

LANDSCAPES OF SHAME IN THE CHURCH:
A TYPOLOGY TO INFORM MINISTERIAL PRAXIS
BY
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ABSTRACT

This thesis answers the question *How might an understanding of shame in the church inform approaches to ministerial praxis?* It is methodologically a creative piece of practical theology which begins and ends with an autoethnographic reflection, drawing on the metaphor of landscape. The practical theology methodology involved the following stages: noticing; reflexivity; describing, naming; focusing; investigating; analysing; evaluating; theorizing, synthesizing; and responding, while drawing on insights from a mixed methods approach to qualitative research. The empirical research involved an anonymous online survey (261 respondents) to church leaders, church members and theological educators and two representative focus groups.

Shame is defined phenomenologically using a range of disciplines; a review of literature relevant to shame and ministerial praxis is included. The unique contribution this thesis makes is twofold. Firstly, the development of an empirically underpinned typology of shame in the church which has six domains: personal, relational, communal, structural, theological and historical facilitating the identification of shame which is often a hidden phenomenon. Secondly, identifying specific approaches to ministerial praxis which help mitigate such shame including a shame examen to assist conscientization. The final chapter discusses the author's learning about shame, ministerial praxis, doing theology and theological education.

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FOREWORD
LANDSCAPES OF SHAME¹
NOTICING, REFLEXIVITY²

Church has always been part of the landscape of my life. This landscape at times has been beautiful, nurturing my spirit and soul, at other times it has seemed hostile and barren. Rainbows have evoked hope in what otherwise has been a time of clouds and storms. Along the way there have been wilderness sojourns too.

A pastoral idyll

I don't remember my Christening on Palm Sunday, two months after my birth and a little more than a year after my parents were married in the same church. However, I have a beautiful silver napkin ring with my name and that date engraved on it so I have always been aware that my life was dedicated to God early on.

I love Sunday school, what is there not to like about going somewhere and listening to stories and feeling appreciated for my dedication. I get prizes too for good attendance and I can choose what book I want so I get Enid Blyton ones as her stories are so exciting. I love George in the Famous Five, she makes me realize it is okay to like some of the things I do like playing football and climbing trees. The teachers are good too, I will miss Barbara when she goes off to be a Wren but I expect we will have someone good again next year even if they are one of Mum's friends!

Thus early memories of church are positive, I felt as if I belonged and my love for learning was nurtured. As I have explored ordination and am now a priest I have spent a lot of time looking at the threads that run through my life and shaped who I am today. My positive experiences as a child and young person were largely due to the endeavours of so many good women who nurtured my faith, some opening their homes to do so. I wonder if some of my feminist views have their roots in such memories and the feelings that as a female I was a lesser being than a male certainly didn't come from those experiences.

I love just sitting in my church and looking. I like being quiet, I don't always want to

¹ This is a piece of evocative and analytic autoethnographic writing (Muncey 2010:35-8; Ngunjiri, Hernandez & Chang 2010:3) which has been an integral part of the process of researching shame in the church. I would not have been able to do this with integrity if I had not been willing to expose myself to the same vulnerability that I hoped for from participants. It also began to uncover for me issues I had about ministerial practice which were central to the research which has been undertaken as part of my ordination journey. Italicized sections are where I have tried to write from the historical perspective I am recalling,

² I am using words from my practical theology methodology in the title of chapters to help show the process.

talk so services are a safe place for me. I think Peter must be my favourite of Jesus' disciples perhaps that is just because that is what our church is called. His symbol is some crossed keys and they fill my mind with all sorts of possibilities – which doors might they open, what secrets may lie behind them... My favourite thing to look at is the stained glass window which shows Peter getting out of the boat to go and meet Jesus.³ I can't find the words to say why I like this picture so much but the idea of turning to Jesus when I need him is very comforting. I like, as well, the words which say feed my lambs and feed my sheep – that always sounds such fun! I like food and I think there is a story about Jesus cooking Peter breakfast – that would be awesome.

The adult me sees Peter as someone who experienced shame as a result of denying Jesus. This is because in my reading of scripture he would have felt shame about who he was, a bad or weak disciple. He had said he would lay down his life for Jesus but instead denied him.⁴ Reflecting back it feels as if I grasped a little of this Jesus who accepts and loves us even when we have blown it like Peter did. As with many other people, my issues over the years have not been with Jesus, they have been with the church – how what is Christ's body⁵ represents my loving and accepting saviour.

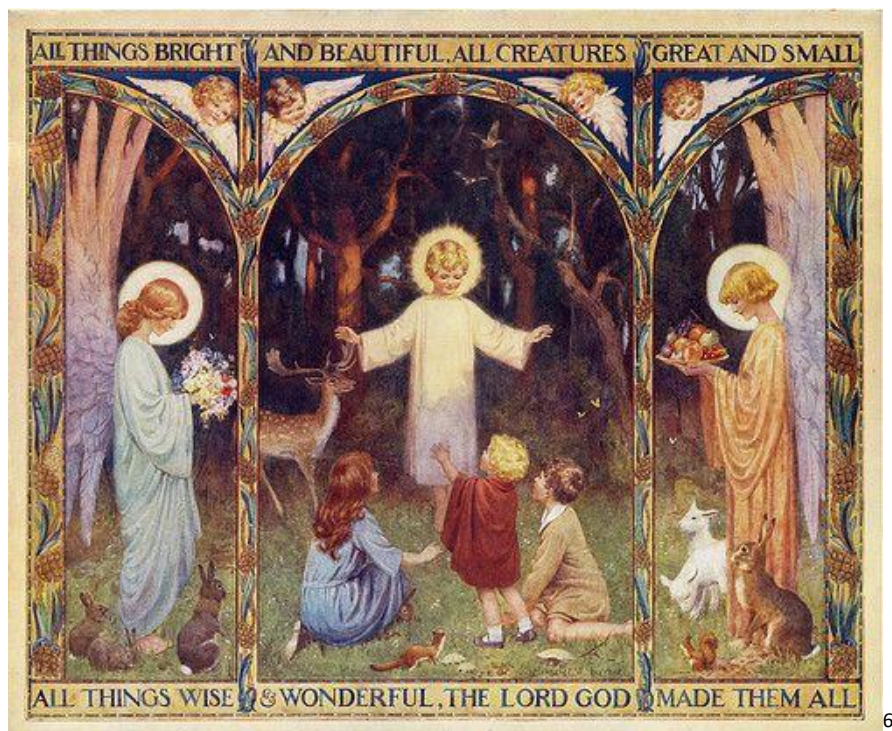


Figure 1 All things bright and beautiful Margaret Tarrant

³ John 21.7

⁴ John 13.37-8; Luke 22.54-62.

⁵ 1 Corinthians 12.

⁶ Margaret W Tarrant 1888-1959 published by Medici Society, 1925.

Reproduced with permission.

This picture hung on my bedroom wall for many years. I think I almost subconsciously took from this picture that creation was good, that Jesus was to be loved and adored and was a light. The nature and form of the darkness was unclear to me as a child, but I knew Jesus as light and I knew that woods were not safe places to go alone. Now I would be embarrassed to choose such a picture of Jesus in one of those exercises where you have a range of images and have to say which resonates with you and why. But that probably still reflects that little girl who was anxious to get the right answer and in the world I inhabit now a blond blue eyed Jesus is not the correct image and could even be seen as a shameful choice!

Rainbows

I love rainbows, I am always excited to see them and have experienced rainbows at two very difficult times in my life relating to loss and bereavement and they evoked a sense of hope. A hope that God would work things out for good despite the desperate hurt and pain I felt at being misunderstood and a hope that there is a life beyond this one and some of the many questions will be answered. The tears I cry as I write this remind me of the dark skies and rain that go with the rainbow but there is always the little bit of me too that knows that the sun is there too and that life goes on.

I am all snuggled up on the red settee, the one we got from a relative who died as we now have a house with enough room for one! Mum is reading from my lovely big floppy Bible and it's one of my favourites – Noah and his ark. The best bit is at the end when the rainbow appears and Noah and all the animals are safe! But that's not my favourite rainbow story, that's the one where there's a pot of gold at the end of it. In our new house there was nothing in the garden, just lots of dirt everywhere, no grass, no flowers, no trees. I get scared by loud noises and thunder is one of the scariest noises of all – I never hear anything else that loud and when lightning flashes across the sky it looks so dangerous – what might it set fire to? I couldn't believe it when Mum and Dad said let's go out into the garden the morning after the storm, the storm that was followed by a rainbow. We got to play with our spades and dig up the ground. It was amazing, there was a knotted handkerchief and it had an S on it, S for Sally and inside there were some coins, lovely coppery coins and they were all for me! I just knew I would buy some chocolate with them, my very favourite treat!

This was a magical, mysterious moment, what I now call a wow moment, an opportunity to connect with the transcendent. There's another piece of my core faith here,

a belief in a faithful God. I have no recollection of linking rainbows to a God who destroyed an evil world, that bit of the story, didn't penetrate my consciousness.

My early experiences of evangelicalism were a rainbow in the sometimes stormy journey of adolescence. Attending a Baptist church with a friend led me to feeling I wasn't a real Christian, I hadn't invited Jesus into my heart and one evening, after a Baptism service I went forward to the front of the church in response to a call to commit your life to Jesus. Looking back now it was a crisis experience when my earlier experiences were a process and I wouldn't dream now of saying I became a Christian aged 14 whereas I would have done then. I was introduced to the four spiritual laws, Campus Crusade for Christ, door knocking, emotional appeals, Christian youth groups, BapSoc and Sunday evening services – Sunday mornings were for sport, another love! Generally this was a good experience although it introduced me to a more dualistic faith than the one I had grown up with in that I became much more aware of the concept of sin and what good and bad behaviour was, and that there were Christians and sinners. I still remember thinking after my Dad had died (thirty years ago now) at least I had explained the gospel to him. Looking back this form of faith was more shaming of people, you were in or out, a good Christian or a backslider. I did know God loved me but there now seemed to be a long list of things that went with that. The simple faith in a loving Jesus and faithful God now seemed much more complex. It was perhaps at this period of my life that guilt came more to the fore, I felt guilty when I did various things you were not supposed to do as a good Christian but most of them were the normal rites of passage of a teenager. Shame still lingered over the shyness and quietness. It was many more years before I understood who God had created and that it was okay to be that me. However, there was an enduring hope, like a rainbow living in me that I had a purpose in life, God had called me and I was on a journey of discovery with no idea where I might end up. I still sometimes wonder what those who knew me back then would make of who and where I am now.

Wilderness landscapes

Not all my institutional experiences were helpful, while I enjoyed learning, school was not always a place I felt at home in.

I have that horrible knotted feeling in my stomach. Why would they ask that question? That's so horrible, so mean, I don't want to be at school. As the teacher begins to go around the class, I put my hand up – "I feel ill, can I go and sit quietly for a bit please".

The feeling of relief when I am sent to the nurse but the feeling of dread at having to repeat the lies. The last thing in the world I want to do is say how much I weigh, I know I am a bit chubby but I am tall and sporty too but no one will take any notice of that. They will just laugh as they see I weigh more than most of the boys. I don't believe it, they are still doing the exercise and thinking I had avoided it I chose a low figure and ignored the looks of unbelief but I blushed, felt bad about myself and wondered why school wanted to show me up like that.

That is my first clear memory of shame and happened when I was eight. I can still feel the shame although only as an adult could put a name to what it was I felt. I reconnect with the memory each time the doctor wants me to get on the scales – sometimes for issues that cannot possibly be related to my weight. If I am very honest with myself it puts me off going to my doctor and I know how foolish that is but shame causes me to withdraw and hide and there is a part of me which does not want to open myself up to another lecture which makes me feel like a shamed child again.

There are various other memories I have of school which are shame related, endless reports that talked about Sally not speaking up enough or being too quiet and repeated handwriting practice to no avail helped reinforce that there was something wrong with who I was – I was not okay. Comments about quietness and shyness were shaming for a large part of my life – I was not who others wanted me to be and I was sometimes made to feel less than adequate because of that. It was as if there was a stereotypical good girl and I was not she.

My time at University was a wilderness time as far as faith and church were concerned. I gave the Christian Union a go but it was also alien, I was a stranger in a very strange land and services on campus seemed inaccessible. My faith drifted and I have a vivid memory of walking down a hill in Brighton on the way to the station and thinking that there cannot be a God. That is the only conscious memory I have of rejecting my childhood faith.

I know I had the thought that there is no God, but something keeps pulling me back. The three months of the summer holidays seem long and empty and I don't want it just to drift by and I had so much fun at seventeen when I helped the Church Army run holiday clubs in Germany. And so I found myself on an airplane and somehow end up finding myself being led out of the wilderness into the promised land of a new sort of faith. Long days working with children but meal times and evenings of conversation and I hear about the Holy Spirit, only a shadowy figure in my Christian tradition – and usually a Ghost! I take

home lots of memories and a book which I read and consequently start speaking in tongues, the beginning of the charismatic bit of my Christian journey and somehow, I am back on track having made a once and for all decision that Christ would be an integral part of my life. I hoped I was out of the wilderness for good but that was not to be. I found a home in a new church but again cultural expectations and judgements meant there was sometimes a lingering shame over who I was, and perhaps more, who I was not, as well as a growing disquiet over the way a theology of women in ministry was modelled.

In my early evangelical experience there were many things said that did not resonate with the loving God that I knew from my childhood and there were a range of people and institutions implicated in preaching, discussions and action. This has always left me feeling a slight dissonance between my faith and what others (who I sometimes thought knew better than me what God thought) proclaimed. On more than one occasion I have experienced vicarious shame on behalf of those who were the focus of unloving words or actions as well as feeling shame because I may have done this too, believing I was doing what God wanted. In more recent years I have felt shame over what people have assumed of me because I use the term evangelical to describe myself, and also over what parts of a liberal secular media say about Christianity. The older and more experienced in ministry I have got the more complex and grey things seem with few right answers and many choices which need wisdom and love.

I am white, middle-aged, middle class, educated, married, have a full time job and sufficient money for a comfortable lifestyle. I realise in a global context that makes me privileged and powerful, I dwell in what looks like a promised land to others. Personality wise I am an introverted, thinking female, using the terms in a Jungian (1992) sense. However, my perception (which may at times be false) is that extraverted feeling women are more valued and appreciated in the Christian cultures I have spent most time in. At times I have felt misunderstood and this sometimes leads to feeling what low grade levels of shame in not being who I think others want me to be or being described by a series of much more boring sounding adjectives such as wise! I have self-defined as a feminist for thirty or so years now, this is another area where others have sought to shame me. This is not always in an overt confrontational way but through little digs and comments particularly using biblical texts out of context. Most of the time now I am content with who God has created me to be and much less often look at others and desire to be like them. It has taken many years to get to this point and understanding shame has helped get to this place. I now recognize much

more quickly contexts where I may respond with shame and can often mitigate against that or at least diminish the impact.

I am not completely uncomfortable in the wilderness, it is the place John the Baptist cried out from.⁷ It is perhaps a place of misunderstanding and sometimes I have felt shamed for being there even when that is the place I believe God called me to be. From my late teenage years I have felt a call to work with young people who are marginalized and to worship in churches in urban priority areas. I sometimes speculate if this call to work with the marginalized reflects the feelings of marginalization I have experienced over the years. I am in part drawn to study shame because of these experiences in the wilderness and hearing the stories of others who find themselves there too.

Barren landscapes

I am a childless (not by choice) married woman, a barren woman to use the biblical language. I have felt shame over this, particularly when reading the Bible in an uncritical way where barrenness – a horrible word which can bring shame to me just in the reading, is seen as a punishment by God.⁸ Reading of how God answered the prayer of some is also painful and always raises the question why did God not answer our prayers? I feel shame that I have not given my mother grandchildren or my nephew a cousin and I am crying as I write this. However, I know that there are many things I would not have been able to do if we had of had children and that there are some people's lives who were changed because of our choices. I also realize that I am immensely blessed in having a job I love, a good marriage and the opportunity to fulfil my potential in many other ways. Compared to the lives of many women in the world I am very privileged and I do sometimes feel shame when I want more. If I think of some of the barren landscapes I have visited, Dartmoor or parts of Arizona, for example, I am aware that there is a stark beauty in the barrenness. This is resonant of kenosis, an emptying that enabled God to become human in Jesus and there is still enough of the sacrificial theology I came to know as a teenager to believe that it is in part in the dark and barren places where I have found God to be most faithful and true.

⁷ John 1.23.

⁸ The Bible suggests as a barren woman I am supposed to be "'desolate' (Is 54.1, Gal 4.27) and 'in misery' (1 Sam 1.11), with a womb that is 'never satisfied' (Prov 30.15-16)" I also should suffer "'reproach' (Gen 30.23), or 'disgrace' (Lk 1.25)" and I "join 'the poor', 'the needy', and 'the widow' as a symbol for the disadvantaged and vulnerable within the Hebrew community (1 Sam 2.5, 8; Ps.113.7-9; Job 24.21)" (Kroeger and Evans 2002:157).

However, I detest being asked if I have a family because I never know quite how to reply and sometimes, and perhaps I am being over-sensitive, pick up a hint that I am obviously not a real woman if I do not have children or cannot possibly be fulfilled.

Seascape

While a pastoral idyll may reflect some of the joys of my childhood, my favourite landscape has to include the sea. As I sit writing this I look up and see two pictures of Brighton, one of Holy Island and one of the Turnberry lighthouse. I surround myself with images of the sea and go to the sea whenever possible as the sea is that place where I feel closest to God and which functions as a metaphor for my understanding of God. There is a photograph of a happy, smiling 18 month old me with a white bonnet and a towelling swimming costume on looking so carefree and full of joy. I yearn for that Sally sometimes, on the days when everything weighs me down and it is hard to see what God is doing. However, I see glimpses of that Sally when I preside at the Eucharist. My route to ordination was a long and arduous one full of people not getting me and the shame of not being able to communicate all of who I am although I think I did finally manage to do this when I attended a Bishops' Advisory Panel in December 2010 and the report talked about me being "warm and engaging".

I started to research shame at the beginning of my ordination journey although I had felt a pull to do so for many years as I began to see how it had marred my life at various times. I wanted to learn how to minister in a way which was not shaming. It is not that I have no idea how to do this but rather a realization that ordination does make a difference, that there are subtle shifts in some power dynamics and that I am much more publicly a representative of Jesus and his church. I largely got through my training without experiencing the shame that I had in many institutional contexts, however, an issue arose right at the end and I wrote this in my journal:

There is a jagged wound deep within, it feels like an internal stigmata that bleeds when touched. I am surprised by the depth of the pain, the hurt, the deep memories that have been touched by what feels like yet another occasion of being misunderstood, unappreciated, devalued. What triggered that deep sense of injustice? What is the shadow that hovers over me? It touches the fragile Sally that lives in such a small space now. It touched vulnerabilities, I shared them, the world didn't fall in and I can move on. It felt like a rejection again and one that was being pushed on me that I had no choice but to accept. No regrets? It revealed something important in me, that I need to fight to challenge perceptions. I cannot be quiet and compliant any more without damaging the Sally that I have become and I can reject the institution shaming me again.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION IDENTIFYING

*I learned the truth at 23
That church was meant for men, not me
That girls should learn with quiet grace
And never run about the place
I learned that leaders had to be
Clothed in respectability
And women should modestly obey
And know the proper words to pray...⁹*

*Isn't it a sad state and a shame
When in confession of His name
Some churches can't model the behaviour
Which is explained by their Saviour?
Brian E. Wakeman¹⁰*

Issues associated with shame in the church¹¹ have been a concern for me for a number of years, in many ways for most of the more than thirty years I have been employed in Christian ministry. The foreword to the thesis offers a background to this. However, by way of introduction, the two excerpts from poems which head this chapter were written by participants in the investigative, pilot stage of my research and hint at some of the reasons why it was a significant topic for me to study as I started ordination training in 2010.¹² The original spark of interest came from seeing colleagues or friends leave ministry or a church because of something they had done or something that had happened to them. Rarely were these situations handled well and in talking to some of these people subsequently it is clear that there was a sense of shame that often still lingered and was at times debilitating. Sadly, shame infiltrates beyond the individual and can impact spouse, family, a church and makes a difference to how we are perceived. The dimension of structural power inherent in the role (Beasley-Murray 1998:110-111) as well as the deference towards clergy I have observed in numerous churches led me to think that I needed to reflect anew on the nature

⁹ A response to an exercise based on Janis Ian song, *At Seventeen* from a seminar I led on my research.

¹⁰ Part of poem received in personal correspondence.

¹¹ I am going to use the word "church" inclusively in this thesis meaning the institutional church, particularly the Church of England as the denomination I am ordained in, local church, and Christian organizations such as Youth for Christ who were my initial employers in Christian ministry.

¹² My previous study, writing and work as a theological educator meant that I had the flexibility to engage in some focused research as part of my initial ministerial education.

of ministry as I moved into a new role, albeit alongside my old one. I am Director of the Midlands CYM (MCYM),¹³ part of the Institute of Children, Youth and Mission (CYM), based at St John's College, Nottingham. I took on this role in an evolutionary manner as part of my role with Youth for Christ (YFC). I am also a self-supporting assistant curate in the Diocese of Birmingham at Hodge Hill Church (HHC), a Local Ecumenical Project (LEP) with the United Reformed Church (URC) which is one of the 7% most deprived parishes in the Church of England. This supports a long term call from late teenage years onwards to working with people who are marginalized and this has largely been reflected in the churches I have worshipped in. For my twenty five plus years in Birmingham I have worshipped in urban priority areas in both inner city and housing estate contexts. In my years in such places I have encountered people who have been shamed by both church and society and who have suffered because of the deficiencies of institutions in their area. This has also fed my desire to explore shame in the church as a research topic.

My research question which emerged in the initial period of identifying and scoping the topic was: *How might an understanding of shame in the church inform approaches to ministerial practice?* However, further reflection and thought led to the substituting of praxis for practice. Praxis is a more purposeful word than practice. Inherent in its use in youth work and ministry literature tends to be a thought through approach rather than a habitual one.¹⁴ While there may be Marxist overtones for some in such definitions, the understanding of praxis as "conscious, willed action, that through which theory or philosophy is transformed into practical social activity" (OED 2014) is one which resonates with my hope for this thesis. The term as it is used in theology has roots in Aristotle's writing and can be seen as deliberate, ongoing, critical, dynamic and reflective with an ultimate purpose or end in mind (Smith 2007:42-3).

The purpose of this chapter is to offer initial definitions and understandings of key terms including reflective practice and practical theology, shame, shame in the church and the initial typology, all of which underpin the later work in the thesis. As a piece of practical theology the entire thesis will be written in the first person. This is in keeping with the autoethnographic introductions and with the academic work that I encourage students to do in my role as a theological educator. It is important to own what I am writing and there are

¹³ MCYM used to be known as Midlands Centre for Youth Ministry but the inclusion of courses educating students to work with children and in schools necessitated a revisiting of the original vision of our parent body CYM and a name change which formally happened in 2013.

¹⁴ Although dictionary definitions of praxis do include this (OED 2014).

precedents for such an approach although I acknowledge it may be less common in such a formal academic piece (Walton 2014:98). I began by using “one” rather than I or we but this felt inauthentic and clumsy in the light of the topic of the thesis. Shame is about who we are and ministerial praxis is about engagement with self and other and the distancing inherent in one did not resonate.

Reflective practice and practical theology¹⁵

This thesis is, in part, a piece of reflective practice (see Johns 2004; Moon 2000; Nash & Nash 2009; Schön 1983, for example) which, along with practical theology is the core approach to ministry in my setting. While reflective practice is not one coherent set of practices or behaviours (Moon 2000:65) in essence it involves “giving something appropriate attention and consideration, looking at it from a variety of perspectives, being aware of the lenses we use, and making a response” (Nash & Nash 2009:3). This is what I am hoping to do, partly because I am aware that there could be a temptation to say that I have been in ministry for years and know how to do most things I will encounter as a priest so do not need to reflect in depth on ministerial praxis. However, I resonate with the way that Thompson and Thompson contrast reflective practice with non-reflective practice:

reflective practice can be effective, rewarding and ethical practice that makes a positive contribution ... Non-reflective practice, by contrast, can be ineffective, demotivating (if not soul destroying) and unethical practice that discourages learning and development and reinforces low standards of professional practice (2008:x).

My intention in studying shame in the church is to articulate some fresh insights into ministerial praxis which facilitate good reflective practice. Conscientization (Freire 1996:100) about the nature of shame in the church is a significant dimension of the research. To facilitate this I developed a typology of shame which provided a framework for my empirical work with the intention of revising it in the light of my data analysis and findings. An empirically developed typology as a tool to identify and mitigate shame is my unique contribution to knowledge through this thesis alongside a related discussion of the implications of this for ministerial praxis. My development of an integrated methodology including elements of autoethnography, practical theology and mixed methods may also offer a fresh way of doing research on sensitive topics.

Practical theology, while perhaps initial attempts to establish it as a discipline

¹⁵ Methodological implications of practical theology are discussed in chapter 2.

occurred in a hostile environment (Browning 1996:3; Miller-McLemore 2012a:10), is now firmly establishing itself as a specific approach to theology. Miller-McLemore writes about the “substantial intellectual and institutional growth of the last half century” (2012b:1)¹⁶ and suggests that while practical theology can be difficult to define, it is a scholarly discipline; the activity of faith; a sub-discipline and curriculum area; and a method for theological study (2012:5). This thesis focuses on the latter element. My foreword is conceivably illustrative of an approach to practical theology which posits that “any audience – academic or lay – will get more out of intellectual efforts if they are grounded, particularized and transparent to specifics in one’s own life” (Miller-McLemore 2012c:123).

Authors vary in their description of the origins of practical theology. For example, Maddox offers a succinct overview of the history which starts from an understanding of the term *theologia* from pre-Christian times (1990:650). In some accounts of practical theology (e.g. Farley 1987; Poling 2011) Schleiermacher, writing in the early nineteenth century and identifying practical theology as a third important area for study along with philosophical, and historical theology is seen as a particularly significant development (see Schleiermacher 2011). Subsequently, a focus on ecclesial and then pastoral practice emerged which led to an understanding of practical theology as pastoral theology. This dimension of practical theology was largely found in institutions which trained clergy leading to further separation from other academic disciplines.

