

management, this is a two way process in which management also trust the non-management staff to be fair and even in their comments and judgements. This trust was based on a common understanding, exactly as Butler (1995) suggested, and the common understanding came, in this case, from a shared allegiance to the teachings of the Buddha, principle among which is the Four Noble truths, the Eightfold Noble Path, and the Ten Precepts, along with their positive counterparts. (See Appendix One). The latter, among other things, encourages the Buddhist not to deceive or speak harshly. The concept of trust in contemporary work organisations as has been noted, has begun to gain some currency, for example, Mollering (2006).

The individually determined meaning of the spiritual life is emphasised in both organisations, but as stated earlier, the growth of the individual is given priority over the 'needs' of the organisation and in both cases decisions are frequently made with that express intention behind them. Jobs are, in both cases, given to individuals because it is felt that the individual will benefit from being in that role. This is not to say that the organisational imperatives are not seen as important, but simply that individual spiritual development is the chief goal, and organisational 'needs' are subordinated to this. Rijumati, for example, quipped that it would be easier to run a dictatorship. Certainly, it was acknowledged that giving people specific jobs based on their spiritual needs at the time, was both difficult and expensive in terms of continually retraining people for new tasks which individuals might have asked to do. At Prinknash, Fr Stephen told me, people stay in roles for at least a couple of years, but the assignment of roles is still more to do with the spiritual needs of the individual than the 'needs' of the organisation, as evidenced by Fr Stephen's choice of an assistant in the Infirmary.

The emphasis on the present rather than the future

A second way in which the literature, reifies the organisation is found in its attitudes to time, in short, the focus on performance leads to a future orientation and a deemphasising of the present. This section will show a different attitude to time in these communities and that this stems from what Butler (1995) called an *'organic'* orientation to time. Even when the future looks bleak the emphasis is on the present, and this is seen here as the result of an eschatological orientation, a concern with the ultimate destiny of humankind and the individual.

The data presented in chapters five and six demonstrate an attitude to the passage of time which appears quite different from that which might be expected in a conventional commercial concern. This orientation to time, is perhaps best summed up in the phrase, attributed to Benjamin Franklin; *'Time is money'*. In this sense the passing of time is objectified, and, as Sievers (2009) argues, commodified. This section will first present a conceptualisation of time as seen by Butler (1995) and Sievers (2009) and then present an interpretation of the orientation to time found in these two communities.

Time appears as something so familiar to us that we rarely afford it an analytical glance, our understanding of time governs our lives so completely, yet Butler (1995: 934) says our conceptions of time tend to be mostly in relation to the clock, and quoting Lightman (1993) he says we see time as, *'the rhythmic swing of a pendulum, mechanical, rigid, unyielding, predetermined'*. Our perception of time, Sievers (2004) argues, is still based largely on the physical, as it was for our ancestors, but relating time merely to the physical is, for him, a narrow conception and both Butler (1995) and Sievers (2004) point also, to the socially constructed nature of time. Sievers (2004) argues that in order to

make sense of the future, we need to make sense of the past. We experience time in the present, says Butler, but we do this by relating ourselves to the past, which we codify in order to envision the future and the extent to which we codify and how far back, is socially determined. In organisational terms, our orientations to the past and the future are part of the paradigm of the organisation, our actions now and choices made will depend in part, on the extent to which we see the future as knowable, yet, as Stacey (1993) points out, the future is unknown and unknowable.

It might also be added, that this also relates to our understanding of the 'march of time' over longer periods. For example, do we see history as a succession of progressive steps with each bettering the previous one? For Gray (2007) the notion of inexorable progress is a particularly Western and Enlightenment (and I would argue, colonially) inspired perspective. Seiver's (2004) suggests that this points to the psychological and emotional influence on our conceptions of time; the 'belief' in never ending progress represents a promise that we can escape from oblivion. In organisational terms there are also cultural differences in our conceptions of time which have been well documented. Hofstede (2001) for example points to the much longer time spans considered in Far Eastern companies in regard to investment. Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (1994) point out that the synchronised 'dancing' 'circularity' of Just-in-Time manufacturing was conceived in the Far East, whereas in the West, Taylor (1911) conceived the 'racing', 'linearity' of 'Time and Motion' studies, where *'Time is money'* and *'Time and Tide wait or no man'*.

Butler (1995) identifies six key variables in our understanding of time and these effectively disconnect *'clock time'* from our *'experience of time'*. The variables relate to

the extent of linearity, novelty, regularity, moveability, (i.e the extent to which we believe we have control over them), concurrence and pace of events. Each of these can vary according to which individual is experiencing them, therefore the experience of time is disconnected from clock time. From these variables Butler (1995) reveals four clusters of time frames in which organisations operate. First, *'Clock time'*, in which organisations are seen to *'work like clockwork'*. Second, *'Organic time'* in which organisations experience time as a *'natural growth'*, the past is relatively uncodified and the future is viewed as a process of consensus building. Emphasis is less on direction and control and more on acting when things are ready. Third, *'Strategic time'* in which time is dependant on the actions of others who have the power to affect the organisation and in which the past is homogeneously codified, and finally, *'Spasmodic time'* in which the past is heterogeneously codified and there is little agreement over the future. Different organisational types are dominated more or less by different orientations to time. Broadly, for our purposes, the bureaucratic form is more likely to be dominated by a clock orientation to time with long organisational memories. Collectives, on the other hand, rely much more on trust and common understandings and clock time is not seen to 'fit' with the perceived natural growth rate for the organisation, and are therefore more likely to be dominated by *'Organic time'*.

The tensions between the present and the future became evident in both organisations in this study. At Windhorse there was a sense of excitement about the *'experiment'*, as Vajraketu referred to the business. The excitement I witnessed daily indicated a future orientation; plans, hopes and dreams about what they could achieve were frequently voiced and the newsletters were peppered with short pieces from all parts

of the organisation expressing ideas and initiatives for the future. However, the problem of growth and size interfering with the spiritual objectives of the community brought the tension between present and future into sharp focus for most of the people I spoke to.

Reconciling this tension was, in the end, a practical matter and at Windhorse, Rijumati explained the decision to consolidate the business meant very practical things like not taking on further van runs or open more shops. These examples suggest that while the attempt to balance tensions is apparent, in the end, spiritual aspirations prevailed. More importantly, the present and the experience of people, are more important than the future and abstract goals. At Prinknash, the same recognition that the spiritual goals were being subverted, led the monks to sell the pottery business. *'The tail was wagging the dog'*, said Fr Francis and *'We were able to pull back to the goal'*. In both cases the emphasis is placed squarely on the **people** in the organisation and **now**. Ultimately spiritual goals are the main reason for being there, and this alone ensures that the economic activity is subordinated, but not ignored.

The people in these two communities have, as part of their nature, an eschatological orientation, that is, a concern with the ultimate destiny of mankind and the individual. Indeed, Fr Martin said exactly that, *'I have an eschatological goal, and because I've got that, I can conduct my business in a detached way'*. In both communities that is characterised by a strong recognition of impermanence, which I argue here contributes to a reconciliation of the potential tension between the present and the future. I expected impermanence to feature in the conversation at Windhorse, but was surprised to hear the same at Prinknash too. Fr Damien said, *'our lord never said anything would last forever'*

At Prinknash attitudes to impermanence led to a sanguine attitude to the idea that the community might have to break up and live apart. Fr Francis recounted, as detailed in chapter five, that this was what had happened to nuns in a community he was familiar with, and that it had *'all worked out in the end'*. In Buddhism, impermanence is arguably the central teaching. The Buddha stated as the first Noble Truth that life is full of suffering, ending in death and this observation gives rise to the entire Buddhist Dharma. In these organisations an eschatological orientation appeared to enable them to balance competing tensions. More particularly, this orientation lays a clear focus on now, rather than the future and long term survival. While survival is important, it is frequently tempered by focussing on the people in the organisation now. Fr Stephen, for example, spoke of *'making the lot of those who will die better,* and focussing on *'those who have made a contribution to the community already'*.

Accordingly, more attention is given to the journey and now, than on the destination and the future. At Windhorse, growth was decisively and consciously foregone in preference to furthering spiritual aims. It also appears to have some impact on attitudes to control; certainly in Prinknash the notion of Grace gives rise to a sanguine temperament that does not appear to angst over issues of survival and growth. *'First we decide whether to act'*, said Fr Stephen and as Fr Francis said *'we should act as though it all depended on us but believe it depends on God'*.

In both communities reconciliation of the tension between present and future was ultimately achieved by talking. The discussion groups and newsletters at Windhorse provided ample opportunity for individuals to express their concerns which included those of the management team. At Prinknash the recognition that *'the tail was wagging*

the dog' came through discussion, but the level of consultation is prescribed by *The Rule,* and though it again took time, (and money), eventually decisions were taken to ensure that **the community** at **the present** was paramount.