This list of characteristics of practical theology can be distilled into a short definition reducing the significant areas of overlap and different ways of saying that praxis is important. Thus from this perspective *practical theology is a holistic, contextual, communal endeavour which focuses on developing and transforming praxis*. A dilemma is how the communal element may best be incorporated in my research. Research tools will be communal to some extent in that they will be piloted with an appropriate range of respondents but the analysis and interpretation will largely be a solitary exercise, although with the potential for some communal soundings. However, my formation has occurred in community and I bring those wide range of influences and insights into my attempts to do practical theology.

In reading various overviews of practical theology (e.g. Maddox 1990; Miller-McLemore 2012b; Swinton 2000; Woodward & Pattison 2000:13) I have sought to evolve a

¹⁶ This introduction to the *Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology* (Miller-McLemore 2012b) which she edited provides a concise introduction to and overview of the field.

definition of practical theology, also drawing on my own experience as a practitioner:

practical theology is a holistic, creative, experiential, contextual, socio-politically aware, interdisciplinary, analytical, integrative, dynamic, communal, loving, theological, reflexive endeavour with a primary focus on exploring, developing and transforming praxis.

In many respects this could be regarded as a phenomenological definition which encapsulates the various lenses through which I approach and appreciate the task. This definition will thus offer some loose boundaries to my research.¹⁷

Shame

There is no clear consensus as to either the meaning or nature of shame (Ferguson 2005; Goodliff 2005; Nathanson 1992; Pattison 2000). Reasons for this lack of consensus include conceptual complexity as well as the difficulty in identifying shame experiences (Lewis 1971:38-9). Etymologically some scholars (eg Kilborne 2002:6) suggest shame is derived from a pre-Germanic word *skem* which has a meaning of covering oneself (OED 2012). A difficulty in understanding shame from an English language perspective is that it is unique amongst European languages in having only one word for both discretion and disgrace shame and also a preponderance to focus on the latter (Schneider 1992:19). Pattison¹⁸ identifies a plethora of approaches to shame of which the eclectic/synthesising (2000:52) is the one I am adopting in this thesis as it is most pertinent for a practical theological study.

In the light of an eclectic approach, these definitions give a sense of the range of understandings found in different disciplines. Within psychology and related disciplines the definitions are mainly individualistic. Ferguson, a psychologist,¹⁹ suggests that “Shame can be broadly understood as individuals’ intense disappointment concerning their own or another’s shortcomings, which they perceive as discrepant from standards of significance to them or important others” (2005:378). Kaufman notes the dimension of being seen or exposed as significant arguing that “To live with shame is to experience the very essence or

¹⁷ I am purposefully choosing to continue to use the term practical theology rather than empirical theology which some apply to endeavours which draw on both theological and social-scientific approaches, to describe my thesis. As empirical theology in the British context tends to be used for different types of project, more often quantitative and involved in testing existing theological models, for example (Kay 2003:179). Van der Ven (1993), perhaps the leading proponent of empirical theology also had a strong emphasis on quantitative method and it is within a chapter on quantitative method that empirical theology is discussed (Schilderman 2014). Others use the terms more as synonyms (eg Village 2007:2).

¹⁸ For the sake of transparency, Stephen Pattison was one of the supervisors of this thesis.

¹⁹ The discipline identified represents the academic department that the author is associated with.

heart of the self as wanting” (1985:8). From the perspective of pastoral care and counselling, Wimberly offers these definitions which give an insight into the issues faced: “feeling unlovable, that one’s life has a basic flaw in it” (1999:11); “experiencing the loss of what society defines as worthy and valuable, and without possessing these symbols of worth and value, one is not loved and has no worth” (2011b:103). From the standpoint of psychotherapy: “Shame is a deeply held, embodied and implicit belief that there is something wrong and defective with who we are. It sits as a black hole at the centre of our being” (Lloyd & Sieff 2015:27). A definition which focuses more on the discretion element is that “shame guards the separate, private self with its boundaries and prevents intrusion and merger. It guarantees the self’s integrity. At the same time, it also protects the integrity of the human relationship and prevents complete isolation and rejection” (Wurmser 1997:65).

Other disciplines having something to contribute to understanding shame include anthropology which sees it as “a painful emotion responding to a sense of failure to attain some ideal state” (Nussbaum 2004:184). Sociologist Scheff sees shame as the major emotion because “of its ubiquity in human experience, its role as the force behind conscience, and as the regulator of all of our emotions, including shame itself” (2011:34). From the outlook of a theologian Pembroke combines elements of these definitions “Shame arises when the self evaluates itself as flawed, defective, inferior. One judges that one has fallen short of a cherished ideal. One perceives a gap between the self as it really is and a desired identity” (2002:142). There are some commonalities within these definitions which reinforce that shame is about perceptions of self and has an element of being comparative. Shame can be seen as multi-faceted including the following components: social or external cognitive; internal self-evaluative; emotional; behavioural; physiological (Gilbert 2002:5-6).

There is a reasonable consensus in literature from a variety of disciplines regarding distinguishing shame and guilt: guilt tends to focus on what we have done and is oriented towards others, shame is oriented towards and impacts our sense of self (Goodliff 2005:6; Lynd 1958:2008-9; Morrison 1996:12; Teroni & Deonna 2008:725). Thus shame is addressed by changing our thinking about ourselves possibly leading to personal transformation but guilt is addressed by thinking that may lead to changed behaviour and/or reparation (Woien et al 2003:314). Erickson (1995:245) suggests that the psychosocial crisis involving shame (autonomy v shame and doubt) precedes the initiative v guilt crisis and both of them happen in early childhood. Shame develops a sense of being self-conscious, a relational context, a feeling of being watched, thus the person “who is ashamed would like to force the world not

to look at him, not to notice his exposure. He would like to destroy the eyes of the world. Instead he must wish for his own invisibility" (Erikson 1995:227). Interestingly, in relation to reflecting on an institutional context Erikson goes on to note how there is a limit to the extent to which a child or an adult can endure endless demands to perceive themselves as "evil and dirty" (1995:227) and to see those who impose such judgements as infallible and may begin to "consider as evil only the fact that they exist" (1995:228). Given the parental models that can exist in some church settings it may be helpful to note how Erikson sees that from "a sense of loss of self-control and of foreign over-control comes a lasting propensity for doubt and shame" (1995:228). This suggests that some may be more shame prone whereas if self-control has been developed with no loss of self-esteem then appropriate pride is present. Guilt relates to initiative and may be about what you have done or is thinking about doing and tends to be more internal in orientation (Erikson 1995:230). Recognizing the early origins of shame and guilt in human development and the capacity of this development to be stalled or malfunction may be important in exploring shame experienced at a later date.

Shame is a concept that is culturally determined (McNish 2003:8; Pattison 2000:55); can be felt about almost anything (Pembroke 2002:142); is seen by some as distinguishing humanity from other creatures and attracts the attention of a range of academic disciplines (Schneider 1992:5). Shame is seen as the opposite to pride (Scheff 1979:56) and while more than emotion may be seen as the most social emotion as it threatens the social bond (Scheff 2000:98), shame can be seen as a "permanent possibility" and "daily companion" (Nussbaum 2004:173). Shame is seen by some as originating in early childhood experiences, particularly related to helplessness (Nathanson 1992:214; Nussbaum 2004:183-4). Shame can be seen as exhibiting an unwanted identity (Deonna et al 2012:7).

The literature suggests a significant range of consequences of shame both individual and communal although these may be felt to different degrees - from a chronic disabling experience to a reminder to behave in a particular way in context. The individual or personal include involving the whole self (Lewis 1995:2; Pembroke 2002:143); defectiveness and unworthiness of self (Fowler 1993:816); lack of functioning of self, feeling paralyzed, helpless, passive (Block Lewis 1971:88); feeling exposed (Hollander 2003:1328; Kaufman 1985:8); feeling small and shrinking (Tangney & Dearing 2002:67) or painfully diminished (Kaufman 1985:8); self-loathing (Brown 2007:4); resonating with fear of abandonment (McNish 2003:7); feeling unlovable and worthless (Wimberly 1999:11); seeping sense of

badness (Berecz 1998:87); feeling flawed, defective and inferior (Pembroke 2002:142) or flawed, weak and dirty (Morrison 1996:13); sense of self-respect doubted (Jacoby 1996:52); fundamentally deficient as a human (Kaufman 1985:8); a feeling of loathing against ourselves (Morrison 1996:13); cloud that follows us, feeling at heart of identity we are poison (McMillan 2006:158); feeling weak, inadequate, a loser, dirty, infantile (Nathanson 1987:248); inferiority complex (Morrison 1996:198); woundedness (Malina 2011:149); hiddenness (Pembroke 2002:143) or desire to hide, crawl away or die (Lewis 1971); incongruence (Pembroke 2002:143); intense disappointment with shortcomings or discrepancy to significant standards (Ferguson 2005:378); loss of face, fall from grace, being unfixable (McMillan 2006:151-2); potentially experiencing tears, rage or blushing (Block Lewis 1971:88); a kind of psychological murdering (O'Donohue 1998:161); failure to achieve ideal state (Nussbaum 2004:184). Nathanson (1992:312) offers a model of a shame compass to describe responses to shame which on the vertical axis has withdrawal and avoidance and on the horizontal attack other and attack self. He suggests that the purpose of these four responses is to change the feelings associated with shame (Nathanson 1992:312).

Based on this wide reading which I wrote up as a series of literature reviews as part of my initial scoping of the topic, and my own reflections on experience, I developed a phenomenological definition:

shame may be either constraining or estranging having either a beneficial or negative consequence; is contextually determined in relation to a real or imaginary audience and can arise from a sense of exposure and vulnerability which impacts the whole of one's self; may include a loss of status, identity and belonging; produces feelings of unworthiness, powerlessness, self-contempt, incongruence; results in seeing oneself as flawed, unlovable, deficient, contaminated, dirty; acts as a threat to trust; often causes significant suffering; acts as an incentive to maintaining healthy boundaries, relationships and concern for others; may be manifest in many ways including physiological, a desire to withdraw or hide, or spark a shame/rage cycle.

It has been important to acknowledge in this definition that shame may have positive as well as negative dimensions. When reading a statement such as "Shame protects privacy; it functions as a guardian against any outer power that might exploit weakness in the essential realms of the self and interfere with one's own inner logic" (Wurmser 1997:66), which is emblematic of some of the discussions of such a positive dimension, it is clear that shame is not all bad. However, in relation to the ministerial praxis focus of the thesis I am wanting to particularly explore how the negative dimension of shame may be mitigated against, and have a concern about how the shaming of the innocent and or vulnerable can occur in ways

which are personally destructive. While I have a strong personal aversion of shaming as a tactic used towards individuals, I am aware that there are occasions when I have behaved in a way which has been the antithesis of what I expect of myself as a priest and follower of Jesus and sometimes it has needed a mirror held up by someone else for me to recognize that. On such an occasion shame is a trigger to amend my behaviour although sometimes I may only feel guilt about something. It may be that there are times when guilt is made known that shaming could be seen as appropriate. Certainly there are contemporary institutional instances of the church shaming with what may be seen as a prophetic voice such as responses to pay day loan companies, and the government over child poverty where that may be one of the few strategies that has the potential to elicit a response. There are also instances where it seems right that the institution of the church should experience shame because of, for example, a historic lack of action in relation to child abuse by clergy. Thus while not saying that shaming is always wrong, much of this thesis will explore perspectives on those occasions when it is not the appropriate response in relation to a liberative praxis of ministry and will offer a framework to mitigate against this.

Emotion

In this thesis I largely use the verb “experiencing” in relation to shame rather than “feeling” because I do not want to limit understanding of shame to an emotion. This is, in part, because emotion as a concept is contested, there is no one agreed definition and disciplines, and scholars within disciplines, disagree with each other (Pattison 2000:37)²⁰ or more bluntly “the field of emotions is less a body of knowledge than a jungle of unexamined assumptions, observations, and theories” (Scheff & Retzinger 2001:3-4).²¹ Also, within a Western context emotion is often contrasted unhelpfully with reason and discussions about shame should not be easily dismissed by those who mistrust emotion. However, I am certainly not denying that we feel shame and appreciate that our emotions reveal something of our self-perception, beliefs and values (Elliott 2005:37) and that emotions have cognitive, affective, conative and physiological elements.

While there are discussions about whether emotion is cognitive or non-cognitive (Elliott 2005:19), a succinct definition which may be helpful in relation to shame is that

²⁰ Pattison (2000) begins his seminal book on shame with a chapter discussing emotion which identifies all the pertinent issues.

²¹ Scheff & Retzinger (2001) provide a helpful historical account of shame as an emotion drawing also on biblical material.

“Emotions are primarily non-conscious processes which evaluate a situation, and prepare us to deal with it” and they may motivate approach or withdrawal depending on whether something is perceived as good or a threat (Siegel & Sieff 2015:139). Some believe that shame is felt from infancy (Nussbaum 2004:183) and that it can be an innate reaction and triggers “the sense of an incompetent self” (Nathanson 1992:214). For some, shame is the master emotion which can impact the capacity to express other major emotions such as fear, grief and anger and may either inhibit or amplify them (Scheff & Retzinger 2001:xix). Shame dynamics may be a universal dimension of social interaction (Scheff & Retzinger 2001:27).

Shame in institutions

While most of the material delineating the consequences of shame above is more focused on individual experiences, there is also literature which suggests that there is a communal dimension which is pertinent for my research. Areas which may be relevant include: shame potentially having a national character (Wurmser 1987:87-8; Scheff & Retzinger 2001:29); psychological distancing from the institution as a consequence of vicarious shame (Chi et al 2015:1); collective shame as a response to a group action (Shepherd et al 2013:43); losing one’s place and identity within the community (Binau 2006:101); loss of status (Malina 2001:50); a propensity to behave in a self-sufficient way as a consequence of experiencing shame (Chao et al 2011:202); loss of what community regards as valuable and worthy and loss of meaningful community (Wimberly 2011b:xvii); failure to live up to communal standards one shares (Miller 1997:34); polluting condition of specific groups with potential for unpredictable social effects (Pattison 2011:13); threat to the social bond (Scheff & Retzinger 2001:5); getting trapped in a shame, rage, revenge cycle with the potential for war (Scheff & Retzinger 2001:242); undercurrent in organizational and social dynamics reducing effectiveness (Clough 2010:25).

My intention was to research shame in the church and initially I explored using the term “institutional shame” although came to the conclusion that was perhaps too loaded and contested a term.²² In part, what I am seeking to explore is a dimension of what may be called structural sin which “describes the embodiment of sin in structures which in turn produce further disvalues in the form of intolerance, inequality and all manners of injustice”

²² The term “institutional” in respect of negative behaviour in organizations came to the forefront in the Stephen Lawrence enquiry and the Macpherson Report’s (1999) definition of institutional racism.

(Connolly 2002:112). In using such a term I am asserting that, sometimes, sinful attitudes, words, actions and so on may be incorporated into the practices and structures of institutions to the detriment of particular individuals or groups.

Other literature supports the concept of exploring shame in institutional settings. Anthropologist Mary Douglas called her book *How Institutions Think* (1987) and suggests that an institution “provides the categories of their thought, sets the terms for self-knowledge, and fixes identities” (1987:112). Clough writing from a public sector context suggests shame in organizations is “ubiquitous – but hidden; plays mercilessly with our deepest insecurities while also revealing and supporting our values and aspirations; it may facilitate social interaction by prompting us to behave appropriately, or it may alienate and isolate” (Clough 2010:26).

Shame can contribute to the motivation and performance of individuals, internal and external relationships, how employees feel about the organization and how they may then represent it to others, she notes that “shame can flourish in the interface between an organisation and the wider society it inhabits” (Clough 2010:26), citing MPs’ expenses as an example. Deonna et al suggest that “in a shame system people can behave very immorally in order to court favor with their superiors and avoid being rejected for not complying with requests or orders” (2012:1). Chi et al (2015:1) speculate that an organization’s capacity to overcome a crisis may depend on the extent to which individuals withdraw their support as a consequence of the shame they feel because of the actions of that organization and this tends to happen more when there are high levels of identification to the institution. The church and clergy are subject to some of the same sort of press attention as other public sector organizations and many of her observations are transferable.

Again writing from a public sector perspective, healthcare, Davidoff argues that shame “is a powerful force in slowing or preventing improvement [and] unless or until shame is confronted and dealt with, progress in improvement will be slow” (2002:1). He writes this in relation to doctors admitting to patients that they have done something wrong and for clergy this may perhaps be even more complex as in some traditions the notion that God has done something wrong may be implicit in an admission. That it is difficult to admit shame is noted by Scheff & Retzinger who suggest that “the denial of shame is institutionalized in modern societies” (2001:3). Martin (2000:143) argues that organizations mediate cultural themes for those within them thus churches will mediate the experience of shame that participants experience. Thus our theology of shame may impact how this is

done. Research in the area of social marketing suggests that using shame is ineffective as an approach to get people to do the right thing and participants talked about such issues as hopelessness and depression in response to such shaming approaches (Brennan & Binney 2010:144). This may be of relevance as to how to approach aspects of ministry.

Writing more specifically about the church, McNish argues that in a distorted form shame can “destroy” communities (2004:176) and that the church is complicit in “the fostering of toxic shame” (2004:185). Clough argues that historically the church has put herself into a difficult position because of the mythology it has developed around different dimensions of its values. An example is the way that priesthood and religious life was raised “to a position of sanctity that was beyond recrimination [which] facilitated a tendency to protect perpetrators and blame (and shame) victims” (Clough 2010:30). She then suggests that scapegoating is a consequence of such approaches which sometimes results in the weak and the vulnerable being seen as guilty with others siding with those in power against the victims (Clough 2010:30).

From this reading and reflection I have developed a working definition of disgrace or estranging shame in Christian institutions which involves

the consequence of practices, structures, processes, behaviour, attitudes and liturgy that people encounter through their involvement in and with the church and other Christian institutions, which fail to reflect the reality of the body of Christ as exemplifying the love, life, work and example of Jesus and which engender shame in individuals, groups or communities.

In offering such a definition I am not suggesting that the engendering of shame is always intentional, or manipulative, much of the shaming that occurs may be inadvertent or careless and the perpetrator unaware of the consequences particularly given that shame is such a personal experience and culturally determined. However, this definition can act as a reminder of the diversity of ways in which shame may occur at the institutional level and complements the typology which offers more specific ways in which shame in the church may be manifest.

Typology of shame in the church

The idea to develop a typology of shame emerged out of my initial attempts to define the scope of the topic realising that it was often hidden, interpreted as something else and difficult to talk about with people. Typology is defined as “the study of classes with common characteristics; classification, esp. of human products, behaviour, characteristics, etc.”(OED

online 2014). Developing a typology was helpful for two reasons. Firstly, to provide a framework for identifying and naming the different types of shame that occurred in the church and secondly, as a structure for some of the research.

I only found two attempts at a typology in the literature. Pembroke (2002:156) identified five different types of shame: situational shame (eg embarrassing situations); aesthetic shame (eg falling short of an ideal); inherited identity shame (eg class, culture); inferiority shame (eg feeling lacking or deficient or role incompetency); moral shame. While such a typology has potential for analysing individual shame it did not offer the broader framework I believed to be necessary to research shame in an institutional context. Fowler's typology has some similarities and encompasses healthy shame which is similar to discretion shame; perfectionist shame involving conformity to unrealistic expectations; minority identity shame which may include ethnicity, gender, for example; toxic shame resulting from mistreatment by others; and shamelessness where conscience does not impact behaviour (1996:113-141). Again, this felt too individualistic in orientation and describes behaviour observed rather than the broader context of where the shame originates from.

I broadly developed two typologies (see tables 1.1 and 1.2), one more complex which I consulted on and used initially in some of the research and a simpler one which emerged out of the early data analysis. With the original typology I identified three loci of shame: internal or external to the institution, and the institutional belief systems and five domains: personal, relational, communal, systemic and historical. I chose the three loci to indicate the primary arena in which institutional shame is experienced. Internal refers to what happens within an individual church or organization, external refers to the wider context such as denomination or community and institutional belief systems focuses on the theology, doctrine and beliefs of the church. The five domains were chosen to encompass the most common contexts in which shame is experienced through organizational engagement. Personal relates to shame experienced by an individual as a consequence of their relationship with the church; relational is shame experienced as a consequence of identification with the people within the church, particularly, but not exclusively, leaders; communal relates to shame which is experienced at a group or congregational level; systemic related to shame that is a consequence of what the church says, does or believes at the denominational or institutional level; historical relates to something which has happened in the past. I then sought to identify types of shame within these different loci and domains, some of the terms use transcend more than one loci or domain where this

seemed appropriate. All the words with the exception of vicarious are verb-based to try and bring a consistency of approach and to emphasise the active (even if inadvertent) shaming which occurs. I also tried to use words which can encompass shame which estranges and shame which inhibits, disgrace and discretion shame. In offering such a typology I was aware that the multi-faceted nature of shame means that these categories are not necessarily always discrete.

The terms identified are a lens through which to see the concept. They are also an indicator which may help us identify if what is being experienced is shame as well as concepts which may potentially be useful in developing suitable responses to, or remedies for, negative dimensions of shame experienced. The terms were chosen to lend themselves to reflective practice in identifying what may engender shame in either the minister or those they work with and which perhaps may help provide an alternative vocabulary in discussing shame, as from experience it appears to be something that people shy away from. They are also terms which were helpful in framing questions for the empirical stage of the research.

Domain: Loci:	1 Personal	2 Relational	3 Communal	4 Systemic	5 Historical
A Internal to institution	(Non)complying	Vicarious	(Dis)stigmatizing	(Un)colluding	Buried
B External to institution	(Non)conforming		(Dis)harmonizing	(De)fragmenting	
C Institutional belief system	Dissociating/Associating				

Table 1.1 Original typology of shame in the church

While initially the more complex typology seemed helpful in seeking to differentiate between different elements of shame, in analysing the data it was not nearly so clear and it was hard to differentiate the different loci of shame. The vertical axis was renamed facets of shame. In the initial data analysis institutional belief system functioned more as a domain thus I added theological to the original five. However, one other change was to substitute the term structural for systemic as this seemed more in keeping with the initial findings. The revised typology met another of my goals which was to have a model which could be relatively easily taught, learnt and remembered and which would be genuinely useful in a ministerial context rather than a theoretical model which had little impact on practice.

Domain:	1 Personal	2 Relational/ Associational	3 Communal	4 Structural	5 Theological	6 Historical
Facets of shame	(Non)complying (Non)conforming	Vicarious	(De)stigmatizing (Dis)uniting	(Un)colluding (De)fragmenting	Associative Dissociative	Buried

Table 1.2 Revised typology of shame in the church

Overview of the thesis

This thesis seeks to answer the question: *How might an understanding of shame in the church inform approaches to ministerial praxis?* It is structured according to my methodology and each chapter title identifies which part of the process is involved. Chapter two introduces this methodology more thoroughly and focuses on providing an overview of a practical theology approach to research and mixed methods perspectives from social-science literature. I then offer a synthesis of the two as my chosen methodology with theology taking precedence. Chapter three locates shame within a biblical framework drawing on three elements: the creation narratives in Genesis, the gospel accounts of Jesus' ministry and Paul's letters to the Corinthians. As a practical theologian from an evangelical tradition, I seek to take seriously this element of my tradition in the light of critiques of the use of the Bible in practical theology (Cartledge 2013:281). Chapter four is a literature review exploring the understanding of shame in ministerial praxis. This is approached thematically and includes understanding, defining and scoping shame from this perspective, theological perspectives and ministerial responses. Chapter five is an analysis of the data gained from questionnaires and focus groups in relation to the typology of shame in the church, based on a thematic coding of all the transcribed data. Three core questions underpinned this analysis:

- When do people experience shame in the church?
- How do people respond to this dimension of shame?
- What implications are there for ministerial praxis?

In chapter six I offer a revised typology of shame in the church which draws on the empirical work as well as the wider reading from other disciplines including theology. The revised typology extends the concepts used to describe shame in the different domains. Chapter seven discusses the implications for ministerial praxis focusing on two main threads: mitigating shame in our own praxis and responding to those who have experienced shame. I seek to describe my approach to praxis. In chapter 8 I draw together my learning through looking at the four main areas I have explored: shame, ministerial praxis, doing theology and

theological education. In this chapter I draw on some of the empirical work which relates to theological education. I also offer a more formal conclusion to the thesis. The Afterword is a return to the autoethnographic writing which focuses on the changed perspective I now have as a result of researching and writing this thesis.

CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY INVESTIGATING

Research ... encourages and enables the development of creative thinking, problem-solving strategies and abilities which in turn help others to approach everyday life (Wisker 2005:5).

Introduction

I started this research as an ordinand in the Church of England. Part of my motivation was to engage in research which would enhance my effectiveness as a practitioner (Costley et al 2010:xvi), both as a theological educator and eventually a priest as I continued researching during my curacy. My intention was to offer insight through the lens of understanding shame in the church into approaches to effective ministerial praxis which has been an aspect of my writing and research for a number of years (eg Nash 2006, 2008; Nash, Pimlott & Nash 2008; Nash & Nash 2009; Nash 2011; Whitehead, Nash & Sutcliffe 2013; Nash & Whitehead 2014).

In developing a methodology to answer my research question of *How might an understanding of shame in the church inform approaches to ministerial praxis?* I drew on literature and approaches from both practical theology and qualitative research methods as I wanted to research from the perspective of a practical theologian, but within a framework of good research practice as understood in the wider academic context. In this chapter I discuss reflexivity, identify the relevant material from the two fields and then offer a contextualized methodology for my research question.

Reflexivity and autoethnographic approaches

Reflexivity highlights the impossibility of value free research and is an integral part of the qualitative research process. It involves a self-awareness and criticality of our values, beliefs and attitudes and the way they impact the research process (Payne and Payne 2004:191; Etherington 2004:11). Scharen and Vigen identify the importance of “courageous willingness” (2011:19) to be changed by the research process which is particularly apt for this research topic. However, it is difficult to identify change or new insights if unaware of the starting point. These are some of the reasons why I chose to start the thesis as I did with a piece of autoethnographic writing. Because this research topic was in part triggered by personal experiences I expect the journey of exploring reflexivity to be ongoing.

A strong belief in the importance of reflexivity and the personal triggers for wanting to research this area led me to explore autoethnographic approaches to research (Hughes et al 2012; Muncey 2010). Autoethnography has roots in anthropology and has grown as a research method over the last twenty or so years with the first published work clearly delineated as autoethnography coming in 1979 (Hughes et al 2012:209-10). There are a range of definitions and approaches to autoethnography, but broadly they connect the analysis of personal experience in relation to cultural contexts or experience.²³

Autoethnographic research may be seen as “a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act” (Ellis et al 2011:1) which produces “meaningful, accessible, and evocative research, grounded in personal experience, research that would sensitize readers to ... experiences shrouded in silence” (Ellis et al 2011:2). This encapsulates its attraction in relation to researching shame in the church. Thus autoethnography provided a fresh methodological insight which contributed towards my overall approach to research.²⁴ In part this was because it was important that I demonstrated a willingness to be vulnerable and share my own shame experiences which enabled me to be aware of some of the issues that may arise when asking others to do this. It is also one of my values as an educator not to ask anyone to do something I am not willing to do myself. Thus the thesis both begins and ends with autoethnographic reflections. Dauphinee argues that “the risk of autoethnography opens us to the possibility of seeing more of what we ignore in both ourselves and others, asking why it is ignored, and what we might need to do about it” (2010:818). Thus it felt important to set down my own experiences, to acknowledge the pieces of the jigsaw that have fuelled my passion for this subject and to be willing to confront some of my own memories and experiences in the way that I hoped others may in responding to my research tools.

Another reason for being drawn to autoethnographic approaches is the resonance with my experiences of Christian testimony (Hoyt 2007). While testimony seems less common in my current Church of England context it was an integral part of life as a young person in a Baptist Church and in my young adult experiences in both a house church and Pentecostal church. Testimony is a tool which can give a voice to the oppressed and

²³ There are a variety of approaches to defining autoethnography, Muncey (2010) offers a helpful introduction to the field with many examples of autoethnography in practice.

²⁴ I am aware that there are a range of opinions on the academic merit of autoethnography, see Doloriert and Sambrook (2011) for arguments for its use. Authors who offer a critique of autoethnography include Tolich (2010), Cook (2012) and Hughes et al (2012). Forber-Pratt (2015) presents in autoethnographic form her attempt to use this methodology in an initially hostile setting.

marginalized (Wright 2008:186) which may be significant in exploring approaches to ministerial praxis around shame

Methodological approaches and insights from practical theology

In a widely cited text, Swinton and Mowat, discussing both practical theology and qualitative research, define practical theology as “critical, theological, reflection on the practices of the Church as they interact with the practices of the world, with a view to ensuring and enabling faithful participation in God’s redemptive practices in, to and for the world” (2006:6). This is a pertinent definition which coheres with the focus in the research on ministerial praxis. Practices contain “values, beliefs, theologies and other assumptions which, for the most part, go unnoticed until they are complexified and brought to our notice through the process of theological reflection” (Swinton & Mowat 2006:20). Some of the practices around shame in Christian institutions fall into this category, which is why shame is so often misunderstood, misdiagnosed or minimized. Swinton and Mowat conclude that “Practical Theology has a wider theological remit which involves challenging current practices in the hope that they will move closer towards faithfulness. This requires more than simply problem-solving. It involves consciousness raising” (2006:256) the latter being part of my intention in studying shame in the church.

Methodologically, how I construe practical theology will influence how I “do” it. Pattison and Lynch (2005:415-421) identify three styles of practical theology which are liberal-rational, neo-traditional confessional and radical-liberationist. The radical-liberationist approach seems the most useful in relation to shame in the church as it pays attention to social context including such topics as gender and ethnicity; has an awareness of power and the potential of abuse; and promotes liberation from oppression (Pattison and Lynch 2005:420). While others such as Graham, Ward and Walton (2005) and Ballard and Pritchard (2006) offer a wide range of approaches to practical theological methodology I am intending to use a pastoral cycle type approach. This is because it has roots in my preferred radical-liberationist style, can be explained clearly, offers a structure that can be used in a variety of settings along with the opportunity to draw on a range of other disciplines at different stages. I have written elsewhere about using a variety of tools in theological reflection (Nash & Nash 2009) and some of these creative approaches are compatible with using the pastoral cycle. An overview of approaches to the pastoral cycle are summarized in this chart:

Element	Cameron, Bhatti, Duce 2010	Lartey 2000	Osmer 2008	Poling 2011
Description/naming	Experience	Experience	The descriptive-empirical task: priestly listening – gathering information that helps to discern patterns and dynamics in particular episodes, contexts or situations	Description of lived experience
Reflexivity				Critical awareness of perspectives and interests
Analysis (multi disciplinary)	Reflection – using four voices of theology: normative, espoused, formal and operant	Situational analysis theological analysis	The interpretive task: sagely wisdom – drawing on broader theories to better understand and explain why these patterns and dynamics are occurring	Correlation of perspectives from culture and Christian tradition
Evaluation	Learning	Situational analysis of theology	The normative task: prophetic discernment – using theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, contexts or situations, constructing ethical norms to guide responses and learn from good practice	Interpretation of meaning and value
Theorize or synthesize				Critique of interpretations
Action/response/outcome	Action – transformed practice and transformed theology	Response	The pragmatic task: servant leadership – determining strategies of action that will influence	Guidelines and plans for a particular community

Table 2.1 Comparison of approaches to the pastoral cycle.

While this chart is not exhaustive, it exemplifies the main types of approaches to the pastoral cycle. I have tried to choose a representative range of authors across time, location and context which may be indicative of the development of the methodology beyond the use of see, judge, act in liberation theology which was my first introduction to theological reflection (eg Boff and Boff 1996). Cameron et al (2010) offer a recent UK based version, Lartey (2000) is well known for his work in intercultural contexts, Osmer (2008) is the author I have found most often cited as offering a model for practical theology in my field of youth ministry and Poling's (2011) approach is that which most resonates with me in relation to

this thesis.

I have identified what seem to be the core elements of the activity which can be seen as offering a full pastoral cycle or spiral approach, the notion of a spiral indicating that when one begins the process again it is never from the same place (Green 2010:17-27). Drawing on insights of the models above, as well as wider reading, personal experience and my own definition of practical theology as *a confessional, holistic, creative, experiential, contextual, socio-politically aware, interdisciplinary, analytical, integrative dynamic, communal, loving, theological, reflexive endeavour with a primary focus on exploring, developing and transforming praxis* from chapter one, I end up with a practical theology methodology framed as follows:

- *Noticing*: the first stage is to notice an issue that requires attention or reflection.
- *Reflexivity*: this involves self-awareness and acknowledging what the issues may be that could influence engagement in this process, particularly lenses for analysis and evaluation. It also includes attending to feelings and tensions (Poling 1991:186-190) experienced during the process. It draws on contextual, confessional and experiential material.
- *Describing/naming*: this involves getting a full understanding of the experience or situation, what Geertz calls a “thick description” (1973:6) and includes “priestly listening” (Osmer 2008:4). This understanding will seek to be holistic, drawing on a range of perspectives and disciplines.
- *Analysis*: this involves drawing on insights from theology and other relevant disciplines such as sociology, psychology, anthropology and culture.
- *Evaluation*: this involves interpreting the findings emerging from the reflection process, noting any competing interpretations, being aware of reflexive perspectives and testing out as appropriate.
- *Theorize/synthesize*: this involves using the material developed in the process in the development of theory or in synthesizing to illuminate the concept or topic being explored seeking to be creative, integrative and contextual.
- *Action/response/outcome*: this involves drawing the process to a conclusion and deciding what the appropriate response is which may include considerations of faithful and unfaithful ministry practice (Poling 1991:190-1), transforming practice (Graham 1996), changes in perception, a new understanding; action can take many forms.

Methodological approaches from research methods literature

Qualitative research “begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Cresswell 2007:37). However, methodological choices tend to be subjective to some extent, thus “it is difficult to argue that methods choice depends exclusively on links to research aims; choice of methods involves a wider, more complex, interdependent set of considerations” (Buchanan & Bryman 2011:1) which include personal preferences and biases. There are five key areas where such choices are significant relating to ontological (pertaining to the nature of reality), epistemological (relationship between researcher and researched), axiological (values and bias), rhetorical (language) as well as methodological (process) assumptions (Cresswell 2007:17).

Ontologically, qualitative research perceives reality to be subjective and draws on the experiences of participants to explore different perspectives (Cresswell 2007:17).

Swinton and Mowat note that there are four major functions of research: contextual, explanatory, evaluative and generative (2006:51-2) and that a method needs to be chosen that relates appropriately to the function. Both contextual, “describing the form or nature of what exists” (2006:51) and generative “aiding the development of theories, strategies and actions” (2006:52) seem pertinent to my topic. My preferred methodology to date has tended to be grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Collins-Mayo et al 2010; Nash 2011) but this is not appropriate for a topic where I had already engaged in significant conceptual development. While drawn to ethnography, adopting this approach would have required a focus on particular congregation(s) or institution(s) and that would not have given me the breadth of data that I was hoping to gather across traditions and contexts. For similar reasons neither a case study nor narrative research would have achieved what I wanted to. While I was adopting a loose phenomenological approach to defining shame, phenomenology as a research approach would have meant focusing far more on articulating the essence of shame in the church whereas I wanted also to offer a significant focus on ministerial praxis.

Bearing in mind these reflections, the most appropriate choice seemed to be to undertake a mixed methods project

which uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches within a single study. Its premise is that the design and conduct of research should be directed by what will be the best way to gain as full as possible an understanding of what is being

studied, rather than adhering strictly to one paradigm or methodology (Hewitt-Taylor 2011:90).

Bryman (2011:517-9) argues that mixed methods has more recently become legitimized but initially the critiques of it were partly on epistemological grounds because of the differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches.²⁵ One of the helpful things about mixed methods research is that an element of data and methodological triangulation may be built into the design (Bryman 2011:522). Returning to Cresswell's (2007:17) five areas of methodological choice, the mixed methods approach to this piece of research involves seeing singular and multiple realities (ontological); using practical approaches that work to collect data (epistemological); having a range of stances about the research topic (axiological); using language appropriate for my context using the first person in asserting my views (language); the research process will be reviewed, adapted and revised as necessary as experience dictates (process). More specifically I will draw on a pragmatist paradigm epistemologically which is concerned with the consequences of actions, is problem centred, pluralistic and real-world practice oriented and is that which is regarded as fitting well with a mixed methods study (Cresswell and Clark 2011:41). A mixed methods approach also facilitates using the autoethnographic reflection described above as well as a practical theological methodology. There is an evolving literature on mixed methods which posits a range of approaches within the field and what I am doing fits best, from my perspective in the transformative design where "the researcher seeks to address issues of social justice and call for change" (Cresswell and Clark 2011:97). This approach necessitates thinking "very carefully about the language, messages, tone, intentions, integrity, assumptions and effect on others that our research activity and presentation constructs" (Cousin 2009:17). The more quantitative element of the data collection is an anonymous survey collected online and the more qualitative through focus groups and my autoethnographic writing. In my study the quantitative survey phase preceded the qualitative focus group phase although each had equal status in the data analysis which integrated the separately analysed material from both. This is what Leech and Onwuegbuzie call a partially mixed equal status design mixed methods study (2007:270).

²⁵ Chapter 2 of Creswell and Clark (2011) summarize these critiques.

Survey

In order to try and get an overview of shame in the church and to begin to test out my typology model I devised three questionnaires (see Appendix 1). Two were parallel, one addressed to leaders and the other to church members and the third was for theological educators. These three distinct surveys enabled me to get data from the breadth of my ministerial settings: church, Christian institutions and theological education. I used Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com) as my vehicle for data gathering as it enabled respondents to be completely anonymous as there is no way of me knowing who has completed the questionnaire unless they chose to include some identifying data which was not required.²⁶

Part of my preparation for the data gathering phase was to meet with people who had expertise in working with those who had experienced shame. This included a psychotherapist, a psychologist, a spiritual director and a Bishop's Adviser on clergy wellbeing. Out of this emerged several elements to take into account in the survey design. The first was to word questions so that where possible they could be answered in the third person, focusing on the experiences of others but with the potential to answer personally if the respondent chose. The second was to make the introduction to the survey very clear around the area of voluntary informed consent (Boynton 2005:91) and for the participants to know that they could omit any questions they want to. I collected some demographical data which would allow me, if necessary, to divide the data up in various ways. I then had a series of open ended questions which I appreciated would be more complex to analyse although I kept the questions to 10 to try and avoid respondent fatigue (Bryman 2001:129).

Focus groups

Focus groups can be seen as a group interview with ideally between 4 and 8 participants, a facilitator and a clear purpose for the group, interaction and joint construction of meaning is significant (Bryman 2001:337). I am aware that some urge caution in using focus groups to discuss difficult topics and that there can be less control for the facilitator and that transcription and data analysis can be difficult (Bryman 2001:349-50). However, the information given to potential participants made the content of the focus groups very clear, and as with the questionnaires there were opportunities to respond on behalf of

²⁶ The research process is explained more fully in chapter 5.

observation as well as personal experiences through the use of pictures, activities as well as open ended questions (see Appendix 2). Thus focus group participants had the opportunity to control their contributions while still taking a full part.

My preference for focus groups as opposed to interviews was because of the way focus groups enable shared construction of meaning. I am aware that because shame is often a hidden phenomenon, and sometimes goes unrecognized or mistaken for guilt, then discussing it in a group may uncover more than an interview might as views are challenged, considered and re-presented. I planned two focus groups each with a mix of participants. The content of the focus group schedule was the same for each group and drew on the initial analysis of data from the questionnaires. Information and consent forms were detailed and gave people the option of how they wanted their contributions to be attributed. Focus groups were audio recorded and transcribed in preparation for data analysis.

Ethics

While the survey and focus group did not require personal disclosure, one of the dilemmas in seeking to identify an appropriate methodology was getting the right balance between any potential therapeutic effect of discussing shame incidents and the danger of exacerbating the consequences of them. The approach I chose in drawing on a range of people in ministry makes anonymity easier to maintain than if I had wanted to do a case study on a particular church or theological college, for example. This desire impacted my methodological approach. The research was subject to the University of Birmingham's ethical review process (see Appendix 3) and sought to model good practice. Both questionnaire respondents and focus groups participants were encouraged to seek support if the research raised difficult issues for them.

Validity and reliability

Within mixed methods research validity may be explored, among other ways, through triangulation of data and checking out the analysis with key participants (Cresswell and Clark 2011:211), both these approaches were part of my strategy. Reliability is confidence that the data gathered is replicable given the same conditions. Within qualitative research representative reliability may be pertinent which considers whether findings from similar samples generate similar results which impacts generalizability (Payne and Payne 2004:195). The three different questionnaires facilitated checking reliability in this way along with

running focus groups with a similar profile of people to those who completed the questionnaires.

Synthesizing practical theology and empirical research methodologies

Having identified both my preferred practical theology and empirical research methodologies I then synthesized the different elements identifying the process to follow:

- *Noticing:* in starting ordination training and being offered the opportunity of undertaking a research degree I needed to “notice” what dimensions of ministry and theology were significant to me and to explore the implications of studying such an area (*Foreword, Chapter 1*).
- *Reflexivity:* the autoethnographic forewords and afterwords contain a significant amount of reflection on this area and it is addressed in this chapter as an aspect of methodology. However, I sought to be aware of reflexivity issues at each stage of the process and to be aware of my own values, attitudes and the way my personal experience may potentially influence my interpretation of the experience of others (*Foreword, Chapter 2, Afterword*).
- *Describing/naming:* this stage involved articulating my precise research question and refining it through reading the underpinning literature and developing a theoretical model – in this case the typology (*Chapters 1, 3, 4*).
- *Focusing:* this involved identifying the most appropriate methodological approaches including theoretical and theological perspectives. research design, considering the pertinent ethical issues then completing ethical review (*Chapter 2*).
- *Investigating:* this stage involved carrying out the research (*Chapter 5*).
- *Analysing:* this stage involved coding and thematic analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaires and focus groups and drawing on the theoretical and theological material to help inform the analysis (*Chapters 5, 6*).
- *Evaluating:* this stage involved considering the implications of the data analysis and beginning to articulate a response to the research question, particularly liberative approaches in relation to ministerial praxis (*Chapters 6, 7*).
- *Theorizing/synthesizing:* this stage included reflecting on the typology that was devised as part of the original process and developing, amending and nuancing it in light of the research, providing a more evidence based version of it (*Chapter 6*).

- *Responding*: this stage involved offering a reflective response to the research question, identifying my learning in four core areas and finally returning to my autoethnographic reflection to identify how the process had changed me (*Chapter 7, 8, Afterword*).

One of the consequences of adopting this practical theology methodology is that different parts of the process draw on similar material but use it in different ways.

Chapter 5 articulates the research journey actually undertaken but before that I offer two literature reviews, one on biblical perspectives on shame from the creation narratives, Jesus in the gospels and Paul's letters to the Corinthians, the other on ministerial praxis in relation to shame.

CHAPTER 3

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SHAME

DESCRIBING

And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed (Genesis 2.25).

Introduction

An essential part of my methodology as a practical theologian of evangelical heritage is locating my understanding of shame within a biblical context (Cartledge 2013:281). This work was done alongside the wider social science review which contributed to my definition of shame in chapter one, and the broader Christian ministerial context that I am focusing on in a literature review in chapter four. I am also concerned about the way that the Bible may be interpreted or used in relation to shame in the church both by individuals feeling shamed and those they may feel shamed by (although this may be some notion of an ideal self) (Wurmser 1997:74). In this respect, I am mindful of Village's work on the Bible and lay people and his encouragement of developing a reading which accepts that individual difference is inherent in God's creation of humanity and being willing to engage our individuality with scripture and be open to an encounter that may change us (2007:168). Village asserts that this is the approach that perhaps comes most naturally to what he calls "ordinary Bible readers" (while acknowledging the complexity of such a term) (2007:168). This approach highlights potential tensions between exegesis and eisegesis, as well as my experiences of the latter through what I would regard as the Holy Spirit illuminating a text in a way which would not be in keeping with more traditional exegetical understandings but which may have been comforting in times of experiencing shame. Thus this task is complex and inherent with tensions between the different roles I inhabit. As well as more personal roles of wife, friend, daughter, sister, aunt, these roles include educator, priest, trustee and a woman who has experienced shame in various church contexts. I have looked to the Bible for amelioration of that shame but not always found it in an un-nuanced reading although feminist readings have been helpful in the nuancing.²⁷

The metaphor of "two horizons" (Thiselton 1980:xix) which can be understood as "the attempt to illuminate the transforming engagement of the horizon of the interpreter

²⁷ I resonate with Beavis' understanding of a feminist hermeneutic as one which critiques patriarchal structures, promotes non-oppressive relationships and which resists God being presented "in the role of harsh, vindictive tyrant" (2002:17).

with the horizon of the biblical text” (Porter & Malcolm 2013:x) is enlightening in approaching texts about shame. Within this construct the notion of “horizon of expectation” (Thiselton 1992:44) is insightful as inherent within it is the capacity to move and expand, while accepting that there is already a landscape in view. More precisely “the term ‘horizon’ calls attention to the fact that our finite situatedness in time, history, and culture defines the present (though always expanding limits) of our ‘world’, or more strictly the limits of what we can ‘see’” (Thiselton 1992:46). Helpfully, Thiselton notes the importance for pastoral theologians of focusing on both horizons where it might be assumed that the second would take primacy (1992:556-8). Whereas the cross may transform ideas of relevance, the cross is not transformed by such notions (Thiselton 1992:609-10). This, in part, highlights the tension I sometimes encounter between the relative merits of experience and scripture in theological reflection. Used properly, Freirean conscientization may help through encouraging an active engagement between both dimensions (Thiselton 1992:610).

A Christocentric approach to biblical interpretation resonates with my faith and has helped me put my shame experiences in perspective. While a Christocentric hermeneutic is a relatively commonly held approach there is not agreement as to what this looks like in practice (Pietersen 2011:69). Thinking about a hermeneutic in relation to shame, then, Pietersen’s approach, which suggests that such an interpretation “should enhance our love of God and neighbour and contribute to human flourishing in terms of justice, mercy and faithfulness.” (2011:70) is a helpful one. A consequence of this approach is an exploration of Jesus as prophet, pastor and poet, the latter two terms being an alternative to the more usual priest and king of systematic theology (Pietersen 2011:70-84). Conscientization is a prophetic act, and one which in relation to shame requires a pastoral response which is why discussing ministerial praxis is an integral part of this thesis.

Within the scope of this thesis it is impossible to offer an overview of all the biblical material on shame. I have chosen to focus on three areas which have particular significance to shame in the church and ministerial praxis: the creation narratives, the gospel stories of Jesus and Paul’s letters to the Corinthians. The creation narratives are clearly important as this is where shame is first encountered and thus they provide an interpretive lens through which to explore shame. I am using the gospels because of the significance of exploring Jesus’ ministry as illustrative of good ministerial praxis in relation to shame. The Corinthian epistles are a helpful example of the emerging institutional church and issues of shame in relationship to this, and contain substantial material on ministerial praxis.

There will inevitably be an element of reflexivity in the choice of biblical texts to explore in such a study and I acknowledge that these reflect my bias towards a Christological faith (gospels), a desire to explore Eve as emblematic of womanhood and influential even today on my identity as a female priest (creation narratives) and an interest in church leadership and ministry as significant in forming my own priestly calling and ministry (Corinthians).

In relation to taking seriously the two horizons I offer an introduction to the broader context of the biblical literature I am studying and some of the hermeneutical issues to be considered as well as looking at specific texts in more detail. I am mainly focusing on commentaries and material specific to the biblical context as opposed to more systematic theological texts on the themes I am exploring in order to try, within the limited space available, to get a good understanding of the horizon of the biblical text. I am also intrigued by Collicutt's suggestion, as a psychologist, that "if the text is to be received as transformative, a good reading is likely to be dissonant, challenging or ugly" (2012:1). This has been helpful as a non-biblical specialist in engaging with a range of interpretations of passages beyond those I was familiar with and being open to fresh perspectives.

Introduction to the Old Testament context

The related concepts of shame and honour are seen by many scholars as a significant lens through which to approach the Old Testament (cf Bechtel 1991; deSilva 2011; Hellerman 2000; Malina 2001; Neyrey 1998; Pedersen, 1926; Stiebert 2002; Tennent 2007). However, there are a breadth of views as to how they may be used as an interpretive lens. For example, Stiebert argues that the term "shame prone" is perhaps a more accurate term to use than shame culture (2002:8) and this observation illustrates the disputed nature of the concepts. At their simplest, honour and shame involve our self perception, that of others, and our perceived societal value (Rabichev 1996:52). More fully, honour is "associated with greatness, dignity, splendour and esteem, as created by the actions of the individual, or his or her family" (Rabichev 1996:57). Correspondingly, experiencing shame means losing "virtue, esteem, prestige, courage" (Rabichev 1996:57). Although I am focusing on shame it is important to note its association with honour as this relatedness is significant for interpretation and potentially for ministerial praxis.

Within the Old Testament there are at least 10 different words with nearly three hundred occurrences which reflect various facets of shame (Tennent 2007:83). The most

commonly used are: *bôš* a verb meaning to be ashamed; *hārap* translated as to reproach, dishonour or taunt; and a range of nouns *bôšet*, *quālôn*, *kělimmâ*, *něbālâ*, *herpâ* and *hesed* translated by such words as shame, disgrace, dishonour, insult (Yee 2003:42). Shame can be located within the broader semantic context of worthlessness and the word can be perceived as negative in the light of this (Avrahami 2010:300-1). However, careful attention needs to be given to the Hebrew words and the associated translations suggesting that “failure, disappointment, frustration, humiliation and the suffering of harm, can all cause shame within a specific cultural context, yet they are not identical” (Avrahami 2010:302). Versions of the Bible also translate the original Hebrew using different words. For example, in Psalm 31.17 the word *bôš* is translated or interpreted as shame in the New Revised Standard Version,²⁸ disgraced in the New Century Version, ashamed in the King James Version and embarrass in The Message. Thus one of the dilemmas of studying shame in this context is the plurality of words used and the difficulty in understanding what they may have meant in the original context. The perspective of the translator may also impact the interpretation thus shame can be seen as, for example, anthropological (shame as part of a value system), psychological (shame as an emotion), or theological (in relation to guilt) perspective (Avrahami 2010:307). From the perspective of the horizon of the text it is important not to read current cultural constructs into a concept and the case of barrenness and infertility²⁹ is an example of this where in the Old Testament a main function of having children was economic which is not normally the case in contemporary Western Society, the predominant motivation being emotional (Koepf-Taylor 2013:63). Thus there may be some bias in the words chosen to translate particular terms in the original Hebrew. Summarizing an understanding of shaming in the Old Testament, Bechtel argues that it

functioned primarily (1) as a means of social control that attempted to repress aggressive or undesirable behaviour; (2) as an important means of dominating others and manipulating social status; and (3) as a pressure that preserved social cohesion in the community through rejection and creating social distance between deviant members and the group (1994:81).

Genesis and the creation narratives

“Genesis” is a transliteration of the Greek word for origins and the Hebrew title is *běrešit* which is normally translated “in the beginning” (McKeown 2008:2). Despite two centuries

²⁸ Unless stated otherwise, all Bible quotations are from the NRSV.

²⁹ Example used as it relates to my autoethnographical writing in the foreword.

spent exploring Genesis based on the Documentary Hypothesis “the authorship and prehistory of the Genesis text are still a mystery” (McKeown 2008:8). Although it can be seen as a theological account designed to explain to the Israelites their origins and the nature of their God offering a contrast to the religious culture of significant powers such as the oppressors of Israel, the Egyptians and Babylonians. The issue of whether there is one creation account or two may be resolved by arguing that the Genesis 1.1-2.4a account should be regarded as a creation story and Genesis 2.4b-25 as an origins story (Rogerson 1991:63).³⁰

The creation narratives give an insight as to how humanity may be viewed. At the end of the sixth day God looked at creation and declared that it was very good³¹ and it is this which is the source of the value and dignity of humanity (Whitehead and Whitehead 2003:155). Shame is first encountered in Genesis 2.25 when Adam and Eve are described as being naked and without shame; yet in acquiring knowledge through eating from the forbidden tree it appears that shame became part of the experience of humanity. Adam and Eve’s shame is illustrated by their attempts to hide from God because now they were aware of their nakedness (Tennent 2007:83). Reflecting on God’s response to the first experience of shame in the Bible may offer insight as to how the church might respond to those who are shamed in the context of their involvement in that institution. There are a range of positive interpretations of that act: God’s response in clothing Adam and Eve³² can be seen as bestowing honour (Tennent 2007:94); demonstrating sensitivity to their shame (McNish 2004:131); an offering of “gracious forgiveness and divine mercy” (Arnold 2008:66); a part of the maturation process preparing them for the world outside (Bechtel 1993:99). It may be that God always intended to clothe Adam and Eve regardless, although this interpretation is very rarely mentioned (Wilder 2006:57). More widely in the Bible, clothing is a symbol of honour or investiture and we may interpret God clothing Adam and Eve with animal skins as God giving them a part of their inheritance as rulers of the earth (Wilder 2006:68). Brock argues that clothing in the geographical context of the Bible relates to identity. He offers a detailed explanation of the Syriac concept of the robe of glory which includes identifying

³⁰ There is not scope within this thesis to discuss a wide range of hermeneutical approaches to interpreting Genesis and the creation narratives. Rogerson (1991) and McKeown (2008) provide helpful summaries of some of the issues of interpretation.