The same eschatological orientation appears to have some influence on attitudes to economic activity, especially in regard to the potential conflict with spiritual objectives. In essence there were few conflicts between economic and spiritual goals, the latter is always predominant and the ends to which the economic activity was the means. However, it would be unrealistic to suggest that the conflict did not surface; the spiritual life is about living now, in this moment, whereas the economic imperative requires a future orientation and these communities needed to do both.

The alignment with *'organic time'* Butler (1995) I found at Windhorse was most obvious in the conflict between growth on the one hand and friendship, communication and consultation on the other. At Windhorse considerable emphasis is placed on friendship and this is both formal and informal, growing the business came into conflict with this central meaning for many individuals and it took time to resolve. But it appears there was universal agreement that the speed and scale of the growth was affecting this principle adversely. The intention was to grow the business after the consolidation had had the desired effect when, again, income used to sustain the community and to fund projects outside it, but related to it in some way.

The tension between present and future was also apparent at Prinknash as they faced an aging brotherhood and declining new vocations. This was a problem for a number of reasons; the older monks could not do the physical work they had formerly

been able to do, but also there was the sense, expressed by some, that the community needed fresh younger views and ideas.

The tension between economic and spiritual goals was not as marked as I expected it to be, in both cases the emphasis on business activity is oriented towards achieving spiritual goals, which of course includes the survival of the community. At Prinknash this was very clearly the case; income was needed to sustain the community now and in the future and to fund sister communities abroad, but there was little mention of the need for income beyond these purposes, and growth was not mentioned at all. In neither case was there any mention of economic goals being important for their own sake; nobody, for example, referred to abstract goals such as increasing market share. Indeed, both organisations saw economic activity as a means by which spiritual goals could be achieved, and both saw fair dealings in the market place as an essential part of the spiritual aspiration. People at Windhorse, for example, frequently spoke of acting ethically in business and were in the process of improving their relationships with suppliers in order to help those communities abroad. At Prinknash Fr Stephen, Fr Martin and Fr Mark all indicated that while they were not fools in commercial activity, acting fairly in the market place was important for them also, as the *Rule of St Benedict* stipulated. But Fr Stephen even saw this as an ethical dilemma; too low a price might put others out of business.

This concern was also identified by Sinhavacin at Windhorse when he discussed the need to act competitively without putting others out of business. Dirangama, surprised me by explaining the reason for diversification was a way to ensure there was no need for unethical business practices. Fr Mark and others at Prinknash referred to the

concept of stewardship as a way to keep the economic activity in its place; for them, the resources at their disposal were not theirs, but entrusted to them by God, and this ameliorated ethical problems to a degree. The notion of stewardship was perhaps first mentioned in management literature in 1977 by Greenleaf. In both cases then, the economic imperative was subordinated to the spiritual one. Fr Mark for example, in response to an observation that ethical behaviour might leave them at some disadvantage said; *'so be it'*. At Windhorse, growth was deliberately foregone in order to maintain the spiritual objective and this appears to have been universally agreed upon.

The emphasis on direct experience over intellect

One of the central issues to emerge from the discussion on the attempts to define spirituality, was the repeated observation by mystical and theological writers, that the spiritual experience is beyond words and is not an intellectual exercise, for example in *The Cloud of Unknowing* (Wolters: 65-66) the author writes,

> *"For whoever reads or hears about this, and thinks that it is fundamentally an activity of the mind, and proceeds then to work it all out along these lines, is on quite the wrong track. He manufactures an experience that is neither spiritual nor physical. He is dangerously misled and in real peril".*

The spirituality in the workplace literature has tended to treat the spiritual as just that, an intellectual enterprise, mostly because it has been taken up by academics following a number of articles in non-academic American management magazines in the middle 1980's. This conceptualisation enables the writer to remain distant from his or

her subject matter and talk 'about' it, rather than demonstrate experience of it. The word 'it' is important here; the Hasidic theologian and philosopher Martin Buber (1970) draws attention to the problem of a society in which relationships are seen as between *'I - It'*, objectifying and reifying the world we live in, and the relationships we have with other people. This is contrasted with *'I – Thou'*, in which the relationship is entirely about the experience of the other, and therefore not conceptualised. This relationship is, for Buber, devoid of qualities (concepts) and something similar has been understood by Zen Buddhists for centuries.

At Prinknash and Windhorse the organisation affords its members the opportunity to work towards **experience** of the spiritual life, and not (as in my case) an intellectual understanding of it. In other words the idea is to **know** the spiritual life and not to know **about** it. The Buddha likened the one who knows 'about' the spiritual life to a man who tends another's cattle. To engage with the spiritual intellectually, is to do so at arm's length and therefore, at a safe distance. The emphasis on experience over intellectual 'knowing about' accords with most religious traditions I have examined over the years. Repeatedly, adherents to widely differing traditions refer unequivocally to the incapacity of words to describe the spiritual experience. Jung too, (in Hauke 2000: 213) pointed to the ineffable nature of the spiritual; '*...Names and words are sorry husks, yet they indicate the quality of what we have experienced'.*

Foucault (1969) argued that language is power, but here it is the impoverishment of language in respect of spiritual matters that becomes apparent, and it is no surprise that the earliest attempts of humans to express the numinous were in the form of poetry Griffiths (1976). Hauke (2000: 210) makes a further point in this regard; *'It has probably*

been the very poetic and 'unscientific' style of expression of the East that has deterred the modernist, rational mind from paying more than scant attention to these forms of expression except in the margins of Western thought'.

While at Prinknash and Windhorse private study is encouraged, (indeed, *the Rule* of St Benedict makes clear that study is an essential part of the monk's life), it is not a substitute for experience. Not only is, 'knowing about' the spiritual life inferior to experiencing it, in these cases I felt it was not even possible to know fully, **about** their lives. At Prinknash Fr Absel said *'you have to live the life'* and he was right. In chapter four I have discussed what I now realise is the extreme difficulty of even 'knowing about' the spiritual life of the people I met.

The two communities studied here continually emphasise the relationship with other people as central. Discussing the role of the Abbot at Prinknash, and, in mock chastisement, Fr Stephen said *'go and see the man, he is there to be dialogued with'*. At Windhorse the relationship with others is central to everything and frequently given the Buddha's own endorsement. What matters is the direct experience of other people, and this contributes to the spiritual endeavour, a sentiment which seems to encapsulate the importance of the *'I-Thou'* orientation identified by Buber (1970) who makes plain the need to approach God in the same way.

The question might now be addressed 'why do our organisations tend to emphasise the 'needs' of the organisation over and above the needs of the individual, or to put it another way why do we reify organisations? One argument might be that the meaning we invest in organisations may be deeper rooted than mere physical survival Sievers (1990) argues that organisations are 'designed' to outlive us because we

experience existential angst, or what in Becker (1973) called '*the denial of death*' we invest organisations with the immortality we do not have ourselves. The '*diabolization of death*' Sievers (1990) says, enables us to ignore it and to this end we have become obsessed with corporate image. This point is made all the more clear by the vast sums spent 're-branding' companies and the point is not lost of those that are aware of the power of the symbol of the corporate image. Richard Branson regularly presents himself as Robin Hood, David of Goliath fame and Peter Pan. For Sievers (1990) the 'diabolos' present in much traditional organisational studies literature serve only to mask the chaos, ugliness and madness of organisational life, or what others following Jung have termed *the Shadow* (Bowles, 1991).

Recent shocks in the financial world show clearly the impermanence of even the largest and most powerful organisations, yet Sievers (1990) says we continue to see those organisations, and our own identities in them, as routes to immortality. This is perhaps clearer when examining very large organisations turning their history into another 'product' to be sold, Ford, McDonalds and Cadbury, for example, have all created museums for the public to see how they grew and performed in the past, it would not be too much of a stretch of the imagination to see these as structures akin to the Pharaoh's tombs designed to ensure life after death. Indeed, in this reading of organisational life it could be that the reification of the organisation is the modern linguistic equivalent of a pyramid; designed to ensure an afterlife. What all this points to, is that if organisations are places where meaning is created and experienced then the religious organisation may have something to teach us in terms of the parallels that might be evidenced and the symbols that can be interpreted.

Summary

The chapter has drawn together the data from the two case organisations and compared it to the underlying emphases found in the spirituality in the workplace literature explored in chapter three. In that chapter, three underlying emphases were revealed; its managerialist tenor, its dualistic orientation, and its reified assumptions. Taking these in turn, this chapter has shown that far from being managerial, these communities adopt a consultative, if not democratic, decision making stance which is characterised by flexibility and pragmatism. Furthermore, while the spiritual development of the individual is seen to be of paramount importance in these communities, the growth of the individual, in this sense, is not seen as the responsibility of management, but of the individual in communion with others. In addition, the individual is the end to which the organisation is the means, and this is contrasted with many conventional concerns and the spirituality in the workplace literature, where the emphasis is the other way round; namely the individual is there to serve the 'needs' of the organisation. These communities also demonstrate reticence in regard to action which has not been subject to considerable reflection, both communally and in solitude.