³¹ Genesis 1.31.

³² See Lambden (1992) for a detailed discussion of the significance of clothing.

how Jesus' cursing of the fig tree highlights that humanity no longer needs to cover the shame of their nakedness with fig leaves as Adam and Eve did (Brock 1999:256), the incarnation of Jesus offering an opportunity for them to re-appropriate the lost robe of glory through baptism.

Some scholars, particularly feminists, argue that it was not necessarily wrong for Eve to pursue wisdom by eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Carmichael, 1992:51; McNish 2003:11-12; Sawyer, J. 1992:288) as that was the beginning of the development of full humanity and that Adam and Eve at this stage could be compared with adolescents as they sought to differentiate themselves from their parents (Bechtel 1993:88). Their actions may be perceived perhaps as adolescent rebellion which resonates with my role as a youth work educator and practitioner.³³ The writings of Irenaeus, a second century theologian and Bishop of Lyons lend support to these more contemporary accounts of understanding Adam and Eve as growing and maturing and having been given the capacity to choose (2015:341) and using the term "infantile" (2015:344) to describe humanity.

Traditionally, the term "fall" has been used to describe the story of Adam and Eve eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil and being expelled from the garden yet Irenaeus describes this incident as revealing God as "patient, benign, merciful, mighty to save" (2015:230). The term fall is not used in the passage and its use in theology is seen as drawing more from the writing of the apostle Paul and Augustine (Arnold 2008:62). Genesis 3 is not generally used in the rest of the Old Testament or Jewish literature as an explanation of humanity's fall and Paul uses later theological development rather than what the text specifically says in Romans 5.12-21 to explain his understanding of the fall (Pietersen 2011:88-9). No Hebrew word for sin is used until Genesis 4 (Meyers 1993:127) and Alison notes how his thinking was transformed by the observation that original sin is not part of Jewish doctrine at all (1998:3). This supports the interpretation of the creation narratives offered here which focuses more on humanity individuating and maturing. Perhaps a more useful way of interpreting Genesis 3 and 4 in relation to shame is to understand as Pietersen does,³⁴ based on Genesis 4.7, that rather than being an integral part of creation "sin is

³³ Gordon (2015:13-14) suggests that such views do not do full justice to the negative consequences of the action in relation to, for example, loss, pain, alienation and servitude.

³⁴ Pietersen draws on Gordon Wenham's description of the earth as a "formless void" and the concept of "total chaos" at the beginning of creation to suggest as Brueggemann does that it is this chaos that sometimes breaks in from outside rather than that sin and violence are part of the structure of creation. This is seen as a related concept to the principalities and powers described by Paul (2011:94).

regarded as an external power which seeks to grip humanity but can be overcome...in powerful, mythic form the whole drama of God's good creation, humanity's propensity to spoil that creation and God's gracious provision is laid out" (2011:94). This leads to identifying a hermeneutic which understands Genesis 3 as the playing out of a "mythic drama" which raises the issue as to whether humanity will obey their calling to rely on God or seek to try and obtain God's power for themselves c.f. Philippians 2.5-11 (Pietersen 2011:207).

This conclusion attempts to take seriously both the first and second horizon but is not the interpretation I have lived with for most of my life. Historically this part of the creation narrative has been used to oppress women and for some, particularly feminists has been seen as a "misogynist's playground" (Bechtel 1993:77). It has also been used to exclude and diminish the role of women through a theological perspective that sees women as representative of what humanity needs saving from, nature and flesh (Isherwood 2004:141-2). My experience in the church echoes this sentiment and it is only through studying that I have encountered perspectives such as that of Sawyer who entreates the church to "put to death the Eve of patriarchal fantasy, and raise up in her stead the Eve, who created in the image of God, takes responsibility for human progress, liberates herself and her husband from the playground of paradise and engages with the real world" (Sawyer, D. 1992:288). Thus a more liberative reading suggests that this was the start of individuation and realising the potentiality of being human (McNish 2003:12; Thomas 2002:42). As a female priest it is important to me to understand shame in relation to my gender which is why I have focused on this dimension of the narratives in more detail than others.

Exploring the consequences of the actions of Adam and Eve identifies several elements which have bearing on a study of shame in the church and ministerial praxis. Perhaps most obviously there is exclusion and the ramifications of this on identity which becomes more apparent reading further into the Old Testament (Binau 2006:101). The story also encompasses a longing of humanity to return to being at peace with God while feeling inadequate, physically, intellectually, spiritually and emotionally (McNish 2004:128-9). Shame can be triggered through any of these inadequacies. A slightly different perspective is to acknowledge the limitations that humanity needs to live under if we are to experience the *shalom* that is possible (Towner 2001:34). The tree of knowledge of good and evil symbolised such a restriction of human autonomy. However, it was also the one opportunity given to Adam and Eve to exercise their free will which is one of the things that

differentiated humanity from the rest of God's creation (Brock 1999:250). It could be argued that there are three psychological consequences of the choice made by Adam and Eve: a tendency to withdraw or hide; lack of trust; and an inclination to blame others rather than take responsibility, this leads to hierarchy and competition rather than interdependence and mutuality in society (Stockitt 2012:53). In my experience these behaviours are manifested in the church and are an issue to be considered in relation to ministerial praxis.

Summary from the creation narratives

There are several insights I want to take forward from exploring the creation narratives. When seen in relation to honour in particular, shame is often experienced negatively and may encompass disappointment, estrangement and worthlessness amongst other things. Words that may mean shame are interpreted in a variety of ways and the context and perspective of the translator or theologian studying shame may impact that way that it is used. Thus reflexivity applies at many stages in the theological endeavour. The traditional way the story of Adam and Eve eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil is interpreted is one of the contributory causes of oppression of women. However, there are other ways to look at the story; the elements of God's mercy and compassion in clothing Adam and Eve and the element of investiture in that are hints. The focus on moving towards individuation and maturity are significant elements in the creation narratives. The idea of boundaries or constraints that humanity has to live within is also noteworthy in relation to shame. What the story teaches about areas which have the propensity in particular to cause shame merits further reflection. The capacity of shame to exclude and the significance of trust relationships and the damage that occurs when they fall short of expectations are elements which are important for the church. While I am not looking at the remainder of the Old Testament it is worth noting that a pattern can be observed of God's redemption to honour from shame when people cry out for help. This is illustrated in the stories of Job, Joseph, Moses, Ruth, Hannah, David, Daniel, Nehemiah and Esther (Borges 2013:79-80). Irenaeus uses the story of Jonah to make a similar point (2015:230).

Introduction to the New Testament context

In New Testament times one's honour status was a significant influence on one's life, impacting daily living including behaviour, relationships, dress, food, marriage, death rituals,

responsibilities, rights and gestures (Neyrey 1998:3-4; Rohrbaugh 2010:109). deSilva describes how honour was understood for New Testament Christians:

becoming a disciple of Jesus brings with it adoption into God's family and a share in Christ's honor (Jn 1.12-13; Rom 8.14-17; Heb 2.10; 3.1-6, 14; 1 Pet 1.23). In this regard God ascribes the honor of God's own household to the believers. The exaltation of Jesus to the highest honor in the cosmos (Eph 1.20-22) is thus an honor in which all faithful believers now share (Eph 2.26). This honor, though possessed by the Christian, is yet fully to be enjoyed and yet to be manifested to the [73] world. It remains their inheritance (1 Pet. 1-4) (2000:73-4).

Honour can be both ascribed through one's family and heritage, and acquired through public acknowledgement of one's achievements. Both shame and honour are experienced in the public sphere with inclusion and exclusion being significant concepts and the focus being the group or collective not the individual (Malina 1993:1; Malina 2010:17; Malina 2011:149; Tennent 2007:94). It is significant to note that in this context, conscience is communal rather than individualistic and thus public shame comes through community accusation rather than an internal voice (Rohrbaugh 2010:113) yet it is still experienced by the individual. Such communal accusation can still be seen today particularly in the media's treatment of Christianity at times. There are contexts where I can feel shamed at being associated with a faith that is, for example, portrayed as narrow minded and bigoted in opposition to the collective conscience of a particular group or subculture.³⁵ However, we should also avoid being too simplistic in using honour and shame as interpretive categories because of the difference between the original context of the gospel narratives and the more urban context of some of the New Testament authors and the potential this has for distortion and misinterpretation (Osiek 2008:323-4).

Further interpretive concepts

In exploring some of the New Testament material relating to honour and shame there are related concepts which facilitate interpretation. Purity³⁶ is one and an understanding of this concept may illuminate some of the gospel stories. Williams (2010) offers an analysis of Mark's gospel suggesting that one should view Jesus as having a concern for the purity of

³⁵ Influential Guardian blogger with a piece called "Are Evangelical Christians on another planet?" While the article is more nuanced the headline is followed by a line which begins "I despair of humanity". This is one of a number of pieces he has written in a similar vein.
<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/andrewbrown/2012/apr/19/evangelical-christians-another-planet> accessed 21st August 2013.

³⁶ Mary Douglas (1966), the anthropologist, provides a comprehensive introduction to the concept of purity which is a significant concept in relation to shame.

both physical and social bodies as the Pharisees do, but with a very different understanding. She suggests that the difference was in what they regarded as the most significant danger to such purity. The Pharisees saw that the holy body needed to be protected from external pollution thus unwashed hands for eating had the capacity to pollute the body (in the same way that following Greco-Roman practices and culture might pollute the social body). Mark's Jesus focused on the impurity and evil coming out of the social and physical body, sin coming out of the heart, which violates God's commandments. This is what has the greatest potential to harm the social body (Williams 2010:218). From a reading of Mark's gospel it could be argued that Jesus was re-establishing the purity system originally intended by God (Williams 2010:217). A slightly different perspective is that Jesus did not violate the Jewish purity system but rather, in the circumstances where he was in contact with those who most overtly challenged perceptions of purity, it was the individuals that initiated the contact rather than Jesus (Carey 2009:51). This may have implications for ministerial praxis and the way that historically some individuals and groups have been stigmatized and how some sins are seen as "unique loci of shame as they are almost universally regulated by purity metaphors" (Beck 2011:48), this is particularly true of sexual sins. Interestingly, Beck suggests that it is the power of the associated metaphor with purity related sins that make them so likely to cause shame which is in part due to the difficulty of rehabilitation, the fly in the soup situation (2011:49).

Understanding the nature of challenge-riposte also illuminates some gospel stories. Rohrbaugh suggests that the game involves

(1) a challenge (almost any word, gesture, action) that seeks to undermine the honor of another person and (2) a response that answers in equal measure or ups the ante (and thereby challenges in return). Both positive (gifts, compliments) and negative (insults, dares, public questioning) challenges had to be answered to avoid a serious loss of face (2010:114).³⁷

Thus some of the exchanges which may jar a little when reading them from the perspective of twenty first century western eyes were part of a well-established way of communicating and the hearers would have understood the conventions. Boasting was another rhetorical device used which does not resonate with contemporary approaches to leadership but it was at the centre of shame and honour systems in New Testament times (Jewett 2007:49).

³⁷ A clear example of this can be seen in Luke 4.16-30.

Jesus' encounters with people

The ministry of Jesus is often focused on those on the margins of society and “much of his healing activity appears to question boundaries and taboos, theologies of taint and forms of social exclusion. Invariably, the healings question the social forces that divide society between the pure and contagious, between the righteous and the sinner” (Percy 2012:74). Within the stories of healing encounters between Jesus and individuals there is a theme of restoration of the individual to the community – often involving some change on behalf of the community in order to embrace the poor, the socially outcast, or the previously excluded person (Savage 2007:59). This has potential implications for approaching shame in the church as often it appears that it is the individual who has to change, not the community adapt. Savage argues that

Across the range of Jesus' interactions, we see him on the warpath against all that degrades human dignity and spiritual value. With flexibility and insight he takes the initiative against the social structures, deceptions, defences, learned helplessness, negative thoughts and patterns and paralysing fears that imprison us. He models an interpersonal style through which he insists on knowing the other, and on being known (2007:61).

Similarly, Williams (2002:7) suggests that Jesus attitude towards those who seek help from him is accepting, showing no exclusion or condemnation. This has clear implications for ministerial praxis and perhaps ministerial formation where a focus on the structural dimensions of ministry is not always as apparent as the concern for the individual.

A specific example of Jesus ministering to someone who overcomes shame can be seen in the story of the woman at the well³⁸ who surmounts potential issues of shame in relation to culture and gender and openly testifies to the work of Jesus to her Samaritan contemporaries (Jensen 2008:334). There are a range of other stories in the gospels where Jesus destigmatizes people such as Zacchaeus³⁹ and the woman with the issue of blood.⁴⁰ Regarding this latter story the woman here is symbolic of Israel and in calling her daughter (v48) Jesus uses one of only two gendered terms in the gospel (Love 2002:98). Interestingly, the only woman healed in public in the gospel is one who made Jesus unclean by touching him. Pattison (2011:26) discusses the story of the healing of the crippled woman on the sabbath⁴¹ arguing that when we are part of a group that colludes with shaming then we

³⁸ John 4.4-26.

³⁹ Luke 19.1-10.

⁴⁰ Luke 8.43-47.

⁴¹ Luke 13.10-16.

ourselves are shamed. This results in a loss of humanity which again has implications for ministerial praxis.

Discussing the story of the woman caught in adultery,⁴² Collicutt McGrath (2009:42) suggests that Jesus identifies with the woman because of the circumstances of his own birth and that this could have happened to his mother had Joseph responded in a different manner. Jesus associates with the shame that was experienced by the woman but challenged or disassociated himself with a historical legal response to the situation.⁴³ Jesus, in continuing to look at the ground rather than at the woman, opts out of this communal act of shaming based on the Jewish law. Interestingly in reflecting on shame in the church Collicutt McGrath concludes that the acknowledging of personal sin can be seen as signifying integrity and can be perceived as “a symptom of true wholesomeness” whereas the Scribes and Pharisees were looking to maintain wholesomeness through scapegoating the woman whereas turning to God is the only way to do this (Collicutt McGrath 2009:52).

The story of the cleansing of the leper⁴⁴ is a further illustration of the willingness of Jesus to associate with those who did not belong in his cultural context. Thus lepers were being ostracized from mainstream society and this would have both a social and psychological impact (Bock 1994:473). The significance of the events and the consequences of Jesus reaching out and touching the leper would have been well known to those who witnessed it because of the pronouncements about leprosy in the Pentateuch.⁴⁵ Jesus was reaching out and mitigating the shame that the leper is likely to have felt. In Luke 7.22 the cleansing of lepers is identified as one of the signs of the messianic age (Marshall 1978:207). The term leper is also used metaphorically and one of the issues this passage raises for me is who has been made to feel like a leper by the church and how can the church respond to those who wider society has made to feel lepers? In this story the leper approaches Jesus for healing and I am challenged as to what message the church communicates which may diminish the likelihood of those who feel like lepers reaching out for inclusion and belonging.

While I am drawn to the notion that Jesus predominantly responds to people in a non-shaming way in his pastoral encounters (as opposed to those which may be perceived as more political where he interacts with those with power), there are some instances where it may be inferred that shame was involved. Thus in Luke 10.38-42, Martha’s behaviour was

⁴² John 8.1-11.

⁴³ At that time the Roman authorities would need to give approval for the stoning to be carried out.

⁴⁴ Luke 5.12-16.

⁴⁵ Such as in Leviticus 13 and 14.

understandable within the norms of her culture, she was providing hospitality for an honoured guest. Yet when she goes to Jesus to ask for his support in getting Mary to help her prepare the meal, Jesus rebuked her. Commentators differ as to the tone of Jesus' response to Martha which could have been harsh (Evans 2008:471-4) or tender (Bock 1996:1037-44), as well as over which source text is most authentic. However, whatever the tone of Jesus' response it is hard to imagine that Martha would not feel shame at her actions given what Jesus said to her. Although within the context of their relationship, it may have been an appropriate challenge that enabled Martha to see her actions in the light of the bigger picture of being a disciple of Jesus. What this story may suggest is that the quality of the existing relationship may make a difference as to how a remark is perceived and whether it accomplishes its purpose of drawing someone into a deeper relationship with Jesus or not. It suggests that who it is that engages in discussion with someone may be an important choice and it may not always be the church leader. This story may also offer an example of guilt and shame operating together if we see Martha as both doing something wrong and not being the sort of disciple Jesus was affirming.

The encounter described in Mark 11.27-33 between Jesus and the chief priests, scribes and elders revolves around honour and shame (Hellerman 2000:219). The honour of Jesus was attacked by asking him a question challenging his authority. However, Jesus turned it around and through their acknowledgement of not knowing in response to his question, these leaders who normally have all the answers would be shamed. The Jewish Sanhedrin who challenged Jesus lost face and were shamed in a context where retaining public affirmation was essential for their honour or status (Hellerman 2000:228). This shaming was one of the contributory factors to the death of Jesus on a cross. Jesus was challenging the systemic patterns of authority and was not willing to collude with the leaders but rather sought to establish a new pattern of authority. Another perspective, drawing on John's gospel, suggests that "sin is not what excludes in the person of the excluded one, but the dynamic act of excluding in the person of the excluders" (Alison 1998:122) thus Jesus shaming focus is in conflict with the usual cultural practice. In Matthew 9 there are two different approaches to purity "one group [the Pharisees] frames the issue of table fellowship as an issue of purity, the sacrificial impulse. The other group frames the issue as one of mercy" (Beck 2011:52). This was part of the clash between Jesus and the Pharisees, the latter group holding to more traditional Levitical approaches to purity and Jesus offering through his practice an approach redolent of mercy.

The incidents discussed above are emblematic of the approach of Jesus, a person who positioned himself among the shamed and who did not fear shame and perhaps did not see shame as having the significance that others in his cultural context did (Stockitt 2012:116). Gittins offers a similar conclusion arguing that Jesus offers non-shaming interactions with those who had experienced shame from religious leaders and the wider community, he embraced the marginal and invisible and suggested that they would be first in God's Kingdom (1999:39). Having explored some of the encounters of Jesus, it may be clear that "we have seen that God's heart is far 'beyond' ours: he has a depth of compassion, a longing for the lost, and a willingness to suffer, risk and forgive which shocks us the more we understand it" (Duff & Collicutt McGrath 2006:140).

Jesus' attitudes and principles

The beatitudes⁴⁶ are an example of Jesus mediating different values and attitudes to the prevailing culture. Neyrey asserts that the beatitudes can be seen as honouring those who, in the cultural setting, would be shamed:

The pattern of honouring what was deemed shameful applies not only to the original four makarisms (poor, mourning, hungry and thirsty, driven out), but also to the four other ones (meek, merciful, peacemaker, persecuted). These people, as we saw, were all engaged in challenge-riposte situations. Jesus declares them honourable in his eyes for not delivering a riposte or seeking revenge (1998:187).

In a later work, Neyrey argues that one of the roots of the shaming for some of the makarisms is that it involves separation from one's social group and that this would have been the experience of some of the early Christians when being cast out of the synagogue⁴⁷ or when a son is disinherited (2008:93). In some contexts this is still relevant and an individual who makes a Christian commitment may well experience shame for not conforming with the expectation of others, while receiving honour in their new context. This may cause dissonance for some who join the church and emphasises the need for church to offer support beyond a Sunday service.

The Sermon on the Mount⁴⁸ may be framed as the pursuit of justice and peace in a world characterized by many negative attitudes and behaviours:

it is not about human striving toward high ideals but about God's transforming initiatives to deliver us from the vicious cycles in which we get stuck. It has a realistic

⁴⁶ Matthew 5.1-12.

⁴⁷ John 9.22; 9.34; 12.42; 16.2.

⁴⁸ Matthew 5-7.

view of our world, characterized by murder, anger, divorce, adultery, lust, deceit, enmity, hypocrisy, false prophets, and houses destined for destruction. It announces that in the midst of such bondage, there is also another force operating. God is also beginning to rule with justice and peace (Stassen 1992:37-8).

The list of issues addressed in the Sermon on the Mount encompass some of the many issues that can result in experiencing shame. In addressing them Jesus is setting out a way of living that reduces the potential for shame if it is followed.

Hospitality is a theme to be found throughout the gospels. However, Jesus challenges the prevailing culture. Thus, Jesus can be seen as partaking in “deviant, inclusive, status-leveling, honor-reversing meal practices” (Bartchy 2002:177) through both example and teaching. In Luke 14.7-11 Jesus shames those who seek the seats of honour at the table (the Greek infers a formal banquet) echoing Proverbs 25.6-7 (Bartchy 2002:179). There are echoes of this in the parable of the great banquet, Luke 14.15-24 suggesting that Jesus was deliberately trying to shame his guests who were seeking honour (Bartchy 2002:180). The guests who are mentioned in Luke 14 are very similar to those who the good news will be preached to in Luke 4.18 and who are blessed in the beatitudes⁴⁹ (Bartchy 2002:180). Jesus disrupted the honour-shame system when he challenged those who sought honour. Those whose dignity he restored through healing or respectful dialogue were given the place of honour. Such a reversal would have been confusing to both groups yet Jesus was clear, the first will be last⁵⁰ (Bartchy 2002:180-1).

Jesus appeared to encourage his followers not to pursue traditional honour and thus offered a different approach to the prevailing social world (Bock 2009:832). Thus the parable of the guests at the banquet⁵¹ is an example of how we can bring shame upon ourselves by inappropriately seeking honour (Bock 1996:1264). It is suggested that this story has Jewish antecedents (Evans 2008:571) and that it emphasises the importance of humility as a quality for disciples. He also acted in ways which challenged the prevailing honour culture and honours Zacchaeus by calling him by name and going to his house and in so doing helped him overcome this shame through his acceptance of hospitality. Luke 19.7 notes how the crowd murmur about Jesus eating with a sinner in a way that clearly didn’t conform with the crowd’s idea of appropriate practice for a renowned teacher (Goodliff 2005:69). Thus Jesus challenged the prevailing shame and honour culture and was willing to

⁴⁹ Luke 6.20-21.

⁵⁰ Luke 22.24-27.

⁵¹ Luke 14.7-11.

risk humiliation in doing this. He offered honour to those who were without it and in doing so released them from shame. With Jesus there was not a finite amount of honour as may have been believed in the prevailing culture but honour was available to all who sought him. Jesus could give honour to others without diminishing his own honour (Bartchy 2002:181).

The parable of the friend at midnight⁵² is another hospitality tale which may shed further light on understanding shame from the perspective of Jesus' ministry. The parable, if seen in historical rather than literary context, does not equate the neighbour with God but as someone who was shamed by not acting in a way that demonstrated appropriate concern about his honour in line with cultural expectations (Van Eck 2011:5, 12). It could be seen as demonstrating how shame may be used as a tactic to get people to comply with expected communal norms although this can be hard to accept in our very individualistic culture. Thus this may be an example of Jesus condoning an approach which involves shaming someone.

Other stories give a glimpse into the attitudes of Jesus. For example, the parable of the wheat and the weeds⁵³ where one valid interpretation could be "do not allow experiences of shame to cripple. See the wheat in your life as well" (Wyse 1987:135). The "lost" parables⁵⁴ have a similar pattern of have, lose, search, find, rejoice (Maloney 2002:36) but the rejoicing is done in the context of the wider community. The lost son⁵⁵ caused his father shame by asking for his inheritance while the older son shames the father by not joining in the party and anyone observing the father running to greet his lost son would have seen this as a shaming act. Yet Jesus told the story like this demonstrating how shame may be overcome and how perhaps acting in a shameful way breaking conventions is sometime the most appropriate response. In a fascinating Jungian hermeneutic of this parable Veliyanloor identifies the concepts of "Christic potential" and "Christic differential" suggesting that the latter "refers to the differential between where one is now and the centered position of the Self/Christ/Imago Dei that is one's Christic potential" (2009:246) and the importance of realizing that the Imago Dei has always been present. These parables may evoke a caring God who rejoices when someone or something that was lost is found (Maloney 2002:37). Thus churches need to be very careful in their actions and try to avoid inadvertently losing what is part of them as the lost belong in the gathered community. That

⁵² Luke 11.5-13.

⁵³ Matthew 13.24-30.

⁵⁴ Sheep and coin, Luke 15.4-19.

⁵⁵ Luke 15.11-32.

Luke 15 has three consecutive parables about someone or something that is lost may demonstrate the importance of the message, that Jesus is communicating and certainly the story of the lost son is one which resonates strongly when exploring shame.

One of the dilemmas encountered when reading the Bible at face value is that some of the words chosen to translate the Greek do not offer the nuance of the original, or use a word which can be misinterpreted. Thus for some people there is a pressure to live up to the ideal self, based on the idea that we should “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect”.⁵⁶ . Not attaining to such ideals results in some people feeling shame and perhaps presenting a false self which seeks to appear perfect. However, when Jesus talks about “being perfect” a better translation for *telios* translated as perfect may be mature or complete as opposed to flawless. Thus the notion of a Xerox syndrome to describe the way that particularly children are encouraged to see Jesus as a perfect example to follow is not consistent with the text (Berecz 1998:89). This shows one of the dilemmas of the interpretation of English translations of Greek words. Referring back to Genesis 3.4-8, “It is in attempting to be ‘like God’ that we generate the highest levels of shame” (Berecz 1998:89). This is a danger in certain approaches to discipleship, preaching or liturgy which focus on how one falls short of who God expects one to be if one does not have a healthy self-esteem that can hold this in tension. Romans 5.8 as a corollary to this “But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us” (Berecz 1998:89) suggesting it resembles a Rogerian unconditional positive regard (Rogers 1961:283-4).

The opening chapter of Luke’s gospel recounts the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth who were childless and beyond the usual age of childbearing but were righteous in God’s sight⁵⁷ and Elizabeth is recorded as thanking God for removing her public shame⁵⁸ (Bock 1994:98). In Luke 23.29 Jesus is reported as saying “Blessed are the barren” to a group of women. Familiarity with Old Testament passages on this topic highlights the radical nature of that statement. One of the ways I have felt shamed as a Christian is in being childless⁵⁹ and to hear Jesus say “blessed are the barren” destigmatizes a shame that other parts of Scripture seem to impose. One interpretation of this is in the new order Jesus was building childless women become highly valued as they are able to focus on their discipleship unencumbered by children and are free to follow their calling (Collicutt McGrath 2009:66).

⁵⁶ Matthew 5.48.

⁵⁷ Luke 1.7.

⁵⁸ Luke 1.25.

⁵⁹ Cf Isaiah 54.4.

In an observation which is particularly profound for me personally, Collicutt McGrath comments, with reference to Luke 13.34, “The grief of Jesus at this time...is the grief of a woman yearning for what she has been denied” (2009:68-9). She emphasizes that in this passage we hear the voice of Sophia the feminine wisdom of God. This is another dimension of destigmatizing shame, feminine facets of God being identified with Jesus. Thus Jesus often demonstrates a positive, liberating approach to women, particularly those who perhaps faced significant shame in their cultures. This has implications for church structures and ministerial praxis.

While it is impossible to impute motives on to why particular stories were told, it may be that the parable of the Good Samaritan⁶⁰ was told to evoke shame in those who had negative attitudes to people from other places, Samaria in this case, and such a story may draw out overt or buried shame. This parable offers an important new principle through making the Samaritan the hero of this story (Esler 2002:199), one which challenged the prevailing exclusive attitudes.

The death of Jesus

The Christ event has such psychological and emotional power because of the way that Jesus embraced the shame archetype through his life, death and resurrection (McNish 2003:19). He did not engage in the sort of defences normally used such as rage, denial, depression, scapegoating, withdrawal, blaming and so on. In confronting shame he models being able to reconcile who we are despite shameful experiences and offers acceptance and belonging not rejection and exclusion. In a similar vein “people are rehabilitated into the community through Jesus’ voluntary self-stigmatization, they are able to participate through his exclusion; they are given life through his death (Collicutt McGrath 2009:99). These are readings of the death of Jesus which I resonate with, however, Bailey takes the argument further in a way I struggle with as it challenges my perception of who God is and how such a God may relate to me. He writes “What greater experience of that shame can there be than to what Jesus gave voice when he cried of being abandoned by God? (Matt 27:43-46). If trust between Father and Son is ripped apart on the cross, theological shame is brought into the bosom of the Godhead. God is self-shamed and self-shaming at Golgotha” (Bailey 2013:71). A helpful observation on this, for me, dissonant reading was that this would

⁶⁰ Luke 10.30-37.

involve rupture at the heart of the Trinity which is not conceivable.⁶¹ A different, more helpful perspective in the light of this study suggests that Matthew's gospel presents Jesus' death as being honourable rather than shameful:

We see that Matthew presents Jesus' actions and words in the Passion narrative as illustrations of two key virtues of his culture. Because of his patient endurance of hardships, pain, and even death, Jesus should be seen as courageous. He voluntarily accepts his fate, and so he does not die a slave or a victim. His obedience to God's will indicates that he dies freely and nobly (Neyrey 1998:160).

Whether Jesus death could be seen as being shameful or honourable in moving beyond Jesus' death to his resurrection it is clear that honour is re-established as he is crowned with glory and honour⁶² and is given a position of honour at God's right hand (Tennent 2007:91). In dying in the way that he did as a self-giving victim, Jesus is establishing a new form of community where victims are no longer driven out but are included as old values are made redundant and new ones established (Alison 1998:160).

Paul's letters to the Corinthians

Corinth, a Greek city, had a diverse population including Greeks, Roman freed persons and immigrants including Jews (Garland 2003:3). Corinth was culturally Roman while geographically Greek (Garland 2003:3). Social status and honour were important concepts and it was perceived that honour was scarce (Garland 2003:5). The church was dominated by socially conscious and pretentious people who flaunted their position and looked down on others (Garland 2003:6). It is suggested that Paul spent eighteen months in Corinth c50-51CE (Johnson 2004:21). Paul's letters were part of a wider communication which would also include messengers bringing instructions and face to face communication including preaching, teaching or dialogue and rhetoric (Witherington III 1995:38, 45-6). There are similarities between Corinth and our contemporary postmodern society "which looks not for truth but for applause, success and adulation and thrives on social constructivism, competitive pragmatism and radical pluralism" (Johnson 2004:18).

1 Corinthians

One of the reasons that 1 Corinthians is an apt letter to focus on here is that it contains more

⁶¹ Observation made in conversation with Robin Stockitt (2012) about comments in his book on the death of Jesus (27th February 2014).

⁶² Hebrews 2.9.

teaching about church than Paul's other letters (Fee 1987:18⁶³; Fitzmyer 2008:81). 1 Corinthians is not the first letter Paul wrote to the church at Corinth⁶⁴ and should be seen as part of an ongoing conversation (Garland 2003:20). There is some disagreement as to when it was written, 54 or 55 CE (Garland 2003:20) 56 or 57 CE (Fitzmyer 2008:48). There is also disagreement as to whether it is one unified letter or a synthesis of at least two (Keener 2005:8). The relevance of 1 Corinthians today is clear as "we may compare the self-sufficient, self-congratulatory culture of Corinth coupled with an obsession about peer-group prestige, success in competition, their devaluing of tradition and universals, and near contempt for those without standing in some chosen value system" (Thiselton 2000:17). With reference to the letters, Thiselton affirms the understanding of shame being in relation to others and involving a loss of face whereas guilt tends to apply to moral failure in individuals (2000:187) which is broadly in line with the approach used in this thesis.

In a Roman city such as Corinth, honour was both public and male. Shame tended to be female or at least related to inferior members of society. Paul's writings redefined "the whole zone of honor and shame for his converts" (Witherington III 1995:154). So Paul can be understood as suggesting that "male sexual behaviour can produce shame and works by women that benefit the community, including remaining single to serve the Lord, can lead to public honor... he undermines many of the most cherished values and redefines what real status amounts to, namely being in Christ or being sons and daughters of God" (Witherington III 1995:155). Like Jesus, Paul turned traditional honour/shame constructs upside down. He suggests that most activities were attempts at gaining praise and honour and it was thus not unexpected to see such conflict in the church at Corinth (Witherington III 1995:155).

1 Corinthians offers insights as to what it means to be human as well as what it means to be church with the latter focusing on unity and community with body imagery in 1 Corinthians 12 is seen referring to the church (Fitzmyer 2008:83). Fitzmyer suggests that there are seven key terms worthy of exploration regarding what it means to be human: body, soul, flesh, spirit, mind, heart and conscience (2008:85-87).⁶⁵ In 1 Corinthians there is

⁶³ Although Fee does not consider "shame" worthy of an entry in the index of his commentary.

⁶⁴ Cf 1 Corinthians 5.9.

⁶⁵ This may have some relevance for discussion on ministerial praxis possibly in the relationship between these elements and where and how shame may be experienced. Soma for body is used both literally and metaphorically (Fitzmyer 2008:85-6). The word for soul psyche is used only once and appears to mean that which animates us (Fitzmyer 2008:86). Flesh, Greek sarx, is used to mean human being (Fitzmyer 2008:86). Spirit, pneuma, is used both of the Holy Spirit and that part of a human that is open to God's spirit, "the

a focus on a new type of community in Christ (Crocker 2004:139) that goes beyond a hierarchical honour shame paradigm and reflects the new creation of horizontal relationships which embrace diversity and involves all in church participation (Crocker 2004:139). This was in response to the “unholy inversion of the egalitarian nature of the ritual [Lord’s Supper] was symptomatic of a profound moral and social failure within the Corinthian church” (Beck 2011:112). Paul was emphasizing what the body of Christ was called to be in contrast to what the church in Corinth were manifesting.

Paul’s original status in the Christian community would have been high having both apostolic authority and charismatic power (Finney 2010:28). But with the Corinthians the authority wasn’t being recognized or was being undermined and the letters were an attempt to bring harmony but also re-establish his honour (Finney 2010:31). However, Paul sought to offer a critique of some of the practices of the Corinthians and try and emphasize the unity of the apostles. In his writing Paul’s instructions include both vices to avoid and virtues to pursue or a movement from impurity to holiness, old ways to new (Horrell 1996:78-9). The main vices were sexual immorality, greediness and idolatry and these are explored in 1 Corinthians 5 and 6 (Horrell 1996:79). What should be most pursued is love but also patience, kindness and peace, and life should be lived in the Spirit (Horrell 1996:79).

Specific passages from 1 Corinthians on shame

1 Corinthians 1.27 states that “But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong”. The weak and foolish may be likely to respond to a cross of shame because they are already shamed (Garland 2003:76). However, it is likely that the shaming referred to relates to the understanding in the Old Testament where it refers more to being shamed through the judgement of God.⁶⁶ Shaming relates to boasting and Paul is arguing that God chose the weak as they have no basis on which to boast and thus suggesting that salvation is received freely from God (Garland 2003:79). Similarly, one has nothing to boast about to God as it is through what Christ has done that one has status not one’s own accomplishments (Witherington III 1995:116).

In 1 Corinthians 4.14 Paul writes “I am not writing this to make you ashamed, but to

affective and willing self” (Fitzmyer 2008:86). Mind, Greek nous, is that part of a human which demonstrates intelligence, judges, plans, criticizes, knows (Fitzmyer 2008:86). Heart, Greek kardia, has some similarities with nous and can mean “inner person, heart, mind” (Fitzmyer 2008:86). Conscience, Greek syneidesis, infers the ability to make judgements on one’s actions as right or wrong in retrospect or prospect (Fitzmyer 2008:87).

⁶⁶ Eg Psalm 6.10; 31.17; Isaiah 41.11.

admonish you as my beloved children". While shame can be positive because it encourages one to avoid doing what brings disapproval from God and humanity,⁶⁷ the shame referred to here is about losing face (Garland 2003:145). The emphasis is on their values and behaviour, not their personhood as being shameful (Garland 2003:145). Paul is trying to imbue the self-worth that comes with God's grace and power in one's life which means one can disregard honour that the world values (Garland 2003:145). There are three main reasons for the shame implied in this passage: valuing a grasping attitude above church welfare; patronage used in a corrupt manner in self-promotion rather than justice or the good of the church; the deepening of splits within the church through such behaviour (Thiselton 2000:435).

Although Paul says that he is not trying to shame the Corinthians here, he does "openly admit to trying to shame them into Christian sanity"⁶⁸ (Fee 1987:184). It is also interesting to note the father/children language that Paul uses which may enable him to talk more easily in terms of admonishing as that is part of a parental role which also includes encouragement (Fee 1987:184). Appealing to one's followers was common practice amongst other sages and philosophers (Keener 2005:44) and the phrase in 4.14 is "ironic denial" and that Paul intends to shame the Corinthians in the hope of getting them to follow his example (Keener 2005:46). Thus Paul's denial that he is trying to shame them is a rhetorical device and Paul is wanting the Corinthians to examine their lifestyle and views (Witherington III 1995:147). The implications of this for ministerial praxis is challenging to explore because it implies a precedent for shaming as a pastoral tool which I find difficult to appreciate as it conflicts with my personal values. However, perhaps it is easier to consider in the light of a communal admonishment rather than an individualistic one and there are times when a mirroring of unhelpful attitudes or actions can be a necessary trigger to even realize what it is one has been doing.

1 Corinthians 11.2-16 discusses headcoverings and this is perhaps best seen as a cultural rather than a theological issue as in the Corinthian context married women covered their heads so as not to bring dishonour on the family as women could only lose honour, they could not acquire it. However, it would have been a significant development for women to pray and prophesy as led by the spirit in such a context (Garland 2003:505-11). Johnson, having recounted his personal journey towards accepting the full participation of women in leadership and ministry, summarizes his understanding of what he describes as a

⁶⁷ Eg 2 Thessalonians 3.14; Titus 2.8.

⁶⁸ 1 Corinthians 6.5; cf 15.34.

particularly difficult passage to both translate and interpret:

Women are joint heirs of the salvation in Christ, baptized (circumcision was only for males in the Old Covenant), joint participants in the Lord's Table, jointly gifted by the Holy Spirit, jointly involved with males in leading and prophesying, and all of the above without male supervision over them. Yet in the Corinthian situation women must still observe social honor-shame requirements with respect to husbands and other males, just as men must not dishonour their head, Christ, with hairstyles that blur their male identity (2004:185).

This makes for an interesting precedent as to how far cultural norms should determine behaviour in church or what equivalents might be in contemporary society.

In 1 Corinthians 15.9 Paul writes "For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God". Chrysostom suggests that Paul's persecution of the church "was a shame he never forgot. It taught him the greatness of God's grace toward him" (cited in Bray 1999:152). If this is a valid argument then it might help to explain Paul's approach in shaming others as it is part of his story and perhaps determined his response to various issues.

Background to 2 Corinthians

This letter can be considered as "an apologetic letter of self-commendation" (Keener 2005:143) and again there is some dispute as to whether it is a unified or synthesised letter with unified being the minority view (Keener 2005:146-7, 151) while others suggest it is made up of a number of letters (Witherington III 1995:327). Reconciliation is a key theme of the letter and if this was not achieved then the identity of the church at Corinth would be endangered because of Paul's position as Christ's agent (Witherington III 1995:328).

In 2 Corinthians there are a series of pairs of terms which appear to be paradoxical yet are at the heart of his ministry; these are comfort and suffering,⁶⁹ glory and shame,⁷⁰ life and death,⁷¹ riches and poverty,⁷² power and weakness,⁷³ (Savage 1996:1). This is a letter written into a very specific context but one which Paul only alludes to (Savage 1996:1-2). A significant focus of the letters is an intruder who is personally attacking Paul⁷⁴ and Paul seems to be both complaining about and rejoicing in the response of his converts in the first

⁶⁹ Chapter 1.

⁷⁰ Chapter 3.

⁷¹ Chapter 4.

⁷² Chapter 6.

⁷³ Chapters 12 and 13.

⁷⁴ 2 Corinthians 7.12.

part of the letter (Savage 1996:2-3). However, in the latter chapters⁷⁵ Paul is again facing opposition and being criticized. There are four main areas where the Corinthians criticize Paul and perhaps seek to impute shame: his refusal to boast, his physical presence, his speech and his unwillingness to accept financial support (Savage 1996:12). It is interesting to note that these are complaints which may have been made in a range of contexts and have some parallels with the sort of criticisms made of current church leaders.

Key texts

2 Corinthians 3 talks about the glory of the new covenant. Through the resurrection, glory and honour can replace shame and it is significant that Paul encourages the church at Corinth to look at Christ's face (Stockitt 2012:151). What it means to gaze upon the face of Christ and receive healing from shame is a challenge for ministerial praxis. Various authors identify the importance of the face of Christ for those experiencing shame (Goodliff 2005:107; Pattison 2013:86). Stockitt perhaps gives a hint of the significance when he writes "The face of Christ conveys a depth of interaction with humanity that calls for a response of thanksgiving and praise. It deals with the loss of respect and value that all of humanity feels. It treats the condition of shame with the utmost seriousness, yet counts it as nothing and replaces it with honour" (2012:153). Transforming shame to honour through appropriating what it is Jesus has done is a core message of the church but one which is not always preached, it sometimes feels like the benefits of the cross are more focused on the future than the here and now.

2 Corinthians 4.1-16 introduces the concept treasure in jars of clay. Corinth produced many easily broken clay vessels and the metaphor would have been readily recognized (Keener 2005:174). Vessel as a metaphor was well used in ancient writing and sages and some of the later rabbis emphasise the importance of broken or cracked vessels as repositories of God's wisdom (Keener 2005:174). Thus Paul's power was to be found in weakness and the reality of the resurrection (Keener 2005:175). One specific verse merits further attention: 2 Corinthians 4.2: "We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practise cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God". This has implications for ministerial praxis in perhaps encouraging a sharing of those things which

⁷⁵ 10-13, which may have initially been a separate letter.

are shaming which are normally hidden which may release the power of them. The appropriate use of testimony, skilled pastoral visiting and facilitation of small groups may help this.

Summary from the Gospels and letters to the Corinthians

A series of questions and issues are beginning to emerge from this review of biblical material from the gospels and the letters to the Corinthians relating to shame in the church. The extent to which an honour and shame culture still prevails within the contemporary church, or at least the cultural expectations that seem to be part of church which cause some to experience shame is an issue relevant to my research. An element of this may be constructs of purity and the way that particular people or behaviours may be perceived as polluting the church. Alongside this, exploring the ministry of Jesus leads to an emphasis on acceptance, inclusion, belonging, restoration and a more collectivist rather than individualistic understanding of issues. The centrality of hospitality in many of the gospel stories which illuminate understandings of shame in the church leads me to consider how this may shape ministerial praxis.

What has been interesting to observe in myself is a discomfort with the instances of Jesus and Paul using shaming as a tactic. While I noted earlier that there have been some instances where I may have been appropriately shamed into behaving in a more Christ like way I think one of the dilemmas for me is the difference between how shaming may occur today and the biblical examples I have looked at. There is some danger that I am reading my deeply personal experiences of shame and the dissonance between who I aspire to be and who I am at times with those occasions when the shaming seems to relate more to an external expectation of a role. Thus while I briefly experienced shame as someone talked to me about how (female) priests should dress it was relatively easy to move on from that as I have thought through for myself what standards I should adhere to in my current contexts. Thus it was a cultural expression of shame and were I to visit a different setting I would comply with the cultural conventions of that place. However, when comments are made about weight and size I internalize them much more and can easily access the feelings of worthlessness that are common in shaming in an individualized context and also perhaps there is a dilemma that this is an area I cannot quickly rectify. I am beginning to see that there is a differentiation for me around being and doing, shaming people because of who they are, particularly for qualities that are impossible or not easy to change, is unacceptable

whereas there may be some occasions where shaming for what has been done may be justifiable particularly on occasions where guilt may also be attached to such actions.

Paul's writings are reassuring as they make it clear the ways in which groups can be dysfunctional and that in trying to be church there are a range of issues one encounters, thus one is not alone in the struggles. Paul's letters affirm the need for conscientization amongst both clergy and congregation members to help them be aware of the potential of some actions and attitudes to cause others to experience shame. In some settings unhelpful messages and expectations may enhance the likelihood of shame being experienced. I have reservations regarding Paul's parental approach and use of deliberate shaming although appreciate that this may have been culturally relevant and the most effective way of communicating in that culture. However, Paul's encouragement to be open about shame is something to reflect on further along with being transformed through gazing on the face of Christ. The extent to which the body of Christ as the church can function as Christ's face to gaze upon and be instrumental in liberating people from their shame is an idea to pursue further.

In this chapter I have tried to take seriously the two horizons of the text and the interpreter (Thiselton 1980:xix) and have drawn on a range of commentaries and other literature as well as my own experience. This material will inform later discussions of my typology of shame in the church and ministerial praxis.

CHAPTER 4

LITERATURE REVIEW: SHAME AND MINISTERIAL PRAXIS DESCRIBING, NAMING

I find shame is not a topic that evokes most people's lively enthusiasm. Nobody wants to talk about it. There is a sense that even to talk about shame is shaming (McNish 2004:1).

Introduction

This thematic literature review focuses on texts which discuss shame in relation to ministerial praxis in a western context⁷⁶ published since 1984, when I began in ministry.⁷⁷ This will provide an underpinning theoretical base for the research and provides a clear criteria for selecting literature to review. I have not included texts which are from a biblical studies or systematic theological perspective as they do not engage with the implications for ministerial praxis although I drew on such work in the previous chapter. The one exception to my criteria is including the work of Brené Brown in the USA as this has been mentioned to me, by a variety of people, usually unsolicited after I had posted something about my shame research on social media. Thus I have evidence that her perspective is influencing contemporary ministerial praxis. Brown, a social worker, began to research shame as the result of being told, in a professional context, that “You cannot shame or belittle people into changing their behaviour” (2008:1). The ensuing explanation makes it clear that disgrace shame is being referred to. Brown only talks briefly about spirituality noting, interestingly, that her research doesn’t identify institutionalized religion as a particular source of shame although some of the human imposed expectations can trigger it, and for some, finding a more appropriate faith path has been necessary (2008:260).⁷⁸

I identified three areas I wanted to focus on in the review as they underpin the other elements of the thesis: how shame was understood and experienced; theological perspectives; and ministerial responses.⁷⁹ The texts I am including have been discovered from searches in databases, subject alerts, university and theological college libraries, online

⁷⁶ Shame is a culturally determined concept and drawing on literature from contexts where shame is perceived quite differently to my western Anglican setting have been omitted.

⁷⁷ While any date may be regarded as arbitrary I am interested particularly in literature which informs ministerial practice and focusing on material published since I was employed in ministry means I have a setting to read texts in the light of.

⁷⁸ While Brown’s writing used in this thesis do not appear to be written from a Christian perspective there is material online which suggests that she now would ascribe to Christian faith eg <http://brenebrown.com/2011/02/09/201129faith-doubt-and-inspiration-html/>, <http://christthetruth.net/2014/02/10/brene-brown-journey-to-christian-faith/>.

⁷⁹ Literature about shame in organizations is integrated as appropriate in other chapters, particularly 1 and 6.

book stores and through following up references in books I have read.⁸⁰

Understandings and experiences of shame

Shame is complex (Capps 1995:123), variable (Wurmser 1997:17), a uniquely human experience (McNish 2003:10). It is seen by some as an integral and archetypal part of the human condition (McNish 2003:3), although also culturally determined “contingent upon the social milieu and the mores which are normative in a given setting” (Albers 1995:30). Shaming is ubiquitous as a practice in contemporary society but is rarely spoken about (Brown 2008:2-3) and has an element of psychic suffering (McNish 2004:1). It involves failing to live up to our ideal selves (Capps 1993:72) and threatens a capacity for being at peace in the world (Capps 2002:81). Shame may be either overt or covert and has many manifestations (Wurmser 1997:3). Arguably, it can be both destructive and protective (Goodliff 2005:1).

However, defining shame is not a simple task as it is a complex, contested concept involving a family of meanings and little consensus as to appropriate responses to it (Pattison 2000:2-3). It is an “elusive phenomenon” (Albers 1995:29). However, that is not to diminish the impact shame can have which for some “blights their lives and limits their potential” (Pattison 2000:2) or evokes lasting memories often for events which were comparatively trivial (Pattison 2011:12). Shame can be seen as uniting in the way that it encourages conformity to convention and standards yet isolating and dividing in driving us towards privacy (McNish 2004:3). The most common experiences of shame arise when experiencing disgust, disappointment or disillusionment with ourselves (Albers 1995:35),

⁸⁰ Because I am integrating the literature under different headings I am summarizing here the pertinent information about each author needed to put their writing in context. Robert H Albers is a Lutheran Minister and professor of pastoral theology and ministry in the USA. Warner M Bailey is a Presbyterian minister in the USA and predominantly a biblical scholar. Andrea Campanale is a CMS Mission Partner working with spiritual seekers in the UK. Donald Capps is an American pastoral theologian. Joanna Collicutt is a psychologist and theological educator. Paul Goodliff was head of ministry for the Baptist Union of Great Britain although his book appears to have emerged more from his counselling work. Jill McNish is an Episcopalian priest, counsellor and lecturer in pastoral theology in the USA. Stephen Pattison is a professor of practical theology who was one of the supervisors of this thesis and who has written one of the most influential and comprehensive academic texts in this field. Neil Pembroke is an Australian academic working in the areas of practical theology and pastoral care. His PhD from Edinburgh was on presence and shame in pastoral care and counselling. Robin Stockitt is an Anglican priest working in Ireland. Rebecca Thomas and Stephen Parker are writing from the perspective of pastoral care, psychotherapy and counselling and are based in the USA. John Watson is an Anglican priest. Anne Streaty Wimberly is an African American professor of Christian education who also has a research interest in youth ministry. From a Methodist tradition, Edward P Wimberly, is an African American professor of pastoral care and counselling. Léon Wurmser is a Swiss psychoanalyst and professor of clinical psychiatry in Virginia.

may be the consequence of dashed hopes (Capps 1995:123) or a betrayal of trust and expectation (Bailey 2013:8) and may be adopted as an ongoing attitude towards oneself (Capps 1995:125). Shame may fit best within a metaphorical ecology of defilement, pollution and stain (Pattison 2000:88). Shame can be difficult to articulate and may have its roots in early childhood experience (Pattison 2000:41). In some cultures, and notably in the contexts the Bible was written in, shame is a social or collective phenomenon, not individual. Pattison notes that arguably the shaming of Germany at the end of the First World War was a significant contributory factor in the rise of Hitler and subsequent events (2011:13). Shame is not always well understood by the church (Goodliff 2005:7; Pattison 2011:10), and experiences of shame are both hard to talk about and difficult to listen to (Capps 1993:83).

Differentiating shame and guilt

Differentiating shame and guilt is important as they are often confused (McNish 2003:5-6) and sometimes they are both present in a situation although it should be emphasised that people can experience shame without having done something which causes guilt. Very simply put, guilt is about making a mistake and shame being a mistake (McNish 2004:24). More fully, guilt derives from a failure to meet expectations of others whether perceived or real (Capps 1993:34) whereas shame can be seen as “a sense of being flawed somehow at the core of one’s being ... It is the worm at the core of human life” (McNish 2003:6). A biblical example of the difference is David experiencing guilt when confronted by Nathan (2 Samuel 12) but Saul experiencing shame when confronted by Samuel (1 Samuel 15) as his self-worth collapses (McNish 2003:6). The Western church struggles to differentiate between guilt and shame in relation to sin and struggles to offer a way of helping people to become released from shame in the way it does with guilt (Pattison 2011:20). Shame can perhaps most usefully seen as a family of experiences including such things as disgrace, humiliation, embarrassment, ridicule, shyness, modesty, pride and narcissism whereas guilt includes transgression, offence, culpability, wrong and injury, affirming that guilt is about what I have done wrong and shame about who I am (Goodliff 2005:6-7). Collicutt, a psychologist, draws on the Christ hymn in Philippians 2.5-11, when arguing that in our relationship with God there is a place for guilt with an assurance of forgiveness but shame has been transformed by the death and resurrection of Jesus and should play no part in that relationship (2015:118). She suggests that this is so because, through Christ’s actions we have “access to a relationship with the Father that is like his own – warm, intimate and

reliably present – and in which we can be assured that we are ‘good enough’” (Collicutt 2015:118), the latter phrase relating Winnicott’s (1957) concept from parenting to self-perception based on faith in Christ.