The second section discusses another critical observation in chapter three, that the literature has a tendency to adopt a dualistic stance in a number of ways; separating spirituality from religion, the spiritual life from other aspects of life, management from workers, and the spiritual from the 'unspiritual' organisation. This is also found to be quite different to the communities studied here, where the life is expressly about the aspiration to non-dualism. This observation was also made when discussing key features of the spiritual life by reference to theological work in chapter one, time and again

theological work and mystical writers refer to the aspiration to lead a non-dualistic life, and so it was in these two communities also. The notion of 'the spiritual life' was contested by a number of people in these communities, particularly Prinknash, where, as Fr Martin said *'I have one life'* and as Fr Absel put it they, *'climb the ladder to the unitary way'*.

The managerialist tone of the 'crusaders' discussed in chapter three also does not include any recognition of the role of symbol and ritual in its discourse, yet a central means by which the non-dualistic life is experienced is through conscious engagement with symbol and ritual and this conscious engagement is presented here, both as *'social cement'* (Durkheim, 1915) and as an imaginal process which seeks to integrate life for the individual. The absence of any substantial reference to symbol and ritual in the spirituality in the workplace discourse may itself, be an attempt to separate religion from spirituality in the workplace, most likely because religion is seen by many to be the cause of division rather than unity. However, given the managerialist tenor alluded to earlier it may also be symptomatic of an underlying literalism which sees the meaning an organisation has for its members, as prescribed by management, and hierarchical considerations, it is in this sense, as earlier remarked, *'ordinary management'* not *'extra ordinary management'* (Stacey, 1993).

The final section identifies the reified nature of the spirituality in the workplace discourse, where the 'needs' of the organisation are placed above those of the individual, and abstract goals are given primacy over the needs of individuals. This has been illuminated by reference to the work of Martin Buber (1970) and his distinction between *'I-Thou'* and *'I-it'*. The non-reified orientation found in these organisations manifests

itself in a number of ways; the emphasis on the personal meaning of the organisation as opposed to its formal purpose, the emphasis on direct experience of the spiritual life rather than 'knowing about' it, and the orientation towards the present rather than the future. In terms of the last of these, the spirituality in the workplace literature, by contrast, emphasises the contribution of a more spiritual workplace to organisational performance and by implication, the future is afforded greater significance than the present. Again, this is found to contrast sharply with the experiences of the people in these two communities, where people in relationship to others, in the present, are emphasised over abstract goals and the future. This orientation is illuminated by reference to Butler's (1995) conception of socially constructed, *'organic time'*, and is also allied to a recognition of the eschatological concerns of the people in these communities, where consideration of the ultimate destiny of mankind and of the individual include a strong alliance to the idea of impermanence.

The conclusion to this study has to be that the spirituality in the workplace literature is largely, but not exclusively, managerialist, dualistic and reified. There are voices beginning to offer a more critical view, and this work would appear to support them, since the communities studied here, bare little relation the spiritual workplaces envisaged by many earlier and current contributors. This does not mean that the discourse is of no value, my time in these two communities demonstrated that they were places where the usual tensions of organisational life are experienced, but the means by which they are addressed is unusual, and may be instructive. If such communities are able and willing to share their experiences, the spirituality at work discourse might be considerably enriched.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

By way of a reminder, this concluding chapter will begin by briefly drawing the arguments contained in previous chapters together. It then delineates the contribution this work makes to the field of organisation studies generally and to the spirituality in the workplace discourse more specifically. The chapter continues with suggestions for further research drawn from the conclusions to this work and then concludes with some personal reflections on the research process.

Summary of the main arguments and findings

The study opens with defence of the study of religion and religious communities and demonstrates that *'secularisation is a particularly Eurocentric view'* Joas (2008). Definitions of spirituality are seen as very difficult to agree upon and instead the features of the spiritual life have been identified by reference to theological and mystical writing. The idea of religion as being in the service of some other social function as it is often treated in classical sociology is contrasted with the work of Jung (1973, Vol.11) who pointed to the symbolic nature of the religious impulse, and the growth of interest in spirituality is seen as possibly emerging from a growth in consciousness in which the *'God shaped hole'* (Midgley, 2005: 286) has prompted a questioning of the institutionalised expression of the religious impulse. The spirituality in the workplace literature appears as a paradigm breaking movement but much of it has been criticised by others as potentially faddish and even divisive. In addition this literature does not attempt to enquire into the experiences of people living and working in self sustaining

spiritual communities, an omission this study seeks to address, and finds that the lives of those in such communities does not resemble the conception of the spiritual workplace envisaged by the spirituality in the workplace 'movement'.

The contribution to organisation studies

One of the things this work has taught me, is that however much I might feel there are possibilities for organisations to be more satisfying places for people to live and work in, there, I feel, literalism and rationalism prevail and, in the case of my own workplace, a university, appear to be more prevalent as each day passes. The attitudes and orientations of the people I have met during this work at Windhorse and Prinknash are therefore very unlikely to find a ready audience in most organisations particularly commercial organisations. All I can therefore hope for is that I will have gained from seeing people work together in a different way to my own experience and possibly that others will see it is possible too, I am hopeful but not optimistic.

Nevertheless, while the issues identified reveal organisational settings which have many of the same issues and problems as do many commercial concerns, what is noteworthy, are the underlying aspirations of the individuals in these two communities, these are the key contributions to the spirituality in the workplace literature and are noted in summary here.

1. The people in these communities aspire to a non-dualistic experience of life which seeks to integrate all its aspects.

2. The people in these communities consciously engage with symbol and ritual as a means by which the individual might achieve spiritual growth in communion with others.

3. The people in these communities seek direct experience of reality, God or the Dharma by focussing on people and the present moment.

These observations contrast with a significant proportion of the spirituality in the workplace writing which:

1. Has a dualistic orientation that separates management from workers, the spiritual from the religious and the spiritual from the non-spiritual.

2. Does not address the role of symbol and ritual in its discourse.

3. Reifies the 'spiritual organisation' by focussing on abstract goals and the future attainment of those goals, as well as treating spirituality in the workplace as an intellectual exercise rather than a lived experience.

The non-dualistic aspiration

The first key contribution of this study is the recognition of the potential for a non-dualistic orientation to work and life. It is tempting to write that in essence, the lives of the people in these communities is entirely of a spiritual nature and all else is subservient to that end and perhaps that is the case in some way, but it is rather simplistic.

While spiritual development, whether to know God or reach Enlightenment, is the objective, what this study shows is that apparently 'non-spiritual activity', for example work, management and decision making, are not seen as such, but as an integral part of living the spiritual life. For those at Windhorse work is expressly a spiritual activity to be carried out mindfully and with others. Similarly at Prinknash, the work of the day is carried out as service to God, and again, while sometimes alone, is also frequently with others. The point drawn out of the study is that work and the spiritual are not separated from one another, but the endeavour is continuously to integrate them. I have characterised this as non-dualism.

What I think this study has also shown me, is that the separation of work from the other facets of life; for example, leisure, work and spiritual 'lives', is spurious. We are all of these things, all of the time. A recent book by Stephen Green, (2010) Chairman of HSBC and an ordained priest of the Church of England, argues that we should not have one set of moral principle applied in the market and another for our private lives. This view supports the one found in this study; that the compartmentalisation of life in any of its manifestations causes as many difficulties as it resolves. Notions of spirituality in the workplace are, for me, helpful only insofar as they facilitate the integration of life in all its variety and vicissitudes. *'If you can meet with triumph and disaster and treat those two impostors both the same'*, wrote Rudyard Kipling, pointing to the same non-duality. The Indian writer Swami Parananada (1987: 197) said something similar

"Virtue and vice, good and ill,

Ever play surging havoc in the dual conflict of life,

I abandon them forever and sit with thee".

What is important however, is that the study of spiritual communities may illuminate the quest for an individuated life (Jung, 1973: Vol. 8)) in the context of our work. The spirituality in the workplace movement is, for me helpful to the extent that it contributes to this integration. Whatever terms we might use to refer to the oneness of life as opposed to duality, our organisations continue to require of us a separation and partiality, a fragmentation of the self as identified by others, (Marx, 1963; Habermas 1971; and Fromm, 1994), that is antithetical to the spiritual endeavour, and it is this non-dualism that I feel should be addressed in the discourse known as spirituality in the workplace. Work in a spiritual place is not a set of compartmentalised activities, even though they take place at different and prescribed times of the day, month and year. Having turned the notion of 'spirituality in the workplace' around and enquired into 'work in a spiritual place', I now see the undue separation and dualism in both these phrases, work <u>is</u> a spiritual activity.

Such an assertion has the air of utopianism or idealism about it which must be dispelled. To portray either of these communities as such would be to suggest people who had found the perfect organisational mode and had successfully kept it a secret (in the case of Prinknash for 1500 years). Here, in these communities, I found predictable organisational and human problems; conflicts of interest, conflicts of values. There were human emotions I didn't expect to find in spiritual communities, including jealousy and anger. I found thorny problems of integration and adaptation, there were wrong turns, sometimes only discussed when it was nearly too late. The differences of opinion

between Rijumati and Vajraketu for example, were freely discussed with me and with other members of the Windhorse community (and subsequently published; Padmasuri, 2003).

All this and more suggest to me that the spiritual community is similar to any other community; as Cardinal Basil Hume advised young monks, (Hume, 1977: 31)

> *"You are joining a community composed of extremely imperfect human beings. It is rather like being in a hospital where the matron, as well as the patients is sick! You are not entering a community of saints".*

At Prinknash the people I met were well aware of these shortcomings. Fr Damien for example, recalled meeting Fr Aldhelm (the former abbot) when he first expressed a desire to become a monk and Fr Aldhelm's response was similar to the words of Cardinal Hume *'Have you ever been in a lunatic asylum?'* Fr Mark told be *'we are a rather feeble bunch of guys really'.*

But there is a key difference between these communities and the conventional commercial concern. The humanity of the situation is well known to all participants, but there is a constant resolve to step beyond the little *'i'* and to connect (or reconnect) to something bigger, the transcendent, but which is deemed to be within us all. For those at Prinknash the first objective is; *'...to get to know God and him whom he has sent Jesus Christ our Lord',* as Cardinal Hume said (1977: 30). At Windhorse, Rijumati pointed to the Buddha's own acknowledgment that there was something greater than the Buddha;

the Dharma. Following the Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hahn, (1995) I now see these as the same; God and the Dharma.

In these communities while balance was clearly important the aspiration appears to be to integrate; to live one undifferentiated life, now, rather than accepting the continuous tilting of the scales one way or another and requiring periodical adjustment. This was evidently not always achieved, but the aspiration is ever present, as Fr Absel said, *'going up the ladder to the unitary way'*. St Benedict said the monk's life was about work, study and prayer, but all of this is focussed on the integration of life.

The conscious engagement with symbol and ritual

A second key contribution this study makes is the recognition of conscious engagement with symbol and ritual in order to achieve the aims of the individuals in the community. As noted in chapter seven the use of symbol and ritual to further organisational ends has been well known to business and military leaders for a long time. In these two communities, however, the engagement with symbol and ritual is consciously undertaken by all members with the express intention of facilitating the spiritual growth of the individual, rather than the furtherance of organisational goals as devised by management. Sinhavacin described the ordination ceremony as something you would so if you were the only person on earth. That is not to say that the symbolic engagement is not also to achieve social cohesion as Durkheim (1915) argued it was, in both communities this 'function' was also made clear to me. Furthermore, in these two communities the engagement with symbol is seen, not as an expression of the destination of the spiritual life, but the path to that union. There doesn't appear to be any attempt to prescribe the meaning of the symbols and rituals, but simply to offer them as a path,

leaving the individual to find meaning for themselves. As Fr Mark said the liturgy seems sometimes boring, but one day it, *'exploded with meaning'*. In addition the symbolic framework, within which a community locates itself, evolves organically, but the community is only sustained by that framework, if it is seen to be alive, growing and interpreted by that community.

The non-reified organisation

A further contribution of this work has been the identification of the potential for a non-reified organisation. In chapter seven it was noted that the two communities in this study both focus attention on people rather than abstractions such as organisational goals. They also focus attention on the present rather than the future, even though issues of survival were present they were nevertheless subordinated to *'those that will die and have contributed to the community in the past'*. The focus is also on direct experience of the life rather than intellectual knowledge of it, and on the meaning of the organisation to individuals rather than on the formal purpose of it.

Such orientation appears quite different from conventional commercial organisations which focus extensively on abstractions, intellect, formal purpose and on the future. It was noted earlier that language reifies the organisation by the use of such phrases as *'the organisation needs'*, *'wants'*, *'has'*, *'believes'*, and *'feels'*, yet the organisation is not a thinking, feeling, sensing entity, but an abstraction which, while convenient in terms of communication, nevertheless distracts attention from the human issues of sense making and meaning.

The preceding section argues that the lives of people in the two communities studied here are too far removed from contemporary organisations and their activities to

offer any help. There are nevertheless some points emerging from the study that might be worthy of consideration in conventional organisations, these are offered here as a points for reflection rather than advice or recommendations.

The contribution to management practice

Trust

First, the issue of trust emerged a number of times, Vajraketu highlighted that in Windhorse. Trust was one of the reasons he was able to do the work he did effectively, although he also pointed out that there were times when he felt he should have been earning that trust more than assuming it. Trust, as already noted, has been gaining some interest in the organisational literature (Mollering, 2006). In these communities trust is based on the idea that everyone in the community subscribes to the basic principles of the tradition, Buddhism or Christianity, and that therefore in the words of Vajraketu certain things can be taken for granted. In Buddhism for example the Ten Precepts (see Appendix One) are learned, studied and internalised by most Buddhists, and they are completed by the Ten Positive Precepts which are in place to act as a balance stating the positive side to the Ten Precepts. (In Buddhism the Ten Precepts and their positive counterparts are not seen or written as rules but as training principles aspired to and continually reaffirmed). For Vajraketu, the affirmation of the Ten Precepts and their positive counterparts enables him to take some things for granted, such as honesty, not stealing, and not speaking harshly. For him, and others at Windhorse, this means that much of the uncertainty that can exist in organisations is removed when it relates to relationships between people in the organisation.

What is interesting is that the matters that are assumed are so because of the commitment to something outside and beyond the rules of the organisation, and are seen as something an adherent commits to in all situations in life, not only working life and certainly not only in that organisation.

The implications of this for conventional organisations are not easy to see; our commitment to the organisation is usually seen as a commitment to its rules, and yet. as Stephen Green (2010) points out, an ethical position should not only be in place in the business setting, but in all life's settings. What is apparent here is that having this non dualistic orientation to life enables trust to be engendered in people who adopt the same principles. The question remains for the conventional organisation whether the same trust might develop in organisation where people do not subscribe to the same traditions. However, two points must be made in this regard; the principles, be they the Buddhist Ten Precepts or Christian Ten Commandments are not only similar, but also are not exclusive to religious traditions. There might be grounds for considering whether trust might be engendered in organisations through agreement to act in certain ways as a matter of principle. Needless to say, the Ten Commandments and the Ten Precepts are not simply a list of ethical behaviours. (For a very detailed consideration of the deeper points of the Ten precepts for example see Piyadessi, 1964)

Leadership & Management

A second implication for conventional organisations relates to issues of leadership. The primary implication of much of the spirituality in the workplace writing reviewed in Chapter Three is that the development of a more spiritually oriented workplace is primarily a concern for the leadership and management of the organisation.

Here however, it has been argued that spiritual development of individuals in the context of a community is not seen as a management function alongside HR and Marketing, but as the responsibility of all members of the community. Leadership is clearly seen as important, but the style of leadership is quite different from the managerial tone of the literature. Fr Stephen for example was happier with the term 'accompaniment' than management when he discussed his supervisory role. Similarly the Abbot, Fr Francis spoke of his reluctance to take on the role of Abbot, he said the decision to elect him was a democratic process but that they hoped the Holy Spirit had something to do with it. The implication is that leadership is more like guidance and is informed more by the spiritual traditions of prayer and contemplation, rather than managerial dictate. The spiritual development of the individual is a matter for the individual in the context of a community and not for the management to implement much less enforce. Similarly, the group is allowed to form itself in order to reach the goals of the community which are all agreed upon. The conventional commercial concern might have cause for reflection on these points.

Work/life balance

If the findings in this study are pursued there may also be implications for the discourse known as work/life balance. This study shows the possibility that people may seek not balance between competing elements of life, most specifically between work and non-work environments, but an integration of those elements. The work/life balance discourse appears as a further dualism in that work is seen as a separate activity from life and therefore needs to be balanced. In this study however, work is seen emphatically as life itself. The opportunity to grow as an individual is encapsulated in the act of working,

particularly in working with others. Discussions on the benefits or otherwise of working from home versus commuting to work frequently focus on utilitarian issues of carbon footprints and savings to the company from the reduced need for premises including car parks, but rarely give attention to softer issues, such as the emotional factors present in the working relationship. The notion of work as a dignifying act is to be found in Islamic teaching and in Buddhist teaching (Harvey, 2000).

This study identifies the possibility that through integrating work and non-work activity, individuals may be more fulfilled and this may have implications for performance too. It should be noted however, that the findings of this study show that performance is seen as a function of individual fulfilment and not of managerial dictate

Non-dualism

A further and related implication of this work for commercial organisations emerges from the non-reified orientation of the people in these communities. The focus of attention is always on the direct lived experience of the individual and how that impacts on the spiritual growth of the individual, it is less on abstractions such as mission statements, ROI or ROCE. This orientation has led to the development of communities which perform well and which has last a very long time.

Commercial organisations are largely focussed on abstract goals and methods which orientate towards the future, whereas these communities focus on the individual, here and now, and this results in longevity and performance of the organisation.