Defining and scoping shame

While more conventional definitions abound in the texts I am exploring in this literature review, this evocative description from Stockitt immediately resonated in both personal and ministerial experience and is from a book that is theological in orientation:

How is it possible to stand in the presence of grace with head held high and arms outstretched in welcome when one feels too small, too insignificant and polluted even to draw breath? Better to turn and run in the opposite direction away from those all seeing, all knowing eyes that behold one’s inner being with irresistible love. This is the heart of shame, the awful dread that tells us we don’t belong, that we don’t deserve anything, and we shouldn’t even be (2012:10-11).

Stockitt also identifies the lack of theological writing about shame (2012:7) and seeks to provide a theological framework to facilitate ministry with those who have experienced shame. Another challenging definition drawing on an extensive literature review from a range of disciplines is Pattison’s:

Shame manifests itself in individuals as a painful sense of self-consciousness, self-alienation, depletion, defectiveness, defilement, weakness, inferiority, and inarticulacy. Individuals feel thrust back into themselves, unwanted and unwantable, both by others and themselves. They defend against the sense of shame by developing habitual scripts and defences which can then become fixed reactions or personality traits, determining relations with self and the rest of the world over a whole lifetime (2000:155-6).

From a more popular non-religious context Brown defines shame as “the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing we are flawed and therefore unworthy of acceptance and belonging” (2008:5). A useful summary of shame is that it “arises when the self evaluates itself as flawed, defective, inferior. One judges that one has fallen short of a cherished ideal. One perceives a gap between the self as it really is and a desired identity” (Pembroke 2002:142). This definition reinforces the notion that shame needs an audience, even if it is another construct of self, although some believe that we only experience shame if we are invested in the opinion of the audience (Martocci 2015:58). Wurmser argues that in later development “one comes to betray ideals, not images, and one feels shame for this betrayal. The values represented and personified by this ideal self vary, depending upon the ideals of culture, subculture, and family, and on the individual’s genesis” (1997:74). This has the

potential to be particularly debilitating for church leaders as they may develop ideals based on the expectations put on them, their own expectations, memories of significant leaders they have known (personally or not) and their desire to be Christ like in their ministry. A growing propensity to make snap judgements about people and to perhaps overreact to what are perhaps minor infractions may add to this feeling of being judged and falling short. Ronson's (2015a) book is illustrative of this tendency in relation to social media, he comments that "I'd hope it's impossible to read my book then gleefully want to destroy someone for a minor transgression" (Ronson 2015b:47). Whether shaming should ever be used to regulate behaviour is a disputed concept with Campanale (2014:182) suggesting that it is a dangerous strategy and is more likely to engender further antisocial behaviour.

The more positive dimensions of shame, elements of discretion shame, are to be found in the literature but are by far a minority feature of texts, the balance in this thesis largely reflecting how other authors have approached the topic. For example, shame can be seen as offering a psychological basis for humility, mitigating arrogance, protection against depersonalisation and violation in society where privacy is not respected, a source of "moral motivation" particularly in relationships with those important to us (Pembroke 2002:142). This is a helpfully nuanced understanding of discretion shame which is necessary for society to function within some sort of moral and ethical framework. Discretion shame is also important in relation to tact, respecting others and being aware when actions or words may have caused another harm, making appropriate choices, exercising restraint (Goodliff 2005:1-2). A more self-focused definition sees discretion shame as concerning "itself with the protection of the private sphere of human activity so that public scrutiny is precluded" (Albers 1995:14), it is also a main way of protecting against exposure (Wurmser 1997:65). Discretion shame tends to happen before acting and disgrace shame afterwards (Albers 1995:14). Positively,

shame separates us, creates boundaries, and this is not always a bad thing. We all need boundaries. Boundaries are what defines us as human beings. They give shape, definition and limits to our lives. If we did not have the boundaries imposed by the shame affect, we would have no private inner reality that would impel us to do anything expressive of our individuality or creativity (McNish 2003:12).

This is again slightly tangential to what I am studying but worth noting as an element of what might be understood as shame and which may be relevant in reflecting on one's ministerial praxis.

It may be significant to note that Brown's research suggested that there was no such

thing as healthy shame, it is all destructive (2008:62). However, there are other contexts where this statement would be disputed. Some proponents of restorative justice approaches (Harris and Maruna 2009) use shame in order to help the offender experience some of the damage to be felt which aids motivation in making restitution. This draws, in part, on Braithwaite's (1989) work on reintegrative shaming. In reviewing some of the restorative justice and shame literature, Harris and Maruna suggest that shame cannot be avoided within the criminal justice system, but that research suggests that it is in helping shame to be processed so that it gets resolved which is the most useful intervention that can be made and this may be of benefit to all, including victims (2009:460). It may be that there are lessons to be learnt in ministerial praxis from restorative justice approaches, certainly CYM, the wider organization of which I am a part, wrote a restorative disciplinary and grievance policy to sit alongside more traditional ones.

Another term which is found in some of the literature is shameless which relates more to disgrace than discretion shame. Bradshaw (2005:28) offers a helpful summary of the manifestations of healthy shame and both shameful and shameless responses which may aid the identification of behaviour which has shame as its trigger (although there are other causes of the behaviours listed):

Shameful acting out	Natural shame polarity limits	Shameless acting in
Slob/failure	Permission to be human	Perfectionistic
Out of control	Natural boundary	Controlling
Self-blame	Adequate amount of shame forms	Blame
Sinfulness Intimacy dysfunction	Development of identity and intimacy	Righteousness Intimacy Dysfunction
Rage	Sense of dignity	Passive-aggressive
Self-judgment Gluttony Self-contempt	Brings a sense of awe, reverence and modesty	Judgment Self-deprivation Criticism-contempt Disgust
Erroneous or lax conscience No conscience	Critically examined conscience	Rigid, all knowing Conscience or puritanical Scrupulous conscience

Table 4.1 Types of shame responses

Malina (2001:49), writing about the world of the New Testament suggests that a shameless person is one with a dishonourable reputation. In a similar way Rohrbaugh (2010:113) suggests that in antiquity certain jobs meant that people were classified as shameless because they did not adhere to societal conventions. The final dimension of Fowler's (1996:141) typology is the shameless person whose behaviour is not impacted by

conscience. This is the extreme end of disgrace shame.

Beliefs about the origins or sources of shame vary. Shame can be triggered by a range of experiences which include dehumanizing stereotypes, insensitivity and evil, coping activities such as eating disorders, self-harm, substance abuse, family breakdown (Wimberly 1999:17). These are very individualized triggers and early childhood experience may be significant in understanding future shame although there are potential shame triggers across the life span. In infancy and young childhood powerlessness causes shame and mortification; in adolescence unruly sexuality and the developing body are issues; in adulthood shame can be caused by failure, loss, abandonment, rejection and missed hopes and expectations; in older age physical, mental and sexual decline can cause shame; sexuality can be a source of shame throughout life (McNish 2003:7). More generally, experiences, particularly repetitive ones, that involve rejection, violating boundaries, objectification, for example, that evoke feelings of abandonment, alienation, worthlessness or inferiority may contribute to shame (Pattison 2011:15). There are a myriad of such experiences in contemporary society and sometimes the church can reinforce them or be the cause of them.

Analysis suggests that in the late 20th and early 21st century shame can be seen as a consequence of status anxiety, commoditization of self and an epidemic of narcissism (Wimberly 2011b:xvi). More specifically, “shame is the anxiety that, living without wealth, material prosperity, position, status, and power, one is unlovable and worthless” (Wimberly 2011b:xvi). This definition leads to Wimberly identifying the term “relational refugee” (2011b:xvii) to describe such people with reference to the loss of love and meaningful community and no hope that this will change.

Because, arguably, shame comes before guilt in developmental cycle (cf Erikson 1968) and begins to emerge at the time child is totally dependent on parents and other relationships for love, frustration when things go wrong in those relationships may lead to shame as a response (Wimberly 2011b:xvii). There are also connections here with attachment theory and Bowlby suggests that it is possible for a child to translate being unwanted by their parents to being essentially unwanted by anyone, a characteristic of shame (1973:238). This pattern may be set early on in life with consensus emerging that shame appears early in childhood and is definitely present by the toddler stage (Mills 2005:27).

Shame may also be vicarious when “unflattering or foolish aspects of people with

whom we are strongly identified are exposed” (McNish 2004:39). Although I think this is an incomplete definition and it may also be such things as unethical, unjust or even perhaps evil actions that cause vicarious shame.

Theological perspectives

Theological perspectives found in the literature in part reflect the discipline or vocational focus of the author. A clear example of this is Capps’ approach as a pastoral theologian who writes extensively on shame and the self (1993; 1995; 2002). Capps argues strongly that Western theologians have been remiss in focusing excessively on guilt at the expense of shame, he uses the phrase “conceptual violence” to describe the impact of this on those who have experienced shame but are offered a theology of guilt (1993:86). Using the concept of the depleted self, Capps (1993) then discusses shame in the light of this self. This leads to a conclusion that self-care is a moral imperative and that the actions of Jesus in the gospels often focuses on enabling people to become who God created them to be (1993:167). Capps suggests that self-care was a theme in early Christianity but was replaced by an asceticism which at the extreme could result in the destruction of self (1993:167-8). Self-affirmation is important as is affirmation from the community and God (1993:168-9). This is a helpful starting point for understanding how ministerial praxis might function to mitigate shame as opposed to its use as an agent of social control which is prevalent in the Bible (Goodliff 2005:11).

In the Old Testament⁸¹ shame can be seen as corporate humiliation (Goodliff 2005:11) and in the New Testament the word is most often used communally with regard to cultural control rather than individualistically (Goodliff 2005:15). For those with a propensity towards shame an emphasis in church on humility, pride being a sin and the denigration of the body can make it difficult to develop an appropriate sense of self-esteem and self-worth (Pattison 2011:21-2). Sometimes encounters in worship and practice can “all too often reinforce the sense of powerlessness, defilement, unworthiness and alienation” (Pattison 2011:21). An interesting perspective is that shame emerges from our embodied life through tensions inherent in being both a creature yet also with a spirit connected to God (McNish 2004:23). This can be exacerbated when our experience of shame impacts our view of God who is seen as, for example, accuser, judge, remote and turned away (Watson 2005:6).

⁸¹ Psalm 40.14; 83.16-18.


Creation narratives

The creation narratives are an obvious source of theological reflection on shame and many authors draw on them. One first reads that humanity was made in the image of God and God looked upon all that had been created and decreed that it was good.⁸² Affirming the value and worth of creation is a significant starting point for a theological anthropology (Albers 1995:90-1). It could be argued that the story of Adam and Eve is not about original sin but original shame and the point at which humanity became aware of their separation from God (McNish 2003:11); although this was not just separation from God, it involved separation from each other and creation too (Goodliff 2005:13). Another perspective is that Adam and Eve can be seen as misunderstanding God's nature and not owning their disobedience which led to them in hiding in shame (Collicutt 2015:123).

In becoming aware of their nakedness Adam and Eve were experiencing a new emotion, shame, but that dimension of the story has been neglected at the expense of the guilt and punishment element (Thomas & Parker 2004:177). This demonstrates how the writings of Augustine have received more prominence over the years than those of Irenaeus (Thomas & Parker 2004:177-8). Adam and Eve were growing and maturing humans and their experience in the Garden of Eden enabled them to become more fully human and shame is an integral part of the journey towards selfhood as reflected in Erikson's theory and in Adam and Eve's first responses to God after they had eaten the fruit (Thomas & Parker 2004:178). This demonstrated God's love and care to them (Watson 2005:18) and the episode of clothing them demonstrates how concepts of grace and mercy as well as judgment and sacrifice are pertinent in dealing with shame (Stockitt 2012:26).

I used this picture of Eve in a variety of contexts as I was both piloting and then carrying out the empirical research. It is an evocative picture which is a reminder of the game played with children where if they cannot see you, you cannot see them and embodies the hiding and withdrawing element of shame.

⁸² Genesis 1.27,31.



<http://www.musee-rodin.fr/en/collections/sculptures/eve>

Figure 2 Eve by Rodin

God's question to Adam and Eve was "Where are you?"⁸³ and Adam responded that they had hidden from God.⁸⁴ In a position of wishing to hide nakedness today, most women are likely to use both arms to cover themselves but leave their face uncovered. It highlights the difference between hiding and covering which protects from exposure and the responsibility perhaps of church leaders to seek out those who are hiding and to do whatever the contemporary equivalent of clothing would be to mitigate shame. Unfortunately the word "covering" has unhelpful resonance with a heavy shepherding approach to church leadership. Thus it may be misunderstood if used.

Positively, the creation narratives may offer a theology affirming that humanity and the created order is good and of intrinsic worth (Albers 1995:87) which is an important starting point when working with those who are experiencing shame. Building on this, the metaphor of the body of Christ can be helpful in emphasising the significance to God of humanity and the sacred nature of embodiment which is a helpful contrast to the sin, evil, fall approach (Albers 1995:89-90). Also humans need to accept their finitude and in doing this resist the pressure to achieve a perfection that is only found in God (Albers 1995:91-2). This striving for perfection or being like God⁸⁵ is likely to exacerbate shame as one inevitably falls short.⁸⁶

⁸³ Genesis 3.9.

⁸⁴ Genesis 3.10.

⁸⁵ Genesis 3.22.

⁸⁶ Romans 3.23.

Covenant and trust

My understanding of God's promises impacts how I understand, approach and process shame. For example, one approach is to understand the crucifixion as involving the abandonment of Jesus by God thus suggesting that "If trust between Father and Son is ripped apart on the cross, theological shame is brought into the bosom of the Godhead. God is self-shamed and self-shaming at Golgotha (Bailey 2013:71). While I can appreciate the potential pastoral dimensions of this, I struggle with what feels inherent in it: if God can abandon a beloved son, then why not me? Also it evokes a sense of if Jesus can abandon trust in God in his darkest hour what hope does that give me in mine? I appreciate that this comment may lack theological sophistication, but it reflects an inability to use this explanation myself in a ministerial setting. I resonate more with an understanding that "At the final moment on the cross when he felt the full force of the shameful estrangement, the bond was broken, or at least in the experience of the dying Christ that is how it *felt*" (Stockitt 2012:149, italics in the original). However, the broader point that the Bible calls the betrayal of broken trust "to be shamed" (Bailey 2013:1), suggests that when one experiences shame it may also trigger a feeling that God has abandoned us too (Bailey 2013:4) seems plausible and a helpful insight. Part of God's covenant with humanity is the availability of God's grace and while this may be interpreted as forgiveness by those experiencing guilt, for those carrying shame, unconditional acceptance is the dimension of grace that is needed (Albers 1995:97). A challenge is perhaps for the church to mediate more of God's grace than she does of God's judgement.

Jesus and shame

The example of Jesus in his actions when on earth and the theological dimension of the incarnation are both significant in understanding shame in relation to ministerial praxis. The gospels "portray Jesus as a person who was unafraid of shame and indeed actively sought to locate himself among the shamed. It is as if Jesus did not attach significance to the shame that was generated by the culture at that time" (Stockitt 2012:116). Jesus is an "apostle to the shamed" (Pattison 2011:26) with the stories of the crippled woman healed on the Sabbath⁸⁷ and Zacchaeus⁸⁸ as emblematic of a shame removing response to the individuals. With regard to the first story, those who believed Jesus should not have healed

⁸⁷ Luke 13.10-16.

⁸⁸ Luke 19.1-10.

the woman were shamed by his rebuke and the potential of shame this interaction evokes to address one's own inhuman responses (Pattison 2011:26). Zacchaeus was saved by inclusion, affirmation and restoration of his personhood (Pattison 2011:27). Acceptance of those who have been shamed is emblematic of the ministry of Jesus (Goodliff 2005:69f).

What God has done for humanity in the incarnation is potentially transformative: "The central figure of Christian faith experience suffered the worst imaginable shame – the public exposure and shame of the cross – and was transformed (ie resurrected) in and through that experience" (McNish 2003:5). At each step of this ritual and sadistic shaming through the arrest, trial and execution Jesus "inverts the meaning" of the shame he experiences and makes it honourable (Stockitt 2012:140). He also refuses to adopt defences to that shame (Albers 1995:70-82; McNish 2003:19). The story of the woman at the well⁸⁹ is an example of Jesus identifying and helping someone to embrace their shame (McNish 2003:18) and "When we face our own shame we stop projecting it on others. We become more permeable, more transparent, more authentic and compassionate. We draw closer to God" (2003:20). Some significant figures in Christian history have been both "tormented and transformed by shame" (McNish 2003:11) including Augustine, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Ignatius, Therese of Lisieux and Simone Weil. Thus shame is transcended through a relationship with Jesus where we find our identity and worth (Wimberly 2011b:61). The apostle Paul's writings demonstrate a sense of pride in identifying with Christ and a reiteration of his lack of shame⁹⁰ in the gospel (Goodliff 2005:15).

The gospel was good news for the poor and marginalized, the shamed, because their honour was derived from their identity in Christ which was a gift of grace (Stockitt 2012:134). Thus, theologically, understanding grace is important for those experiencing shame. For someone experiencing shame, grace is about unconditional acceptance whereas someone feeling guilty may interpret it as forgiveness (Albers 1995:97). The apostle Paul writes about the acceptance and reality of this while being able to acknowledge rather than hide his weakness⁹¹ which is the temptation of a person experiencing shame (Albers 1995:99). A significant verse related to self-perception is Philippians 2.5 "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus" and suggests that a holistic understanding of having the mind of a disciple is important in the light of our calling (Wimberly 1999:14) and the Holy

⁸⁹ John 4.1-26.

⁹⁰ 2 Corinthians 7.14; 9.4.

⁹¹ 1 Corinthians 15.10; 2 Corinthians 12.9-10.

Spirit can help us to see ourselves as worthwhile and lead us into relationships which reflect back our value to us (Wimberly 1999:11). My experience suggests that intervention is often needed to achieve this. As church leaders how we both model and encourage the congregation to adopt a disposition of unconditional acceptance is challenging. Depending on our theological tradition there may well be a range of issues we want to challenge or explore while at the same time exuding an acceptance which communicates that difference is to be encouraged and uniformity is not a prerequisite of being part of the church.

Ministerial responses

This section is focused around themes both positive and negative that I have found in the literature that are pertinent for ministerial praxis. It is important that churches become more aware of the way in which they may use shame (Pattison 2011:24) and of a responsibility of evaluating and amending practices so that they enhance rather than mitigate against human flourishing (Pattison 2000:276). Similarly, church life often seems to create or increase shame or ignore it, continuing to focus on guilt and forgiveness which are easier constructs to work with (Goodliff 2005:79). Campanale (2014:190) suggests that fresh expressions, if they want to do church differently, should consider ways in which they can purposefully become shame resilient communities in ways which result in the gospel being relevant to those in great need.

One of the dilemmas is that Christian pastoral care does not always differentiate appropriately between guilt and shame with a focus sometimes on confession and forgiveness which are not effective as a response to shame (Thomas & Parker 2004:176). Responses to shame need to focus more on development of self as opposed to the acts of self which is the focus with guilt although pastoral care may involve dealing with both (Thomas & Parker 2004:181). Listening carefully to someone and trying to identify if they are talking more about a global self than what they have done may be helpful in seeking to distinguish between the two (Thomas & Parker 2004:181). However, there will be no simple solutions or formulae for ministry with those who are experiencing shame, as creative responses appropriate to the context may work (Albers 1995:139). An issue which needs to be acknowledged is the extent to which ministers are suffering as a consequence of their own unworked through shame experiences which may be manifest in dishonesty, bullying and authoritarian leadership, for example (Pattison 2000:281). This suggests that shame should be part of the curriculum for ministerial formation.

Positive responses

Naming and acknowledging

The power or hold of shame over an individual or group can be lessened if it is named and acknowledged and there is an awareness that it is a condition common to humanity including church leaders. This may require self-awareness on the part of the minister to be able to identify shame in themselves as well as in others (Pattison 2000:290). Becoming aware of and acknowledging our own shame may facilitate the realization that we should not isolate, stigmatize or treat others as outcasts because our own shame also puts us in that same position (McNish 2004:167). Sadly some regard church as the “shamingest” of institutions (McNish 2003:20). However, shame is not necessarily easy to identify as it tends to remain hidden and can be masked by such things as grief and depression (Goodliff 2005:85) thus naming and acknowledging it is not a straightforward endeavour. It may be that there are particular times in the church year when shame can be more readily named and acknowledged and the biblical stories discussed in this thesis may offer an opportunity to show how shame is present in many different settings but that it can be overcome.

Liturgy and worship

Liturgy and worship shape our understanding and identity of ourselves as Christians. Positively, worship is often the context in which the shamed are saved such as the place of the sanctuary in Psalm 73; liturgy in Joel 2.12-17; the prayers of people of Nineveh in Jonah 3.6-10; the revelation of Jesus through the Eucharist to those travelling to Emmaus in Luke 24.13-35 (Bailey 2013:92). While this is a positive use of worship in the light of shame, analysing liturgy and worship through the lens of shame can offer a fresh perspective. Thus, it is important to examine the language and theology used in worship so “that we do not inadvertently blow out that smouldering wick or break that bruised reed. The person coping with unhealthy shame is a very vulnerable person” (Watson 2005:22). Thus the use of confession in services, regulations regarding participation in the Eucharist, the word based nature of many services can all act as triggers to shame in some people (Pattison 2011:22). While the language of sinners may be used in church, it can often be a place where some feel excluded (Pattison 2011:23). Particularly pertinent in this respect is the issue of exclusion from the Eucharist which “is a potent way of communicating shame, defilement, unacceptability and unlovability” (Pattison 2000:268). There is also an issue in some

contexts of liturgical language which draws on concepts of dirt, defilement and corruption (Pattison 2011:24) exacerbating shame. A further example is the danger in the dualism that is inherent in the way liturgy may talk about a perfect, all-powerful deity and the response to those who do not conform to the image of what a child of this God is supposed to be like (Pattison 2011:25). How we mediate God to children may also need attention (Pattison 2011:25). In general, the church may benefit from focusing on theological concepts which are “more inclusive, practical, and less shaming” (Pattison 2011:26).

While it is important to be mindful of those experiencing shame in preparing worship, it is also important to remember that “Shame is not sin. Burdening oneself with the judgement that one is inferior and defective is not sinful. Running away from a full and free engagement with life and its challenges is” (Pembroke 2010:38). There are three practices which may be helpful in this context. Firstly, including in prayers of confession hiding from opportunities and failures in self-realization as well as moral failure. Secondly, that an absolution after confession includes both that we are forgiven and that we are whole and beautiful as well. Thirdly, the use of an image of Christ in the place of absolution in words, as mentioned below in relation to gazing on the face of Christ (Pembroke 2010:41-3). These are simple changes which may facilitate a less shaming environment for some.

Relationships

Some authors contend that healing from shame is best done or can only be done in relationship (Watson 2005:18) which resonates because of the audience dimension of shame. Thus if shame only occurs in relationship it may best be ameliorated through relationship. This may include, for example, “finding relationships with significant others in which we experience some semblance of nurture and care without having to turn ourselves inside out, in ways that only increase our shame, in order to meet other people’s expectations” (Wimberly 1999:11). The community is important in supporting the shamed person and relationships and history can help in restraining them from abandoning God when they may have lost faith in God (Bailey 2013:90). Small groups where people may experience love and belonging may help address the “disconnected self-deficiency” of the shamed (Wimberly 2011b:19) as well as offer spiritual responses to the issues being faced (Wimberly 2011b:28) such as reflecting on personal stories in the light of God’s salvation story (Wimberly 2011b:32).

The quality of relationship is important and it requires ministers to be fully present as

presence is potentially more important than the words used (Pembroke 2002:75). Thus, encouragingly, for those of us in pastoral ministry, availability is more important than skill (Pembroke 2002:74) although shame can be intensified through a defective presence (Pembroke 2002:140). This is a challenging statement in a culture where mobile communications can be such a distraction and busyness means that pastoral encounters are often fairly rigidly scheduled encounters. Another way of expressing the quality of relationship required is to value and practice personal and social recognition towards those experiencing shame (Pattison 2011:19). Social media provides an option to do this which may model a more helpful way of using it.

However, working with people who have experienced shame may require patience on the minister's part as well as in the person they are ministering to (Albers 1995:113-6). Along with this, faith in God, the process, self and others is needed as often a person may doubt that God or others are interested in them and their well-being (Albers 1995:116-122). Hope in the liberation that God can bring may also be helpful in finding freedom from shame (Albers 1995:125). Although it may be an obvious observation, love is also an essential part of the process as it can break down defences and engender acceptance and value (Albers 1995:129). This love may be best expressed within a community which has as part of its mandate the healing of those who are experiencing shame (Albers 1995:129-33). Mirroring, reflecting back to people their self-worth and value, is part of the process (Capps 1993:67-9). The metaphor offered in a fictional letter in the novel *Lila* by John Ames to Lila of a father encouraging a child to walk offers an insight as to how ministers may frame their understanding of supporting someone to walk free from shame:

A father holds out his hands to a child who is learning to walk, and he comforts the child with words and draws it toward him, but he lets the child feel the risk it is taking, and lets it choose its own courage and the certainty of love and comfort when he reaches his father over – I was going to say choose it over safety, but there is no safety. And there is no choice, either, because it is in the nature of the child to walk. As it is to want the attention and encouragement of the father. And the promise of comfort. Which it is in the nature of the father to give (Robinson 2014:76).