The focus on abstraction is perhaps understandable in a time of targets and financial pressures, but this study demonstrates the possibility that such goals can be achieved by beginning with the individual's well being, both alone and in community. Such an

orientation may be difficult to envisage in these times, yet the study shows that it is possible and points to a reconsideration of a number of organisational and managerial functions such as human resources, management, strategy and very importantly leadership.

Symbol & Ritual

Another implication of this work for management practice emerges from the conscious engagement with symbol and ritual in these communities. This engagement is expressly intended to contribute to the spiritual growth of the individual, as well as to the social cohesion of the community as a whole. Discussions of the role symbols in organisations arguably began with Pondy et al in 1983. Conscious engagement with symbol and ritual as a means to promote social cohesion was identified by others, Durkheim for example (1915), but recognition of the role of symbol and ritual in the growth of individuals goes largely unnoticed by the contemporary academic community. The world's religions have, of course been very aware of this for millennia, but in an 'age of reason' such considerations are derided as irrelevant and little more than superstition. In this study however, the very pragmatic (if mysterious) enactment of symbolic and ritualistic observance is emphasised. Fr Mark's comment that the 'words suddenly exploded with meaning', and that he might have been reciting 'Three Blind Mice', is testament to the transformative capacity of symbol and ritual on the individual. This may have implications for commercial organisations too; through conscious engagement with symbol and ritual individuals may also contribute to their own wellbeing in the context of commercial activity. However, a note of caution must accompany this observation. The

symbol and ritual I encountered in these communities, while largely prescribed by the institution, and indeed the original teachings were nevertheless interpreted by the community as a whole, and sometimes even dropped when seen **by the community** as no longer helpful. The point being that symbol and ritual is meaningful and therefore potentially transformative, **when and only when**, the meaning is left to the individuals to reveal for themselves, and not instigated by others with a specific agenda. Again, the implications for commercial organisations are considerable, provided the symbol and ritual are an individual and community expression of meaning.

Silence

One of the key lessons I learned during this work was the effectiveness of silence. The people I met in these communities spend a lot of time in silence, yet for many that would seem a waste of time. For the people in these communities silence is central to their own spiritual growth, and also to the flourishing of the community. Silence is a time of deep reflection. In conventional management silence doesn't seem to have a role to play, the emphasis is on words, many words, and much action, achievement, targets, goals, missions, strategy, tactics, and so on. But here the emphasis on silence is seen as a powerful way to harness the capability of the people and the community as a whole. Management may be able to learn a great deal from these communities in this respect. Indeed, some Benedictines have already begun to offer courses to corporate executives to engender just that (Overell, 1999). As remarked earlier, different spiritual traditions have begun to interest the corporate world for example Lowney (2005). I would argue that this may be the single most important observation from this study in terms of the assistance it might offer to the world of conventional organisations.

The future of the spirituality in the workplace discourse

My teaching role during this research included variations on the themes of organisation studies, business ethics and strategic management and I also had occasion to discuss the philosophy of science in research methods courses. I noticed two things while teaching these subjects, in the moments that it seemed appropriate to discuss my own research; undergraduates and postgraduate students responded with genuine interest, (I think I can tell when they are being polite these days). This tells me that I should continue to discuss these issues in lectures and seminars, but increasingly the business school is moving into a Freidmanesque mode of operation indicated by a senior member of staff telling me that research should have a *'bottom line'* consideration. This mode of operation sees the business of business as profits (Friedman and Friedman, 1979) rather than Prophets, so I do wonder where such a discussion would find a home in such an environment. Yet, I do think it is time for such discussion, as the UK faces a decade of severe fiscal measures resulting from huge borrowings designed to save the banking sector, an alternative voice, would be very good in this time.

In the UK, spirituality in the workplace has found an occasional voice for example Gibbons (2002) and Bell and Taylor (2003, 2004, and 2008) and even a stream at the Critical Management conference in 2007 The USA does appear to have much less trouble finding a space for the discussion as pointed out earlier. If a forum for the discussion of spirituality in the workplace in the UK does emerge I hope it would take a less managerial tenor than the US contributions and if it does, certain issues emerging from this research might indicate the direction it takes. The next section offers these suggestions.

Learning from spiritual communities

Collins and Porras (2002) refer to the importance of the feeling of community within large organisations and this is an area that I also feel needs further attention, more specifically that attention might gain considerably from specific reference to spiritual communities. For example, in this work the indications are that spiritual communities might be able to offer an insight into a non-managerial approach to the organisational process. That approach appears to be characterised by express attention to the present as opposed to the future, and as such, is the antithesis of much conventional management literature. The concern that such an orientation would not contribute to the longevity of the conventional organisation has been addressed in chapter one.

The non-managerial approach found in these communities is also characterised by a non-reified understanding of its purpose; people come first over and above abstract goals. One of the supervisors for this work told me that when he when he worked in a coaching company in the 1950s, the Directors frequently said '*you do not work for us, you work with us*', the company, he said, did not suffer industrial disputes as a result of that orientation. Again, this is not commonly found in most conventional commercial concerns and there may be considerable insights to be found in the study of spiritual communities in this respect.

The life of the symbol

A further area of interest emerging from this work is that of the process of symbols over time. In the literature on the organisational symbolism there is a substantial discourse surrounding the existence of organisational symbols and the effects they have

on those that experience them in some way, Pondy et al (1983) was arguably the first major work in this direction. This study has shown that conscious engagement with symbol and ritual has a substantial impact, not only on the sense of cohesion in the community, but also on the spiritual development of the individual within the community. However, within the context of organisation theory, what seems less clear, is the process by which symbols arise over time and the ways in which they develop. Do functional and literal acts only later take on symbolic and ritualistic character? Do symbols move through 'life cycles', for example starting as literal interpretations moving on to symbolic interpretations and perhaps back again? The raging debate as to whether the stories of the Bible can or should be interpreted symbolically or literally is at the heart of doctrinal disputes in the Christianity.[54] What is interesting, but beyond the limits of this study, is the extent to which people have only a literalised conception of life and work, as opposed to a symbolic account which potentially renders a different meaning to life, work, identity and social relations more generally.

Related to this is the extent to which religious communities show us the value and reality of the imaginal life as discussed in chapter seven, and how recognising this might help us integrate it and the empirical world. The spirituality in the workplace literature might be well placed to explore this facet of human existence, but not if, like much management and organisation theory, it remains in the empirical or literal world as if the

[54] It seems less of a problem in other religions; Buddhism for example has more closely acknowledged the symbolic elements within its canon. See for example the Jatakas (Aryasura, 1983) or 'birth stories'; stories of the Buddha's past lives and seen by Buddhists as points of reflection on the individual's life and as stimulants to devotional art (See for example Rhie and Thurman, 1991). Similarly, by comparison to images of Jesus, there appears to be very few attempts to depict the Buddha 'realistically', images are usually stylised and often express the artistic cultural heritage in which they grew. Tibetan images of the Buddha for example, are rather fantastic and use garish, yet alluring colours and are placed in what are clearly symbolic settings. Both Mahayana and Theravada images of the Buddha are highly stylised, images of Jesus by comparison, while taking on the physical features of the culture in which they grew, are more frequently depicted in a realist mode of expression.

imaginal were irrelevant and/or did not exist. This is perhaps the disservice the Enlightenment left us with; it downplayed the imaginal which the medieval mind had in abundance, and to which the perennial religious impulse is testament (Hillman 1989). Even Henry Ford is reputed to have said that in the march of progress, *'we have lost much of what we knew'*; in his later years he acknowledged the need to regain some of those losses. What the religious communities I have studied here have shown me, is the validity of the search for an integrated life. Some work has begun to emerge under the banner of *'work/life'* (Lamont and Lamont, 2003) but this phrase may allude to a dualism which this study has revealed as spurious.

The search for meaning

What this study has shown is the need for organisation studies to give more attention to the need people have for meaning in their working lives. The separation of work from other facets of life, such as leisure time, and spiritual allegiance and practice, is in need of further attention. Organisation theorists have begun to give meaning a more central place in their thinking; for example Pauchant (1995) and Pava (2004) Yet we still separate these elements, as indeed we have for so long in theory and in practice. The Cartesian split so evident in Ford and Taylor, I believe, still needs re-evaluation. This point was also made forcefully by one of the people at Windhorse in a book she wrote about the organisation and its practices (Pamasuri, 2003). Do people experience the fragmentation of their lives? Are people increasingly looking for non-dualistic lives? Do they expect their work lives to be as meaningful as their home lives, or do we still look forward to the evenings and weekends as if 'real' life has been on hold?

Personal reflections on the research process

This research has been difficult to produce. Here I offer some personal comments on the process of the research, and I hope they are read as further observations for other people wishing to do work of this nature in spiritual communities.

The research process is messy, not linear, as often portrayed in text books. The process of research is learned, I think, by doing it, and only partly by reading about it. This I discovered after numerous attempts to do the latter, but the way in which I eventually worked was hammered out through trial and error; I hope most of the lessons have stuck, but I have no doubt there will be more. Research, it seems, is so idiosyncratic that rigid advice is often inappropriate, since doing research leaves each researcher with a different story to tell. It is for this reason that I found actual accounts of people's experiences more helpful than an organised text book. For example, Hobbs and May (1993) was particularly helpful in that it expressed the learning process of the authors as they made their own way through the thicket known as research. It is the subtlety of human experience that makes these experiences so worth our efforts to understand and to pass on, but the 'passing on' of those subtleties requires subtlety too. There is no right way to do this, except perhaps to try to be open to the whole experience as much as possible.

Reflecting on reflexivity

One of the key observations I would make relates to the difficulty of reflexivity. Reflexivity looks like a challenge when it is encountered in a book, when it is engaged with personally it is turns out to be a very big challenge. First, I found it a challenge even

to be aware of the influence I was having on the research process. I frequently attempted to write reflexive pieces but faltered, and instead, wandered back into the role of a detached observer, rather than identifying my own process. I asked questions like, how has my background and my current lifestyle influenced the work I am doing? In the first chapter I offered that I was interested in religion from an early age, this was certainly the case, but why was I interested? How much influence did Sunday school have upon me? What messages did I carry away from that place that found their way into this work? These are difficult questions to answer.

But the real challenge was also to overcome what I found to be a deep seated resistance, **not** to **exploring** my own spiritual process, but to **expressing** it, in the writing. I was, in chapter three, critical of the lack of reflexivity in the 'crusaders' writing and now, in my own work, I find one reason for that is the nature of the material and possibly my own disposition, tending to see my spiritual development as my own responsibility, rather than the company, and much less, management.

Some final reflections

Having identified how difficult it is to be reflexive, I was aware that the work might be weakened by its omission, and I also recognise that some level of reflexivity was present in this work. Perriton (undated) identifies five types of reflexive writing. First, the *'seemingly accidental'* in which the author, 'drops in' reflexive passages, often by the strategic use of the personal pronoun and irony. Second, *'the methodology chapter'*, where the author confines reflexive passages, as a safe place, designed to avoid charges of invalid work. Third, *'benign,* reflexivity, in which authors classify themselves in terms of, for example, class, gender or occupation. Fourth, *'textual guerrilla warfare'*,

where authors use unusual textual devices (for academic work), to position themselves in the work. And finally, *'socio-political'* reflexivity which openly takes the position of an activist on a mission.

The two types of reflexive writing to be found in this work are the *'seemingly accidental'* and *'the methodology chapter'*. Reflexive comments include occasional use of irony and the use of the personal pronoun at significant points in the text. For Perriton (undated) these are characteristics of the *'seemingly accidental'* approach to reflexive writing and are unlikely to attract the criticism that they render the work invalid. I am not sure that validity was my chief concern here, but authenticity was; I hope that the finished work is authentic, certainly the tone may have seemed eccentric on occasions, but this was, for me, intended to augment its authenticity. A further form of reflexive writing to be found here is in what Perriton (undated) refers to as *'the methodology chapter'*, where I attempted, not to hide myself, but to reveal, in as candid a way as possible, a picture of the research process. In the methodology chapter I clearly delineate the choices and the serendipitous events that informed the work, but, as I have noted earlier, unpicking the deeper reasons for certain choices is very difficult, particularly in respect of subject matter such as this, spirituality. In this section I offer some reflexive thoughts that have been the result of the research process and accordingly are placed here at the end of the work.

On why I did this work

This work began as I said in the first chapter because of an adverse reaction to the spirituality in the workplace literature; and a long standing interest in religion probably beginning in my childhood. However, as the work has progressed I have come to realise

that the desire to complete a PhD was also related to a desire to put to rest my inauspicious secondary school performance, where I was convinced by a number of people, events and structures that I was not up to anything remotely academic. Somewhere around 1978, whilst playing guitar in a band in Newcastle I came across a book entitled *'How Children Fail'* by John Holt (1990). It was probably the first piece of academic work I had ever read and much of it looked like my own experience. Active interest in academic things probably began there, taking three 'A' levels in adult education, a first degree and then a second. I now make my living teaching in a university and I hope that this current work finally puts paid to the lack of confidence that lingered from school days to the present.

Along the way I had jobs as a mechanical engineer, carpet fitter, ice cream man, fruit and vegetable delivery boy, musician and fundraiser, among others. Completing this research has been an intellectual struggle, as I think it is for anyone, but my earliest experiences of working life were anything but intellectual. As a result one of the persistent difficulties I had was the feeling that this had little to do with people and the problems they face in organisations. Many people experience work as a place where they face intimidation, impossible targets, sheer boredom, and the ravages of redundancy as my family and I experienced in the 1970's, all justified by reference to 'the numbers'. All of these things I have experienced and sometimes still do, so I am interested in how all this 'head' work translates into a contribution to the lives of the people I knew and worked with.

As a lecturer I hope this experience enables me to offer an alternative to the experience I had of organisations from age 16 onwards. These communities were not

perfect, but they endeavoured to balance the tensions between the needs of the individual and the 'needs;' of the organisation. They did bring different perspectives to the world of work; this study has focussed on some of those differences.

On the 'shadow side' of these communities

Looking back, I now realise that I could have dug deeper than I did in this work. The people I spoke to were willing to be honest with me as far as I can possibly tell, and I with them. So, I now wonder why I didn't probe further, when, for example, I sensed Fr Damien was embittered about something, I was left with my conjectures, but, with some diplomacy, the people I spoke with might have revealed more. I might have found more of how these people deal with some of the issues that characterise much of my own working life. Disagreement, conflict even animosity, I am sure they experienced this as I do, but I was unable to identify these points. Certainly they did not volunteer them. The shadow side exists in all people that part of us that we would rather conceal from the outside world and that we project onto others rather than acknowledge its existence (Jung, 1973: Vol.8). It exists in organisations as well as individuals too (Bowles, 1991), but I heard very little that gave me occasion to enquire into the shadow of these two places. Interestingly, the shadow of the Western Buddhist Order came to me via a website The FWBO Files (http://www.fwbofiles,com), I stumbled upon, in which a number of people many former members of FWBO expressed some very scathing views about the FWBO its management and it intentions. All this follows on from a *Guardian* article (The Dark Side of Enlightenment 27th September 1997) which was a chief concern to senior people in the movement when I first approached them to do this work. They were clearly concerned that I might be there to dish the dirt again, and even though there

were some very candid attempts not hide from the shadow side, my presence must have given them further cause for concern. Nevertheless, it should also be pointed out that while the connection between Windhorse and the WBO was undeniable, the derisory comments on the website were aimed at the WBO and not at Windhorse.

Reflecting on why the shadow side of Windhorse and Prinknash did not surface in any significant way, I can only surmise that, either they do not have the same problems as I do in organisations, or they chose not to share them with me, but it might also be something to do with me. Perhaps I was too enamoured with the overall intention of the people there. This is not to say that I had 'gone native', as discussed in chapter four, that would not have been possible, but on reflection, I now think it is very difficult to be bold as a fledgling researcher. What I wanted to do was to be there for as long as I could to soak up the nature of organisational life and boldness, I felt, would not endear me to them. There is, in this particular work, the problem of sensitivity. I felt very fortunate indeed to have been given access to these two places and to be able to share the time I did with them. As discussed in chapter four on methodology, I continually felt the need to reaffirm that my presence was acceptable, and thankfully it was. But here, the sensitivity was palpable; where can I walk, when can I speak, who can I speak to, who should I approach, when and where should I stand and sit during ritual occasions? These and many more questions confronted me all the time; I wonder if I would have felt the same if I had been researching in a bank? Somehow, the environment I was in made me tread very carefully, but I am not sure the experience would have been so rewarding and so interesting, or even possible if I had been more strident.

I was granted access to these sites and not only that, but access for a number of years as discussed in chapter four. This access felt like a privilege to me and still does, the experience will stay with me for a long time. What is important though, is that the access was gained by being as open as I could about the intended work. Even though the intention was not that clear to me in the first few visits, they were willing to 'go with' that indeterminacy. Access was also gained and maintained by being sensitive to where I was, and why they were there. That sensitivity is a key lesson for me because without access there is no research

There may also have been another explanation. In both places there was an institutionalised outlet for discord and conflict. At Prinknash the Chapter House has been traditionally used as a place where it was possible to air views freely, how freely few will ever know outside the brethren. At Windhorse the tradition is far less established but again there was what was termed the Open Forum in which the airing of views was expected and received. Not only that, but the Newsletter was frequently used to air differences of opinion. Interestingly, most of this appeared to be about very trivial matters like queuing for the workbus.