Developing an appropriate theological perspective on shame

A positive theological understanding of shame is beneficial to ministerial praxis. Adopting a holistic approach to salvation which encompasses the breadth of the biblical narrative rather than a more narrow redemption through the cross approach may enable a perspective which sees the alienation between God and humanity as “the brokenheartedness of frail

humans rather than sin, guilt, and offense against a divine despot” (Pattison 2011:26). The example of Jesus who models relationships which are courteous, inclusive and respectful as he seeks to build a new community (Pattison 2000:306) may give an insight as to the setting within which shame may be addressed and overcome. Sadly, the dimension of God which is sometimes presented is that of a patriarchal despot who is authoritarian and distant and the images we offer of God may be significant in how safe or able those experiencing shame may feel in exposing their shame in the hope of transformation (Pattison 2000:303).

Embracing baptismal identity

Understanding of baptism and what this means for our identity in Christ can help mitigate shame (Albers 1995:95). Baptism is a rite of belonging and inclusion based on God’s covenant with humanity and the water and washing motif associated with baptism may be a helpful concept for those experiencing shame⁹² (Albers 1995:95). However, there may be some people who find that baptism and renewal of baptism vows exacerbates their feeling of uncleanness rather than reduces or eliminates it (Pattison 2000:258). Some Eastern traditions are more explicit about what baptism involves, this prayer from the Syriac Melkite rite exemplifies an approach which sees baptism as transformational:

The new children that You have produced from a spiritual womb in Your holy font give You worship. Perfect Your gift with Your servants, keep back from them all that is shameful, so that they may preserve in purity the robe of glory with which You have clothed them in Your compassion (Brock 1999:254).

The face of Christ, the face of God

A common response to shame is to hide our face. However, Sunday after Sunday I say the words of the Aaronic blessing⁹³ usually to individuals, and am praying that people will see God’s face although there is some truth in the caution that what we really mean is some nice inner feeling which will comfort you (Pattison 2013:86). However, understanding this more literally and taking seriously the importance of the *visio dei* is significant for ministerial praxis (Pattison 2013:86).⁹⁴ Some authors take this more literally, thus, gazing upon Christ’s face can be a healing and empowering experience in contrast to the shame, sin and guilt which

⁹² Ephesians 5.26; Titus 3.5.

⁹³ Numbers 6.24-6: The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

⁹⁴ Pattison’s (2013) book *Saving Face* explores this topic in great detail drawing on a wide range of texts across discipline and is an important contribution to the discussion on the nature and role of the face of God.

may occur when one withdraws from God's face (Stockitt 2012:152).

Faces are significant in ministry and rituals such as the peace and the Eucharist "shapes a habitus of facing. Above all it orientates us to the face of Christ" (Goodliff 2005:99). Exploring literature on the face may suggest that ministers might helpfully facilitate congregations having an encounter with God's gaze through the use of an icon, for example. This may be particularly helpful in confession as an alternative to verbal absolutions (Pembroke 2010:41). My own experiences of healing obtained by gazing upon the face of Christ in the window of the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament at Buckfast Abbey highlights the importance of this for ministerial praxis, therefore I want to include in full Goodliff's version of the Christian message in the light of the face of Christ:

God is almighty and pure, and he despises sin and all that harms his creation. Humans are sinful, but they are also objects of God's love and care. I am sinful, but also loved and accepted by God through Jesus Christ. I have great value in God's eyes, and his face is turned towards me in longing for my best. Pride in my own self-determination, separate from God is wrong, and this arrogant pride is harmful to me, but a sense of my own worth as God's creature is vital if I am to grow up in Christ. Humility must be distinguished from humiliation. Instead of hiding my face in shame, God wants me to look into his face with confidence in his acceptance and love for his care (2005:107).

More succinctly, "the mutuality of Christ gazing upon us in love and us reciprocating that gaze is an image of redemption and restoration" (Stockitt 2012:153). Related to this is the importance of creating non-shaming communities as a parallel dimension to this understanding of who we are as an individual in the light of gazing into the face of Christ (Goodliff 2005:126). There are resonances with attachment theory (Mooney 2010) in this discussion of looking upon the face of Christ and the bonding that takes place between parent and infant early on in life.

Changing perspectives

A shame-bound identity needs a change of perspective and narrative approaches are perhaps the most effective ways of dealing with this. Helping both victims and perpetrators to explore their beliefs and convictions about who they are and relationships with self, God and others is important as it may enable them to identify those beliefs they have wrongly internalized (Wimberly 2011b:107). Storytelling may be integral to this process⁹⁵ as this has the capacity to offer a fresh perspective and undermine existing worldviews (Wimberly

⁹⁵ Wimberly (1999) offers several examples of using biblical texts in this way.

1999:15). The intention of such storytelling is the development of orthopathy, right feelings (Wimberly 2011b:61).

The most significant part of changing perspectives may be the adoption of an identity based on who God is. Streaty Wimberly draws on slave songs and the epistle to the Hebrews to articulate a response to overcoming shame which requires us to understand that life is a journey with the capacity for change; that a tested and interceding Jesus accompanies us on this journey and that we need to embrace a communal identity based on being part of the family of God (2011:61-2). It is difficult to imagine many more shaming contexts than slavery, but for many religion was a coping mechanism within that and while not necessarily being able to affirm the theology inherent in the phrase “Everybody talkin’ ‘bout heab’n [heaven] ain’t goin’ dere” (Streaty Wimberly 2011:81) the resilience and hope gives an insight as to how people tried to make sense of their situation. She offers these insights as significant in the journey of moving beyond shame: invite Jesus to journey with you; persevere, refuse to accept the shame perceiving self as a sojourner on a journey where the future can be different; use spiritual practices to keep close to God perceiving self as a child who is part of God’s household cared for by Jesus; listen to, seek and rely on God to experience peace, rest and joy; connect with others on the same journey as well as stories of others who have journeyed before, worship, confess hope and know that overcoming shame is possible (Streaty Wimberly 2011:81-2).

An alternative perspective suggests that shame should be at the core of our identity because as we embrace rather than avoid shame we create the conditions in which God can be revealed in our inner being (Capps 2002:91). This is based on the idea that the cross is central to our perspective on life (Capps 2002:92). Through telling our shameful experiences to God through prayer, we become able to get God’s perspective on a situation which brings comfort and a consciousness of being at home in the world. While understanding the logic behind this I have some reservations as to whether the exposure of our shameful self is the most helpful lens through which to see our identity in God. I strongly prefer the notion of the *imago dei* and positive inferences about who we are based on God’s love for us. It may however, be that for some this perspective is transformational and enables them to move beyond the shame.

Capps (1990:17) uses the language of reframing, which he suggests is an approach used by Jesus, to explain his approach to pastoral care suggesting that this involves seeing a situation from a different perspective which may include conceptual or emotional

dimensions which then offers a new frame to view the situation from which may change its meaning. He argues that the reasons ministers should engage in reframing “is for the sole purpose of enabling others to have fuller, more abundant life (Capps 1990:51). One example cited is seeing the parable of the workers in the vineyard from the perspective of the generosity of the owner rather than the fairness of treatment of the workers (Capps 1990:60). The metaphor of the wise fool⁹⁶ is then offered in relation to reframing suggesting that the new perspective is seeing a situation as God does which reduces complexity and resonates with Paul’s assertion about becoming a fool.⁹⁷

Developing shame resilience

Developing shame resilience: “that ability to recognize shame when we experience it, and move through it in a constructive way that allows us to maintain our authenticity and grow from our experiences” (Brown 2008:31) may be a useful contribution to ministerial praxis. Shame Resilience Theory suggests that shame is a “psycho-social-cultural construct” which Brown portrays as a shame web (2006:45) and can be seen as a continuum with shame, fear blame and disconnection on one side and empathy, courage, compassion and connection on the other (Brown 2008:32). The first step towards shame resilience is recognizing shame (Brown 2008:69f) which may derive from unwanted or flawed identities which may include appearance, family, parenting, finance, work, health, sex, aging, religion, labelling and trauma (Brown 2008:73). Responses to such shame includes moving towards and appeasing, moving away and withdrawing, or moving against in aggression (2008:89). The second step involves practicing critical awareness (Brown 2008:92f) which involves three processes, contextualizing, normalizing and demystifying (Brown 2008:99). The third element is reaching out (Brown 2008:121) which happens through sharing our story and creating change rather than separating and insulating (Brown 2008:129-30). The final element is speaking shame (Brown 2008:155f) which involves articulating feelings and needs (Brown 2008:172).

Poling situates resilience within a discussion of the abuse of power arguing that “We search for the resilient hope of the human spirit, which can resist abuse and create new communities for the restoration of communion and freedom of self, others, and God”

⁹⁶ Metaphor attributed to Hieje Faber and discussed as part of Alastair V Campbell’s three metaphors which also includes shepherd and wounded healer.

⁹⁷ 1 Corinthians 3.18.

(1991:33). This would be a community which avoided the sort of disgrace shaming of the vulnerable and innocent that sadly does occur although often inadvertently. Poling gives the notion of resilience a theological dimension missing in Brown's work and which is more communal in focus than the individualistic focus of Brown (2008). McDonald argues that to live a resilient life we need to repair elements of our past that are holding us back (2004:98) which is perhaps a succinct summary of what Brown suggests, with more flexibility as to how to approach it.

Developing healthy churches

A study of shame in the light of Erikson's eight stages of human development highlights some characteristics of healthy churches. These include affirming and recognizing the distinctiveness of individuals; it is known that, and how, disapproval can be expressed; communication is open but disciplined; there is a sense of solidarity and shared meaning; the church is open and welcoming to outsiders and forms a caring community; continual reflection takes place in the light of changing experience (Capps 2002:76-9).

Defensive responses

Rage

Rage is a defence against shame, directed at oneself or others (McNish 2004:54). While a minister may perhaps be on the receiving end of rage in a pastoral relationship there also needs to be an awareness of one's own triggers and one's own capacity for rage if shamed.

Perfectionism

Another potential ministerial response to shame is perfectionism which involves striving to be selfless and beyond reproach (McNish 2004:59). This is an easy trap for those in ministry to fall into and can result in the disowning of parts of oneself and the development of a shadow which holds the shame (McNish 2004:60).

Using shame as an agent of social control

Sadly, such practices as bullying, stigmatizing, scapegoating, humiliating occur in the church, and using shame as an agent of social control in this way is dangerous and has the potential to increase behaviour which is immoral or amoral (Pattison 2011:17). This was certainly part of my experience as a young adult and can be seen on social media.

Righteousness

Righteousness is an unhelpful response to shame often adopted by the institutional church because of the concept of being set-apart and a tendency to want to deny or defend what is shameful (McNish 2003:9). One of the dilemmas of adopting a righteous pose is that this can mean avoiding the experience of shame but this is not always beneficial in finding healing or transformation (McNish 2003:9). Perhaps related to this is the observation, drawing on the parable of the prodigal son,⁹⁸ that Christians may experience as much shame as others and find it hard to replicate the generosity of God and may sometimes adopt the elder son's attitude (Goodliff 2005:83).

Observations and conclusions

Shame is a complex concept which is hard to define although there is significant agreement that shame relates to evaluation of the global self and includes a sense of worthlessness, feeling flawed and engendering a desire to withdraw or hide. For some people it is an overarching dimension of their life and they may experience chronic or toxic shame. With guilt there are often clear steps to suggest or take to deal with guilt but this is much less the case with shame as the injured party is the self and it is not always clear what can be done to address the issue. Understanding the shame honour paradigm may be significant as appropriating the honour integral in being in Christ can be a significant dimension in diminishing shame.

There is reasonable consensus that shame in western church culture has been neglected with a much greater focus given to guilt although the range of books published in the past twenty years or so suggest that this is beginning to be addressed. There are a variety of attempts to explore a theology of shame and the challenge of the task is reflected in the terms used: "theological fragments" (Pattison 2000:200); "toward a theology of shame" (McNish 2004:121f); "theological exploration" (Goodliff 2005); "theological resources from the faith tradition that address the issue of shame" (Albers 2005:85f); "towards a theology of shame" (Stockitt 2012); "a contribution to pastoral theology and practice" (Bailey 2013:80f). What is evident in some of the texts I have drawn on in this review is a desire to influence and improve pastoral practice towards those who have

⁹⁸ Luke 15.1-32.

experienced shame which is why I have included such material in this review even although that is the focus of the later part of this thesis. However, current practice in the church suggests that some attempts enhance shame experienced rather than ameliorating it (Pattison 2011:20). That is one of the reasons why conscientization is an aim of this thesis.

This literature review has affirmed the uniqueness of my approach in offering a typology of shame which goes beyond individual manifestations of it, in order that there may be an awareness of the different levels and dimensions of ministry where a propensity to shame can be identified and mitigated against. To support this typology I am offering research, literature and experience based suggestions for ministerial praxis which address the damaging elements of shame in the church. None of the literature I have used in this review has been significantly based on an empirical research project apart from Brown (2008) which is exceptional in the review in not being a theological oriented text and Wurmser (1997) which is focused on psychoanalytic case studies. I am also integrating a reflexive element to the thesis in the autoethnographical writing as well as reflecting on how studying shame in the church has changed my perspective, this element is not clear in most other texts with the exception of Pattison (2000). My hope is that I offer a new “tyre” rather than “retreading old ones” (Pattison 2000:228).

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS: TYPOLOGY OF SHAME IN CHRISTIAN INSTITUTIONS INVESTIGATING, ANALYSING

Introduction

My two main research tools were online questionnaires using Survey Monkey⁹⁹ and focus groups and I developed the process for these in parallel. The first part of the process involved drafting all the relevant material and gaining ethical approval for the research. Once this was achieved I piloted the questionnaires through both the Christian Research in Action Network and a small number of colleagues with expertise in the field. I took into account the feedback and made amendments which were all quite minor except for one which involved changing wording to make the question less intrusive. The final versions of all the documents are to be found in appendices 1 and 2 and confirmation of ethical approval in appendix 3.

Questionnaires

I designed three Survey Monkey questionnaires, two parallel ones asking similar questions to church leaders and church members (participants self-defined) and one for theological educators which was designed to explore my preliminary thoughts about a typology. I distributed the surveys using a combination of convenience and snowball sampling (Bryman 2001:97) and allowed two months for this process. My initial target was 100 questionnaires in total. I used my Facebook and Twitter accounts to publicize the surveys, the Principal of the theological college where I worked sent an email to his peers in other institutions asking them to distribute it, I posted it again on the action research website I used for piloting, I emailed faculty where I work, the cohort I trained for ordination with, the Theological Educators Linked In group, colleagues in the Centre for Youth Ministry, Youth for Christ staff via a gatekeeper, two deaneries via their Area Dean, and our personal contacts. As the surveys are anonymous I don't know which of these approaches was the most successful in recruiting participants.¹⁰⁰

In total 262 people accessed the questionnaires, 43 theological educators, 110

⁹⁹ An online survey tool which facilitates anonymity in response and easy distribution (www.surveymonkey.com)

¹⁰⁰ I am using the term participant to refer to those who completed a questionnaire or took part in a focus group. The term respondent is used in relation to others who I consulted or who engaged in activities relating to this research.

church leaders and 109 church members. However accessing the questionnaire was not the same as fully completing it, although this was to be expected as the information made it clear that one could omit any questions. This table summarizes the key information:

Survey¹⁰¹	Number accessing	Number fully completing	Male	Female
Church Leaders	110	39 35%	55 50%	49 45%
Church members	109	62 57%	46 42%	63 58%
Theological educators	42	18 43%	26 62%	16 38%

Table 5.1 Overview of survey data

There are several reasons why completion rates may have been significantly lower than access rates. One participant contacted me to say it had taken her much longer than had been indicated because of the trains of thought it set off in her, thus time available to respond to such tasks is an issue. Some of the questions may have made people feel uncomfortable and trying to complete the task swiftly may have led to missing a question. Others may have been interested initially by the topic but had less interest in the approach I was taking. Because of the way that Survey Monkey works there is no way to get feedback as to why people did not complete the survey. However, I am interested that the highest category for completion was church members where perhaps the greatest personal disclosure may have been involved. Perhaps this suggests that this was an opportunity for people to reflect on an issue that there may be few other ways of exploring. The gender balance of theological educators may well represent the balance in that field. I am encouraged by the proportions of church leaders and wonder if women were particularly incentivized to complete it because it was online in the autumn of 2012 when there was the unsuccessful vote for Women Bishops in the Church of England General Synod. The church member's survey gender split may reflect the disproportionate numbers of men and women attending church.

¹⁰¹ Where the numbers do not add it means that some participants did not answer a question.

Denomination	Anglican	Baptist	New Church	Evangelical	Other
Church Leaders (86)	47 55%	16 19%	7 8%	1 1%	15 17%
Church Members (109)	43 39%	18 17%	13 13%	11 11%	24 24%
Theological Educators (39)	19 49%	7 18%	1 2%	3 8%	9 23%

Table 5.2 Denominational profile of survey data

I have separately reported any denomination where the response was over 5% of the participants as this seemed a significant threshold to note. Thus the “other” category is made up of a wide range of denominations including some overseas ones. Not everyone in the leader’s or theological educator’s surveys chose to answer the denominational question although that around half are Anglican probably reflects the networks I am part of and the sampling approach. Baptists coming second may reflect that one of the officers of the Baptist Union disseminated the surveys for me. I have not done any further analysis of the data by denomination but believe that this spread of participants suggests that the findings may have some relevance outside of my own Anglican context.

In the initial stage of coding of the questionnaires I identified three questions which encapsulated the core elements of my research question:

How might an understanding of shame in the church inform approaches to ministerial praxis?

- When do people experience shame in Christian institutions?
- How do people respond to this dimension of shame?
- What implications are there for ministerial praxis?

I had 48,000 words of data in the surveys. My approach to data analysis was inductive, thematic and open (Ezzy 2002:88) within each dimension of the typology. Thus I began by analysing all the data received, allocating it to the element of the typology it best fitted into and then coded it as to which of the three questions above the response referred to. I then began to code identifying themes which were relevant across more than one dimension of shame but others which were specific to one of them. I coded on both the transcripts and by drawing mind maps with the element of the typology in the middle and the themes coming out as spokes. I have tried to identify quotations that are either emblematic of a

range of responses or seem particularly significant in illustrating a specific dimension of shame.

Focus groups

Whereas recruiting people to complete my surveys was relatively straightforward, finding focus group participants proved to be more of a challenge although I used a similar convenience and snowball sample approach. I speculate that this is because of the nature of the subject and the potential difficulty of talking about shame in front of strangers or in front of me for those I have a professional relationship with as a lecturer or priest, as well as availability on given dates. All potential participants were sent an information sheet and consent form electronically before the session with the option to complete it online and return it to me, bring it on the day or complete it on the day. Several participants signed the form at the start of the session and then chose which boxes to tick at the end of the session based on what they had shared. I ran two focus groups, both at theological colleges, one where I trained for ordination and the other where I work. This enabled me to run the focus groups in conducive surroundings which I was familiar with and which would offer a classroom setting which participants would be comfortable with and which emphasised the educational nature of the process.

I expected six participants in each group although one failed to arrive on the day, a further two had previously withdrawn. Demographics of the focus groups are as follows:

- 6 female, 5 male;
- 10 white, 1 African Asian;
- 3 theological educators;
- 1 ordained church leader not falling into any other category;
- 4 with a youth work background;
- 3 church members.

The focus groups lasted for two hours and were set up as identical in structure. There were two main elements, the first half covered some of the same ground as the surveys and in doing this I was seeking to collect additional data in a different context, the second half involved testing out some of the findings from the survey. Both of these elements aided triangulation. I have also covered some similar material in conference and educational settings which has provided a further opportunity to triangulate the data from the surveys.

I recorded the focus groups digitally, used a transcription service initially and then listened to the recordings and amended the transcripts in the light of my interpretation and then sent them to focus group members to check for accuracy. The quotations that are included are from the edited transcripts. I have used participants' real names, pseudonyms and complete anonymity in relation to their choices on ethical clearance forms. While it is not always usual to offer the opportunity to use people's real names in research I chose to as it gave them the opportunity to own fully their contributions and for some it was a way of saying I am not trapped by the experiences of shame I am sharing. My approach to analyzing the data from the focus group mirrored the one I used for the questionnaires. There were nearly 26000 words in the transcripts which were of similar length.

Data analysis

When I had done the initial analysis and coded the responses thematically I undertook a further analysis and identified three categories which could be used to group the themes. These are: what churches do, what the individual does, and what others do in relation to the particular dimension of shame. This seemed helpful in trying to identify the source of the shame, in providing a framework in which ministerial praxis may be discussed and for reflection on practice and tradition. Thus the analysis of findings presented here is structured in relation to each element of the typology, and within this the three categories and then specific themes which I have tried to make as discrete as possible. I am aware that my own experience of and perspective on shame has influenced the process and that this analysis will reflect that, although I have sought to be aware of my own bias and influences in selection of material to include..

Personal shame: (non)complying, (non)conforming, (in)sufficient¹⁰²

When do people experience personal shame?

The terms compliance, conformity and sufficiency summarize many of the issues that result in people experiencing shame in relation to the church. The research suggested that there are different levels of proneness to shame with one participant observing that *"I think that sometimes there are things in your own experience that perhaps make you prone to feelings*

¹⁰² Explanations of each dimension of shame are to be found in chapter 1.

of shame and you can perhaps ... be very vulnerable to it".¹⁰³ Others suggested that some do not recognize or perhaps consciously choose not to name what is being experienced as shame. Shame is contextual and what causes one person shame would not necessarily be the same for another but what is represented here are the breadth of issues where participants have felt shame in the church.

Experiencing personal shame in relation to the church

Commitment to and participation in church

A recurring response was around commitment to and attendance at church which involves conformity or compliance with a set of (usually) unwritten expectations. Commitment includes regular Sunday attendance, time, resources, finance, not meeting expectations (of self or others), lack of volunteering and feelings of inadequacy such as "*generally failing to live up to the call of 'being a Christian'*" or that it is "*not OK just to 'go' to church*". Shame was felt by people in relation to their children being perceived as disruptive and when fearing their ignorance may be shown up in study groups or prayer meetings, both of these sometimes led to withdrawal from church, a typical response to shame. Also elderly people felt shame when not able to offer as much as they could in the past and perceiving that young people and families were more valuable to the church.

Susan ended up leaving her church because of their reaction to her saying she needed to pull back her responsibilities on starting University as a mature student. She comments "*I felt quite angry I wasn't going to be supported...I thought this person knew my situation. I'd got two teenagers, I was a single parent. I was leaving my job and I was going into Uni. It was a big enough step for me*". Jackie commented that at least one of her friends has given up church because they felt bad that they couldn't go that often and with busy weekends if you feel bad or are made to feel bad when you go then why bother?

Bad leadership practices¹⁰⁴

There were a range of strategies used by leaders which caused others in the church to experience shame. For example, taking over or usurping authority in a public context, being

¹⁰³ All quotations from the transcripts have been italicized to make them clear and names are only used when explicit permission has been given for this although with the questionnaires names were not asked for.

¹⁰⁴ I considered a range of words instead of 'bad' including flawed, unhealthy, harmful, dangerous and realise that a value judgement is implied in the choice of words but believe that the responses to the research justify the choice and I am focusing on the practices not the person.

dismissive, trying to make people look inferior, being accusatory, making false assumptions. One specific example was a new Vicar dismissing and devaluing three year's work and then contriving to get the person to leave, this led to the person being unable to connect to church for ten years. Another was an allegation that they had upset someone but with no details about who and over what so there was no opportunity to make amends.

Other practices mentioned included oppressive preaching, expecting compliance to a culture: *"a sense that there is only one way of doing things around here"*, similarly delineating standards to comply with which are cultural rather than biblical. One participant suggested *"During times of differing views, some may be made to feel their views or responses to a situation are unworthy of the calling of the institution, even their own calling"*. Forbidding communication with particular individuals or groups of people, suppressing criticism and an unwillingness to listen which can cause shame depending on the issues involved, may also be perceived as bad leadership.

Christian practices

How faith is practiced can be a source of shame. This included feeling shamed because of not having enough faith for healing (some attitudes to infertility expressed this) or were not persistent enough in prayer when depressed, were not reading the Bible regularly, did not speak in tongues when prayed for to be filled with the Holy Spirit or feeling unable to pray aloud. Also raised was the exclusion from the Eucharist of certain categories of people.

Discipline

Sometimes church discipline strategies lead to individuals being shamed although this is not necessarily the purpose of them. Thus one person talked about how they had to share with the Vicar about a youth worker with extreme alcohol issues. They reported that *"I still feel a failure and a sense of shame for betraying the trust he [the youth worker] had in me but I had to as a youthworker"*. Interestingly, another participant notes the importance of someone feeling shame as part of a disciplinary process (over stealing money from homeless people) to lead to any meaningful change:

What he needed to experience was not simply guilt, but 'shame' - he needed to experience a sense that he'd fallen short of the standards we had reasonably expected of him; and of the trust that vulnerable homeless people had placed in him ... Shame is an essential precursor to remorse and, therefore, genuine repentance.

This would be a restorative justice type approach to church discipline.

Using sarcasm or humour as a way of disciplining is an area where one might inadvertently shame people: *“when working with young people who I believe aren't acting their age I might say something like 'your acting like your five years old'. If I'm honest I wouldn't associate that with shame but being made to think about it, now I would”*. This is an example of awareness raising which may take place when shame and shaming is discussed or included in curricula for training. Sometimes there are experiences which feel like discipline although would not be labelled as such. One which emerged from several participants is the way that divorce leads to exclusion and loss of relationships.

Experiencing personal shame in relation to self

Failure to live up to spiritual expectations

In particular church cultures, expectations are established regarding one's participation in Christian practices. Those mentioned that caused personal shame included quiet times, personal evangelism, Bible reading, spiritual gifts (particularly tongues), being expected to participate exuberantly in worship, clergy having a *“better phone line to God”*. I am describing this as the shame of being personally insufficient. This can have a significant impact on people with someone commenting that the shame experienced *“actually made me completely review my whole evangelical background and heritage while at theological college and it was a long time ago, but I remember it as being a very difficult and very, very unresolved experience I think”*.

Moral and ethical areas

Some felt that there were a hierarchy of sins with more shame for people doing things at the top of this list which includes sex, relationships and money. Andrew told of a friend who got pregnant and ended up leaving the church because of judgements from the congregation. Other concerns were drinking alcohol to excess, drugs, swearing, smoking, pornography, lust, abortion, poverty and debt, hypocrisy. A few participants expressed a particular concern about pornography with this comment being representative *“it is both rampant and hidden but it is destroying especially young men by the shame it induces”*. Personal examples of feeling shame included responses to a breakdown of marriage and feeling written off. Parallels in the media were mentioned with celebrities shamed frequently but less of a regular focus sometimes on institutions such as governments and banks. Thus

shame often has a personal rather than an institutional focus although some scapegoating may take place in institutions. A concern was also expressed that if you do fail in a particular area there is not always the support to pick yourself up and continue on the journey of transformation.