On my own dualism

Armstrong (2009) points to the two ways of knowing; Logos and Mythos, and I sometimes think this is what characterises much human conflict. Some people make sense of the world using logos; that rational, left brain activity which has dominated in the West at least since the Enlightenment, and which appears to be the approach of Richard Dawkins (2007). Others see the world through mythos, through symbol and intuition. Much of my world has been dominated by logos and by thinking too and yet as

this work has progressed, I have come to realise that the mythos in me is being neglected, and that has caused much difficulty over the final stages of the work. While I was of the view that I needed to put everything else on hold while I did this, I now see that as unhelpful.

The journey is not for me, solely an intellectual one, but a heartfelt daily response to what I now see as the mystery of life and it is to be experienced not known 'about'. I have said elsewhere that I see the spiritual journey as an integration of the head and the heart, but what this work has required of me is almost entirely in the head. This is why I have found the work so difficult, my heart saying this is not the way to go, but my head and my ego were forcing it through. It is this conviction, only sometimes conscious, that has informed this work throughout, or to put it another way I have used my head to denounce the excessive use of my head in terms of my own spiritual development.

Related to this is the observation that I have, in the final stages of this work, consciously compartmentalised my life in order to finish it. The research was in one box and the rest of life in another with the former taking all my energy, all the time. I have consciously avoided engaging in those parts of my life that previously allowed my heart to have expression. Playing music, family time, growing vegetables, and fixing things; all of these have been consciously put on hold while I finish writing. So in a very real sense I have been guilty of the very thing I have criticised the spirituality in the workplace literature for, namely dualism. The conscious side-lining of the heart things has made the work more difficult, not easier. All the time I had these heart things boxed away to be returned to when this work was done, and now I think such compartmentalisation was counterproductive.

On the reception of this work

I now arrive at the question of what this work might contribute to the life people have in their organisations. Companies are, I think, largely logos dominated (Bowles, 1993) but the attitudes I have drawn attention to here are quite the opposite and I realise that I cannot expect conventional organisations to gain a great deal from this work at this time, for a number of reasons. First, they are, for the most part, too far away from these values, this language and these sentiments. Second, the way in which the people I met engaged with their organisational life is rooted in very old traditions. Buddhism is 2500 years old and St Benedict wrote the *'little rule for beginners'* 1500 years ago, (Fry, 1982) emerging from a Christian tradition 2000 years old. Furthermore, they have, from the start used symbol and ritual as vehicles by which their traditions could develop, and as Campbell (1968) said you cannot invent myth, symbol and ritual, they grow very slowly and have meaning to only certain people because of their continuous engagement with those myths symbols and rituals. Of course there are concerns in the organisation studies literature that symbols and rituals will not be the result of gradual growth aimed at inspiring, but be the product of the rational mind, the left brain, and will be used to manipulate not inspire (Mason, 1994). As already noted such use of the myth is not lost on business and military leaders Hitler and Branson for example. But here I am discussing symbol and myth that cannot be invented or manipulated, only lived for a very long time.

Thirdly, to address these issues in organisations with a competitive imperative as the raison d'être would be too threatening; I have seen this with the organisations I have worked for myself. Better to continue with the rational and the literal than to court the

inner world of feelings and emotions and spirituality. What all this means to me is that we cannot expect the orientations and aspirations of the people I have met in Prinknash and Windhorse to be followed, nor I think would it be good to borrow in that way. As Fr Damien said (and I now realise what he meant) the corporations cannot learn anything from the monastery. I now think I would add because they are not ready to do so, it is not the time. The Copenhagen Climate summit in December 2009 has shown that attempts to unite people around what must be the most obvious common cause we have ever had, is faltering because our values do not yet align with the Buddhist notion of dependant origination[55], karma or even with the Christian and Islamic emphasis on stewardship mentioned by a number of people in this study. Perhaps as a species we haven't suffered enough yet to be able to see our mutual dependence.

Much of the spirituality in the workplace literature seems less reticent than me, authors have already begun to write *'How to...'* books (Fairholm, 1997) and a *'protocol'* for spirituality in the workplace Marquez (2008). The literature is already discussing the 'implementation' of a more spiritual workplace, but I am of the view that we have not even reached the foothills of this mountain range, while some are discussing the final assault on the summit. All I feel able to say because I have experienced it, is that the aspiration to a more spiritually oriented workplace is possible.

With that said, I have noticed the reactions of people to this work over a number of years. Reflexive writing tries to identify the role of the researcher in producing the work, but the work and its objectives, have also influenced the way people react to me.

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[55] Dependant origination refers to the Buddhist idea that everything is connected to everything else in a causal relationship, the implications of this are far reaching. Karma broadly refers to the idea that one's experience of life in the future will be determined by ones actions now. For a very good explanation of these see Dalai Lama, (2000).

For example, when I tell people what my subject matter is, they seem automatically to assume I am interested in business ethics. Indeed, I was given much more business ethics teaching because, *'you are interested in that sort of thing'*. When I initially met Fr Francis and Fr Aldhelm they were wearing their white habits and this had as much impact on me as the setting and their demeanour. The research title, I think, is like wearing a monastic habit; people's view of me changed as soon as they knew the title of the work. Both students and even staff appeared to be trying to form an identity around me because of the subject matter.

This draws attention to another point; that people appear to be interested in this subject. This might be because it has some novelty value, particularly in a business school, but as Fr Damien observed about me, *'there might be more in this for you than just a piece of research'*, there might be more in the interest of others than just another piece of research.

Without wanting to overstate this point, I felt there was a willingness to speak about spirituality that I was perhaps not expecting. Pushing it a little further, I would say that there was almost a sense of relief that this could be discussed at all. Perhaps this was to do with the fact that I appeared to be treating this as an academic subject, and even though they may have had their suspicions that I had a deeper involvement, there was always the fact that it could be discussed at arm's length because it was academic. If they were concerned about being preached to, or converted, they never showed it to me. Yet I also sensed (though again not wanting to over state this) that people wanted to discuss it because it meant something to them. Sometimes these conversations did not get beyond *'that sounds <u>really</u> interesting'*, but frequently the conversations did go further, it is as

though people were relieved that there was another way of thinking about organisational life beyond the OB text books that students and staff were engaged with.

On my future in writing and teaching

This begs the question what I might want to do when the work is done. If this head work has been so difficult and only a small part of me, would I want to continue with this in the future? The answer is to do with wanting to think, write and be, in a way that expresses as much of me as possible, all the time and not box off academic work from the rest of life, particularly the creative and social aspects of life. In this sense I have learned much from the people at Windhorse and Prinknash. I feel there must be a way of engaging in academic work without banishing the heart, a way of writing that acknowledges all aspects of me. I have in this work alluded to my involvement with playing music and I have used the work of novelists and musicians to illustrate certain points, what is necessary I feel, is to more fully engage these forms of expression in my own academic work too. This is difficult because, as I have said, the academic world I inhabit, particularly in a business school seems only to recognise Logos and not Eros (Bowles, 1993) yet, I feel it is important to try.

In the past I have seen engagement with academic matters as puzzles to be mastered and then left behind. Even reading philosophy has been boxed off as intellectual puzzle like Sudoku and perhaps that is as it should be since as King Solomon said *'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity'* (Ecclesiastes: Ch1 v.2). But I now also see the need to take my study more seriously in the sense that I am learning things which are important for life and I also recognise that passing on my understandings may affect other's perceptions. I have therefore a duty of care that goes along with the right to

research. John Maynard Keynes (1936) said, *'Practical men who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influence, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist'*, but like David Knights (2006) I would be unsure about just how much impact my words might have on the students that pass my way, but even if the ideas and the representations of other people's work have little impact, I have now, as a result of this work, developed a greater sense of the responsibility I carry as a lecturer.

Conclusion

'We know too much, and are convinced of too little. Our literature is a substitute for religion, and so is our religion'.

T. S. Eliot

My time at Prinknash and Windhorse included questions and discussions which, on reflection, included both my own spiritual growth and the growth of this research. Ultimately, the two strands of the inquiry; personal and academic will have found their way into the study, and I have tried to acknowledge them where I been conscious of it, indeed, like the people I met in these communities, I try not to see them as separate. I do not understand all the teachings I have encountered, yet many have become more meaningful during this work. Part of that meaning has come from the recognition that when a person is immersed in trying to make sense of the big questions of life, at some point, the particular culture from which they come, and their own history, seem to fade, to some extent, while what it is to be essentially human becomes prominent. The story of Jesus in the desert for 40 days and 40 nights seems so similar to that of the Buddha under the Bodhi Tree[56] and perhaps to that of Moses on Mount Sinai, and the Prophet Mohammed as well as the testimonies of more recent mystics like Bede Griffiths (1979) and Thomas Merton (1948). What this says to me is that the spiritual life is always a struggle, regardless of the tradition in which it is undertaken; this has been my own experience too, though I could not say where I am in my, *'Journey to the East'* (Hesse, 1956) nor what the destination will look like. (My geographical explorations always have tended to be Eastward).

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[56] The Bodhi tree refers to the tree beneath which the Buddha sat vowing not to rise until he had attained Enlightenment.

I listen with some envy to people whose faith and tradition gives them a quiet confidence in life, because I have not embraced a particular tradition to the exclusion of all others, and wonder if life might have been easier in some way if I had done. But I am also sometimes suspicious of the apparent absence of struggle and doubt, such absence does not seem real to me and indeed may be symptomatic of a mask for the world, while the inner person struggles as much as I do. The other side to this is that I listen with some disquiet to those whose faith is not so quiet, and who feel it necessary to explain the superiority of their faith over all others; I have never felt this need. I celebrate the recognition we have of what might be an essential unity and the diversity of approaches to it and I celebrate the imaginal faculty of the human being and its capacity to lead the individual to God, Allah, Tao, Dharma, 'Truth', '*the Ground of our Being*', (Tillich, 1952) and any other name we have given to the mystery. It is in this way that I have come to recognise the religious imperative in myself.

What is now clear to me is that my own spiritual process has been both impeded and enhanced by carrying out this study. One of the central problems has been that the process of carrying it out, conflicts with my own understanding of the spiritual journey. I have enquired into the spiritual life via an academic route, while believing the spiritual journey is not an academic process, and in this sense, the research has impeded my own spiritual development. The Vietnamese Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh (1995; 21) puts this in a characteristically simple, yet profound manner, '*Discussing God is not the best use of our energy*'. But the process of research is, by definition, an intellectual one, and has required me to read, and think in that systematic way, in order to produce this work. Meanwhile, what I really wanted to do is develop my own spiritual practice, which

this work has shown me, is a matter of integrating the head and the heart, rather than one dominating the other. I have tried to place myself and my own journey in this work throughout, but the head had the lead voice, and this may be why it has been a struggle.

I have interpreted the lives of the people at Prinknash and Windhorse as attempting to integrate spiritual and empirical worlds, as I believed I was attempting to integrate theoretical and empirical worlds. As I moved between my two worlds, watching them moving between theirs, I felt privileged to glimpse their engagement with the imaginal. However, while I felt the importance of this experience, I remained for the most part in either the theoretical or empirical worlds, and did not attempt to venture into the imaginal, but watched them, from a (safe) distance.

The Buddha likened the man who knows **about** the spiritual life (as an academic might) to a man who tends another's cattle, (Piyadassi, 1964: 80) so somebody's herd has been well tended by me, yet there is no doubt that the time and effort have been part of my journey. I have gained a great deal from doing this 'head' work, it has enabled me to read and think **about** the imaginal world, even more than in the past, and consider its implications for me, and I also 'cleaned up' a few misconceptions of my own.

I was frequently challenged by what I experienced, and both the theoretical work and the experience have left impressions which I hope will develop further. Even so, however much I reflected and 'reflexed', it was still 'out there', and so I look forward to attempting to know, what, until now, I only 'know about'.

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Appendix One – The Ten Precepts

This representation of the Ten Precepts and their positive counterparts has been taken from Sangharakshita (1989) because of his role in founding the Western Buddhist Order. The representation from other sources may differ slightly and this version may even be contested.

The Ten Precepts

I undertake the item which consists in abstention from killing living beings.
I undertake the item which consists in abstention from taking the not given.
I undertake the item which consists in abstention from sexual misconduct
I undertake the item which consists in abstention from false speech.
I undertake the item which consists in abstention from harsh speech
I undertake the item which consists in abstention from frivolous speech.
I undertake the item which consists in abstention from slanderous speech
I undertake the item which consists in abstention from covetousness.
I undertake the item which consists in abstention from hatred.
I undertake the item which consists in abstention from false views.

The Ten Positive Precepts

With deeds of loving-kindness I purify my body.
With open-handed generosity I purify my body.
With stillness, simplicity, and contentment I purify my body.
With truthful communication I purify my speech.
With words kindly and gracious I purify my speech.
With utterance helpful and harmonious I purify my speech.
Abandoning covetousness for generosity I purify my mind.
Changing hatred into love I purify my mind.
Transforming ignorance into wisdom I purify my mind.

Appendix Two – The Four Noble Truths and the Eight-Fold Noble Path

The Four Noble Truths and the Eight-Fold Noble Path

The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path, said to have been spoken by the Buddha following his enlightenment, are rarely printed with out explanation. Such explanation is beyond the boundaries of this work, however an excellent discussion can be found in Piyadassi (1964).

The Four Noble Truths

The First Noble Truth	The Truth of Suffering
The Second Noble Truth	The Arising of Suffering
The Third Noble Truth	The Cessation of Suffering
The Fourth Noble Truth	The Eightfold Noble Path

The Eightfold Noble Path

Right Understanding

Right Thought

Right Speech

Right Action

Right Livelihood

Right Effort

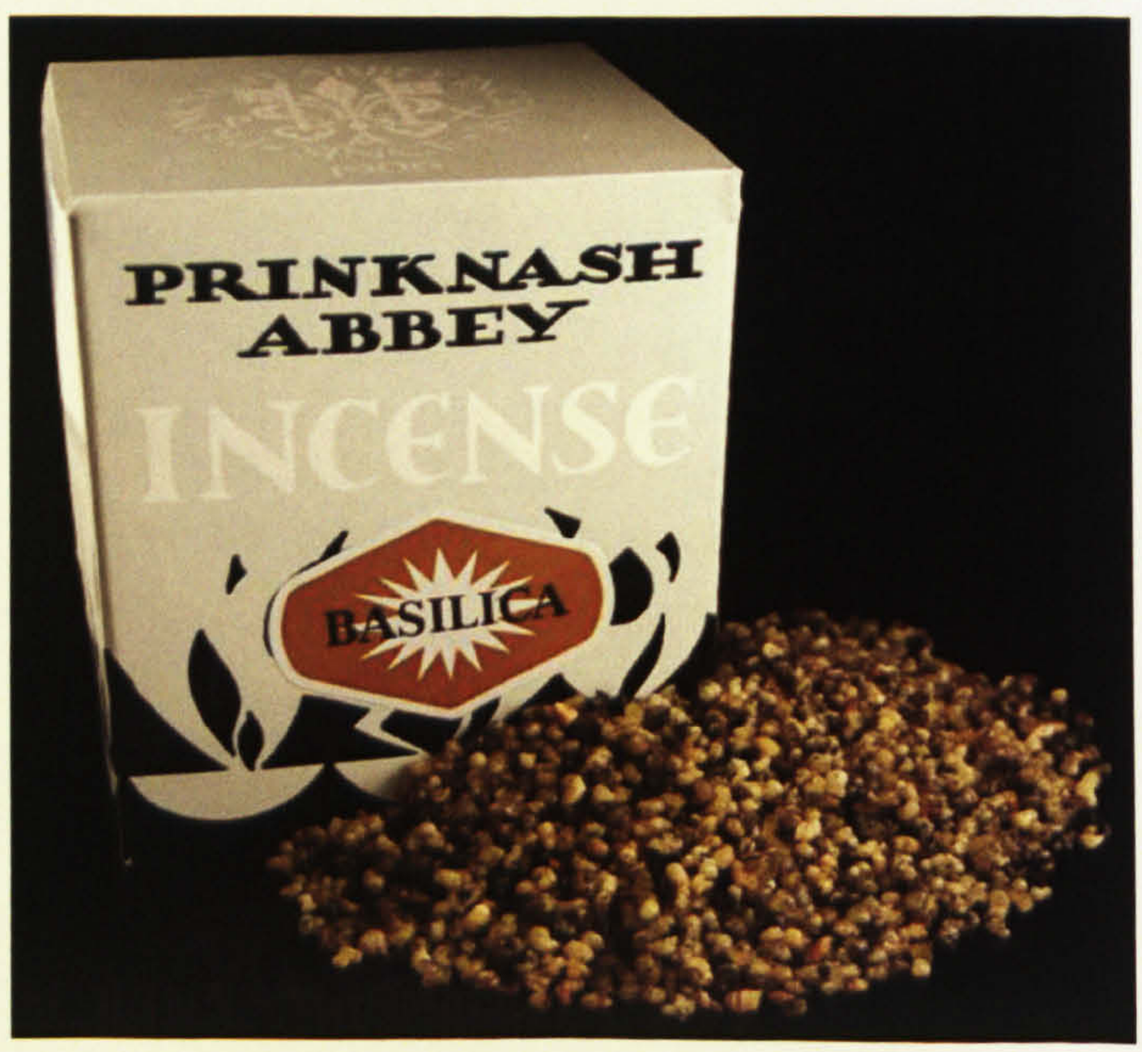
Right Mindfulness

Right Concentration.

Appendix Three - Images of Prinknash Abbey

View From the front of Prinknash Abbey

View of the Abbey Church from the rear of the Abbey



Prinknash Abbey Incence

St Peter's Grange

Appendix Four - Images of Windhorse: Evolution

Uddiyana from the front

Statue of the Buddha from inside the entrance to Uddiyana

The Stupa at Uddiyana

The Warehouse at Uddiyana