Behavioural

While there is clearly an overlap between moral and ethical areas and behavioural issues, in this section I am mainly focusing on more culturally determined areas that become the focus of shame for some. As one participant writes *"I think there is an unspoken assumption that people should behave a certain way in church, and when that doesn't happen, there can be gestures and sometimes words"*. Thus people experienced reproach (not always verbal) over picking one's nose, farting, children misbehaving, being overweight, being miserable too long after bereavement, lifestyle choices different from others (not ethically), being on benefits, tattoos and piercings, unconventional looks or dress, learning disabilities (for parent/carer too), having doubts, suffering domestic violence, being raped, family member involved in crime or imprisoned. Watching the wrong films or listening to the wrong music were issues for some. This can be a particular problem for young people leading to a dualistic approach to life as one participant reports:

When I was growing up in church I felt unable to be honest about how I lived my life. This led to a dualistic lifestyle, where at home and church I was completely different to at school and with friends. I have felt that church had made me feel like I needed to appear sorted, like I had no issues and that I couldn't be open and vulnerable with people, because if I was, I was rejected or made to feel dirty, bad or shameful!

Another participant argued that there was pressure on women to behave in certain ways otherwise they may feel shame:

For women, I think we have to be 'together' or 'sorted', and any sign of weakness or not coping can bring a sense of shame. Women have to be happy to be single, or happily married, wonderful mothers, great friends, and behind the scenes. This is a huge generalisation of church, but I would suggest it is the stereotypical attitude towards a woman.

This was affirmed by most of the women in the focus groups.

There were several examples of people who felt they couldn't go back to church because of something they or others had done or the fear of people's reactions to them. A youth worker responded that they believe

many of the issues youth workers face are caused by people being ashamed of who they are or what they have done and their perceived judgement of this. They often come to the church because they believe they will not be judged, yet they are and harshly, perhaps not by the leaders but by members of the congregation.

One of the concerns in this area is shame preventing people from feeling safe and able to talk about issues that are particularly problematic for them and thus keeping secrets.

Experiencing personal shame in relation to others

Diminution or exclusion

For some participants church involved diminution or exclusion which caused shame. Two of the strongest statements are these:

- *If you have done anything wrong in your life we will judge you when you come in here. We are goody two shoes and don't tolerate sinners. We will try and change you, then we take your money.*
- *You're not worthy of God's love. You're a dirty, rotten, sinner and if it wasn't for Jesus, God would wipe you out.*

Other related comments included the church seeing herself as exclusive and you are only ok if you are in; church being a “*judging presence*” involving personal shunning for some; making those who are different from the norm feel unwelcome; prevalence of cliques and snobbery in some contexts; loneliness as a consequence of oppressive and silent shame; attitudes from the church making people feeling “*less than*”. It saddened me to read some of the responses including from one person who received the message that they are not good enough for church; a not feeling good enough to volunteer reaction; and from another that pastoral work is less important than “*proper*” church work involving building bigger churches. One person was actually told that the church leaders don’t like them. Others were made to feel inadequate for who they were: “*I just felt accused of not being what they wanted me to be (an extrovert)*” or the difference between leaders and the congregation: “*The preacher, the worship leader, the people on the stage, are quite literally, higher than the rest of us, and I think this sinks into peoples' subconscious*”. There are a variety of groups of people who can feel diminution: “*I was in a church context where people were encouraged to attend communion as family groups and the importance of family was emphasised. I know for me and other single people in the church this felt quite alienating and uncomfortable*”.

Difference

Some people experience shame because of reactions (real or imagined) to difference, they don't conform to the norm of the church or perhaps their mental image of what a Christian is like, as one person commented, *"I don't fit in"*. There was a long list of those who don't fit in: divorced, single parents, people with noisy children, single past your 20s, introverted, sick, unemployed, being too emotional or not emotional enough, having mental health problems, having a partner who doesn't attend church. There is also an element of believing oneself to be insufficient in this category also. Other dimensions of feeling different identified included class, dress, literacy level, where they live, stereotyping, past experiences. Amita observed that some people feel shame because they experience being judged but have no idea what it is that they are doing wrong, as no one tells them.

Anna shared something of her story about being a middle class southerner in a northern working class urban community and describes how there was shame around being middle class and recounts that *"I was made very aware that I didn't fit in and I wasn't liked then."*

Andy shared how in the affluent northern town where he lives people can be unwilling to say which estate they come from as others will look at them as if they should feel shame because of that. At the other end of the spectrum Simon recalled how a parishioner felt a sense of shame because her testimony was not *"big" enough, expressing the sentiment "I love Alpha news but every time I read it, I really wish I was this dreadful scarlet woman"*.

However, another participant believes that *"we can generate shame where there isn't any, we can make assumptions"*. Thus sometimes we experience self-inflicted shame. What was particularly sad was that for at least one person it was easier to be a Christian amongst those of no faith than those of faith because of the *"ridiculous number of subcultures and unacceptabilities"*.

Theology

As one might expect, sexuality and gender issues were two of the most frequently mentioned theological issues which cause shame and this was from across the spectrum of views. The issue of the no vote on women Bishops at General Synod in November 2012 was a particular incident mentioned. With regards to such issues, sometimes complying to the theological views of the local congregation caused shame or caused one to behave in a way that felt uncomfortable: *"I hold what would be deemed quite liberal views of homosexuality*

and homosexual practice, contrary to what the leadership and majority of my church believe and teach. I have felt unable to voice my divergent views for fear of being overlooked for playing an active ministry role”.

The inappropriate use of spiritual gifts emerged as an issue of personal shame in both focus groups. There were stories about prayer for healing with both the person not being healed blamed for their lack of faith as well as those doing the praying. Andy was told “*God has given you your healing, it’s up to you whether you have the level of faith or not to take it*” and in this instance it would have been a genuine miracle had the healing occurred because of the particular medical issue concerned. Such inappropriate utterances left him feeling a very strong lack of worth.

Unwitting

One of my intentions in this research is to facilitate conscientization (Freire 1996) over shame in the church and some of the responses suggest that shaming is sometimes done unwittingly. An example given of this was jokes that are made, particularly about things which people may have experienced which are not known to others or assumptions which are made about individual’s circumstances, for example. This story is illustrative of that tendency:

Since I joined the CofE, I've worshipped at a church in a much wealthier part of town. Not long after I joined one of the parishioners mentioned they'd had a motor bike stolen. I said I'd keep a watch out for it - to which came the reply "well if it turns up anywhere it will be at your end of town" - that was embarrassing for me, they'd drawn the social difference.

Another example was doing something in a new church which was acceptable in a previous church but being told off for it. Once people are aware of how their actions may be interpreted they sometimes change their behaviour.

The area of liturgy and ritual is an area where churches unwittingly cause those who attend to feel shame. One of those who completed the church members’ survey wrote this:

It took me some years to start attending church because of what I perceived to be the complexity of liturgy and ritual. I can still feel “wrong footed” in this area, especially in an unfamiliar church. Again, it is more in the context of the church as an institution - when you become part of the family of a church then it is OK to make mistakes and show emotion.

I think that last comment is sadly only true in some churches based on some of the survey responses.

Appropriate conviction

For a small number of participants experiencing shame was an appropriate response to a sense of conviction by the Holy Spirit, as a response to God's holiness, from reading the Bible or preaching or at penitential times in the church year such as Maundy Thursday or Good Friday. One person observed that faithfulness to biblical truth may be mistaken for shame. Someone identified their moment of conversion as a time when shame was appropriately felt and saw this as an ongoing experience where they had fallen short of God's will and had needed to repent.

How do people respond to personal shame?

Flight or fight?

Fight and flight are two common responses to difficult situations and there were hints of both of these in the responses to personal shame. Although there were a wide range of issues people found it difficult to comply or conform to, some chose not to flaunt their non-compliance. Phrases used which reflect this include *"quiet rebel...without causing too many ripples"* and *"I refuse to make my non-compliance an act of open rebellion or controversy"*. However, the internal reaction to this behaviour was difficult for some such as feeling *"less valued and slightly second class"*, *"often there's a screaming child inside giving a different commentary"* and *"[complying] makes you feel like a naughty child ... you also feel closed in a box and hope that the box can have sides that are open so that you can burst outwards"*. A youth worker talks about how *"This frustration is building within me and I see it as a sign of bullying. When you are shamed for being honest about things (which is often how it occurs) then it suggest there is an inauthentic and unhealthy culture that is not being challenged"*. A measured response was offered by another participant who said that *"Nowadays I conform to my conscience, to reasonable demands on me from the church, and to the need not to upset people, but not a step further"*. One of the dilemmas for those who experience shame is that it is possible to get trapped into a negative pattern. In some situations the only possible response seems to be to pray and trust God and some reported the efficacy of that, feeling vindicated by God in the longer term.

Others are more confident in their non-compliance or conformity suggesting that *"it makes me feel mischievous, more honest and a better Christian"* or it led to *"mirth and rejoicing"* and a particular individual response notes that they deliberately dress how they

used to before they were ordained so that they can be who they are not who the congregation thinks they should be as a Vicar. The final response made by some is to leave the church because they are not willing to live with the shame that they feel is put upon them or because they are no longer able to live up to expectations, which can be their own as well as others.

Feeling judged

Feeling like they did not conform led to one participant thinking that they are “*being judged, excluded and have shame ascribed to me by others. It makes me suspicious of people’s reactions to me*”. For some there is a historical dimension to this, thus “*Many years ago when I was a conservative evangelical, I went along with attitudes which caused me to cringe with shame when I look back on them – my guilty secret!*” One participant offered an interesting contrast between shame before humanity and shame before God with the importance for them of not feeling shamed before God for their actions even if others misunderstood.

Relational/associational shame: vicarious

When do people experience vicarious shame?

A particular issue here appears to be how we are seen by others if it is known we are part of an institution that does or says things which give a negative perception of church to those outside of it. More broadly some feel shame because it betrays the mission of the church or the name of God.

Experiencing vicarious shame in relation to the church

Bad behaviour of leaders

There were a variety of behaviours by leaders that caused shame with perhaps the greatest concern over sexual abuse (particularly of children) by church leaders and the subsequent cover up that appeared to happen in many contexts. Related to this is extra marital affairs with an issue for some of the woman being scapegoated and the male leader being restored to ministry at a later date, an interesting take on the Eve stereotype. Generally issues of corruption, lying and deceit led to vicarious shame when exposed. A very small number of participants felt shame over gay leaders as they perceived this was not biblical. A context specific example was the “*opulence of the priest and his obvious enjoyment of the earthly*

goods". Poor preparation for ministerial tasks was mentioned with a specific example of a badly prepared civic type service with the potential of bringing disrepute on the denomination. Blaming or scapegoating people was raised by some participants, a particular issue was accusing people of a lack of faith over good things not happening or bad things happening. Simon shared about a counsellor friend who felt vicarious shame because of all the burn out that happens in the church which should be an institution that does things differently. Unethical investment by the Church of England may perhaps be included under this heading.

Public statements or actions on behalf of the church

When Christians make statements which either are, or get interpreted as being, on behalf of the church (local or national) some feel shame particularly when there appears to be an apparent lack of grace inherent in the statements or a disconnectedness with contemporary culture. Some may argue the no vote for women Bishops in November 2012 could come under this heading as it appeared to be a public statement on how the Church of England perceived women's ministry. Another example from the Church of England was described thus *"the mealy-mouthed disingenuousness of Lambeth Palace in dealing with genuine concerns over Child Protection failings in Chichester. I was so upset I wrote to the Church Times in frustration"*. An interesting observation was that the *"loudest voices speaking in the name of Christianity often come from the most opinionated and damaging sources"*. One participant talked about those who behave *"as though you and your part of the church have all the right answers, so no listening is required. This is particularly evident in some recent issues eg homosexuality and the role of women"*. Issues around exclusion from church and from participating in the Eucharist were also raised.

Negative or unloving attitudes

Negative attitudes towards a range of people which may vary according to context and tradition is an area where vicarious shame can be often felt. This can include those who are different theologically, by learning style, sexuality, marital status, disability or medical condition, ethnicity, attitude to abortion, dating rules, ignoring or minimizing injustice, historical animosity or divisions between particular groups or denominations; *"morally arrogant"* was a phrase identified by one participant. Another example was *"groups that tell gay people that they are going to hell and seem to feel joy at hurting other people"*. An

unusual response was *“explaining some of the practices of church management to my non-Christian family has made me feel ashamed at times, because I felt embarrassed about my career and felt protective of a career that they disapproved of”*. Another significant response is this:

As a women clergy person we are constantly talked about as a “problem” or “issue” that has “divided, destroyed and broken the church”. At times it has felt like we were being publically named and shamed for daring to be female and a priest. I found this difficult as it resonated with negative experiences of shame in my own life (often a gender issue) so have probably colluded with this by feeling bad about myself and not valuing properly the ministry God has given me to do at times.

The focus on exclusivity rather than inclusivity and the corresponding apparent lack of humility and tolerance in a range of areas is an issue which causes vicarious shame but women bishops and attitudes towards those who identify as LGBTQI come across most powerfully. Perhaps related to this is an inward focus when so much of the world needs the church to be looking outwards. Historical issues such as involvement in the slave trade and attitudes to immigrants, particularly from the Caribbean in the 1950s and early 60s triggered vicarious shame in some. Some other specific behaviours mentioned included abuse of power, putting people down, criticising, lying, seeing people treated as *“little people”* by hierarchy, bullying, transference, misuse of confidential knowledge, martyr spirit, controlling through theological knowledge, imposing cultural values on people, public humiliation.

Exploring vicarious shame in relation to others

Cultural images

We discussed the popular image of clergy, particularly on television which may evoke vicarious shame when watching clergy presented as *“ineffectual, elderly, naff”* and in *“amusing and embarrassing ways”* and as one person shared *“I feel shamed by the perception of ineffectual half-baked clergy really if I’m honest, as I am one”* [not a fair reflection of this person but they demonstrated a residue of shame from various experiences]. Others resonated with this.

How do people respond to vicarious shame?

The main theme that emerged in response to exploring vicarious shame was the consequence of what was said or done on the perception of the church and God to those outside of the church generally, and friends and neighbours in particular. Thus one person

responded *"I feel it because I am identified as 'the church' by people I know who are not Christians, and it makes it harder for me to have sensible conversations with them as they think I share church attitudes"*. *"Tainted by association"* was another way of putting it. Comments ranged from the church being perceived as *"out of touch"* or irrelevant, acting in a way that is *"so much the opposite of what Jesus would want us to do"*, lacking credibility, being complicit in stereotyping, hurting people, what happens at a local level being tainted by national pronouncements, being seen as judgemental. Some participants wanted to take ownership of what happened acknowledging that *"I feel part of the church and therefore its failings are mine"*.

Communal shame: (de)stigmatizing, (dis)uniting, (dis)empowering

When do people experience communal shame?

There are some similarities with issues in the personal dimension of shame but here I have sought to focus on what is predominantly communal in experience or attitude. In this section issues are often around stigma, disunity and disempowerment.

Experiencing communal shame in relation to the church

Theological tradition

A suggestion was made that the theological tradition of the church in part determined what caused communal shame. Thus what is taboo in one context maybe almost celebrated in another. The tradition also determined what may be more communally shaming thus Simon shared how in his teenage church there was *"a communal sense of unspoken shame about our failure to evangelize"* which was disempowering for people. He went on to say that his experience of evangelical churches suggested that such shame was silent but in liberal catholic churches the shame manifested as anger.

Processes

Disunity and stigmatizing can sometimes arise out of change. As one person noted *"The church really needs to begin to understand how to help people deal with change there is so much learning in secular organisations about how to set about, communicate and lead change, most of which seems to have bypassed the church and then we wonder why people feel insecure, stressed, depressed and bereaved"*. Another example comes from a church leader *"we assume we all agree that some things are 'right' and others 'wrong', some people*

don't want to reorder the building or be involved in fundraising and banging on about it ... they can feel shame at not 'catching the vision' It is difficult to voice this difference of opinion - especially if you're on the leadership team as you're seen as not flying the flag".

It was interesting to note that while seeing salvation as a process is a widely held approach, in some settings there was an expectation of personal change in what others defined as *"an appropriate timeframe"*. This is one example: *"I have been part of a church where there is a lot of grace when someone first becomes a Christian and they can be forgiven for even the most horrid acts, and then when those same people have been in church a while and slip up, there is so much less grace to embrace them"*. A different take on this was offered: *"expectations are set high, we need to wear masks just to survive sometimes. We are supposed to be open and transparent but in truth this is so that we reveal ourselves whilst the powerful gain control through knowledge of our openness"*.

Church practices

When churches promote particular ways of being "normal" or acceptable then people can feel stigmatized if they don't fit in and this ranges from minor trivial details to what may be seen as significant theological issues. Related to this is the danger of a hierarchical style of leadership where members get told what to do and believe with open exploration being discouraged. Disproportionate or unjust reactions to disagreement or dissent was also raised. A slightly distressing response was from someone who said that when they were training for the ministry they were encouraged to evoke a

response to the Gospel by hooking into people's short-comings ie make them feel guilty, highlight their sin, encourage them to consider ways they had let God down. That was the culture. I remember clearly the moment I realised what this was doing to people and rebelled and made a conscious decision to tell people how good, gracious God is, because, on the whole, people already know how imperfect they are - they don't need to come to Church to hear that.

Andrew talked about the disuniting shame he was experiencing over a difference relating to using bread or wafers for Holy Communion. He talks about feeling very ashamed that *"as a congregation who is trying to attract young people into the church we are disagreeing about something so pathetic and as a matter of fact we keep forgetting the whole meaning of communion"*. The impact of change can be quite severe and evoke strong emotions.

Andy shared how one of the first conversations in his church was not about what God may have been saying through the service but who is not there (and not in a pastoral way).

Christine contrasted the way “*Nice to see you*” is communicated to those who are not yet Christians or fairly new when they are welcomed with open arms, to the same phrase used ironically to a member of the church who hasn’t been around for a while. The underlying attitudes are very different.

Bad leadership practices

Authoritarian and controlling leaders appear to create an atmosphere where shame is experienced which may include stigmatizing those with divergent views which can lead to people being removed from leadership or choosing to leave. One of the themes which emerged was a fear of expressing views because of the potential consequences of this if leaders became aware that someone was not toeing the party line. One observation was that “*Leaders who are insecure about their position, and/or their knowledge and ability to be a leader, make others feel they are inferior to him/her, their calling questionable and commitment to the cause or institution not 100%. This is also seen as bullying people into submission*”. Generally the lack of respect for those with different views and the potential or actual stigmatizing of those who are different was an issue. One participant summarized it like this “*Failure to follow principles of love (ie putting the interests of others above oneself, seeking unity above personal rights or selfish interests)*”. Judgemental or accusatory sermons were identified as having the potential to engender shame in some hearers. A more subtle example is this:

Having been involved in church leadership previously I have been aware of and felt on the receiving end of being shamed. In my experience this involved being asked my thoughts and then being told that they were wrong. I got the impression that they were listening because they asked what I thought but found that my confidence lessened and I withdrew and felt like I was wrong.

Church members who criticize leaders can end up causing them to experience shame. Manipulation to achieve a particular outcome was mentioned with shame being felt through colluding with such an approach. A lack of forgiveness was raised as an issue with the comment that “*it makes people feel that we are pompous hypocrites*”.

Experiencing communal shame in relation to self

Issues people face

A fascinating insight into this came from one participant who suggested that unmet needs in congregation members can tend to manifest in disagreement or disappointment. Another

suggested that disunity can come out of situations where people feel they have something to offer but feel excluded from particular roles and functions. Not being able to read was identified by one person as an issue in some churches. For one participant *“the general layout/format of church can alienate a lot of people making them feel they don't fit in/aren't good enough to go to church”*, the unfamiliarity and lack of guidance to navigate services can also add to this. A related response was that

church leaders/people at the front sometimes inadvertently imply that they are perfect and don't struggle. This can make congregation members who are struggling feel inadequate, ashamed and like they don't belong to this perfect group of people so they hide/leave church or simply put on a brave face but feel ashamed inside.

A more personal story is this:

As an adult I've never felt I fully fit in in church. I feel uncomfortable when telling other Christians my political and social views even now. I think sometimes I am surprised when I do and it is accepted. I think the church is maybe just not good enough at discussing weakness, at discussing the things we are uncomfortable with and providing space to discuss certain issues rather than just be given a position on them. I have friends in church but not really close ones. I have the feeling that churches don't quite know what to do with me. There is no forum to discuss my views and ask my questions.

Such a context is very disempowering.

Experiencing communal shame in relation to others

Dissonance

Communal shame sometimes appears to emerge out of dissonance. Thus one person reported an experience of a theological college that accepted women for training while not believing in women in leadership. Another commented on the mismatch between the denominational standards for belief and local congregational practices and being able to conform to the former but not the latter. The way that Christians segregate according to labels is another area where there is the potential for the dissonance this brings to evoke shame. This is an example at the micro level: *“I have seen churches split or divide amongst the congregation over things as superficial as service times, which technology to use, or whether the priest should wear vestments”*. Others continually feel dissonance: *“I have therefore not ever even now, felt 100% able to be myself in church as I feel that people expect that when they pray life will be fixed or you should be able to cope more easily and therefore in order not to fail those people or look weak I will often pretend to be okay and this obviously is unhelpful”*.

Attitudes

One participant notes that *“if the church lays accusations verbal or non-verbal on people that they ‘don’t conform to OUR norm’, or that they aren’t keeping the rules/obeying the traditions or they’re too sinful or not good enough, then this creates an atmosphere of shame”*. This is explained in a different way by another participant *“We are quick to tell people what they are not allowed to do but sometimes fail to follow this up with support for every individual within a worshipping community. Isolation and internalisation can easily fuel deep feelings of shame and inadequacy”*. A church member describes the situation like this *“There is a lot of judgement in the church. People that make assumptions about others behaviour and say hurtful things”*. This was a recurring theme *“Feeling judged by others within the church can make one feel ashamed but not really know why? Not feeling accepted by an ‘inner circle’ can lead to feelings of insecurity and the need for self preservation/protection”*. Stigmatizing was a practice that was regularly observed or experienced.

Cultural values

Individuals may be stigmatized because of specific cultural values. Thus Andy talked about growing up in Northern Ireland where the Bible was held in extremely high esteem and as a blind person he would sometimes drop his Bible accidentally and the inappropriateness of this would be clearly communicated. What was very sad, but which resonated with my experience, was a comment that *“I find that people assume that when difference is on the table the church is going to be unaccepting towards difference. I think I found that really exhausting ... and it would be lovely to see the church not to be the first to reject people because they’re different. That would be a nice experience”*. Another way cultural values are manifested is in attitudes as to who should be involved in ministry thus Christine shared how it was assumed that she was too old to work with children but has independently pursued an opportunity to do this.

How do people respond to communal shame?

Acting to promote unity

Some people made a conscious decision to sacrifice their own position for the sake of unity, although this is not without its problems:

I have often acted to promote unity over and above my personal feelings. When I feel the issue is not a core one, I feel good to be able to put my personal views aside for the sake of the whole, or for the sake of finding unity. But when dealing with core issues of biblical truth, the gospel, sin, etc. I feel very uncomfortable. Unity which compromises truth is a false unity. Love does not mean making everyone happy, but doing what is right, and ultimately in people's eternal best interests.

Another observation was that people lose heart when there is disharmony or disunity as it can feel as if their beliefs are a lie. An interesting response came from one person who finds it *"impossible to promote unity as there will always be someone who is excluded by the actions/direction the church takes so I try to work towards a system of acceptable difference"*. Yet on the other hand someone else suggests that *"I really try to promote unity because I see God working where we as His church operate together"*. A comment from an Asian context was that *"Mostly church leaders are very careful to preserve 'face' even of those they don't like in that to shame someone else risks disharmony"*.

Revisiting core principles

Focusing on love and functioning appropriately as the body of Christ was one response to stigmatising and a lack of unity. A thoughtful response about how church and culture relate was this:

Sometimes we need to reflect on our teaching and realise the extent to which it has been shaped by cultural norms, but sometimes we need to recognise that the gospel means we become counter-cultural. Yet in doing so, we will induce shame in those who want to hold to Christian faith and practice, and yet live by dominant social norms. So, we have to be careful that we do not induce shame simply because we have not properly thought through our own position, but at the same time be prepared to deal with shame if this is generated by an authentic proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

What this latter phrase means is open to interpretation and is perhaps one of the sources of disunity.

Structural shame: (un)colluding, (de)fragmenting

When do people experience structural shame?

Structural shame does not necessarily impinge on everyone in the church as it relates to things which happen at a denominational or broader level than the local church.

Experiencing structural shame in relation to the church

Church practices

For some the practices of their denomination have the potential to cause them shame.

There were several comments about selection, training and deployment in denominational churches and the lack of pastoral care for those who are hurt by the system. This is one example:

The system of appointing leaders to Churches is not a system that encourages conversation - so a refusal to accept a given appointment or to question it's appropriateness would be responded to by the suggestion that there was a problem with their relationship with God ... Over all the denomination has a very parental attitude to its leaders and members and seems to encourage and prefer it when they remain in Child mode. Seem to struggle to work Adult to Adult.¹⁰⁵

Liturgy in denominations which have prescribed services and prayers can cause shame and it can lead to colluding with a view of God or oneself that it is hard to hold with integrity with personal views. Other practices mentioned included Anglican clergy having to say the office twice a day, the poor care for those not selected for ordination, the way that Curates have little say in what happens to them.

Through doctrinal or ecclesiological differences

While there are genuinely held doctrinal or ecclesiological differences, the fragmentation in the wider church that can occur through these may be a cause of shame. At the extreme these have led to the evolution of new denominations. An unwillingness to accept that there are a range of acceptable perspectives on a particular topic can be problematic. One participant commented that *"In the case of internal disputes, the Anglican Church in particular places a very low value on unity"*.

Bad behaviour

Some of the ways church leaders talk about each other can bring shame which may include such things as leadership contests, one-upmanship, taking to the media to make points which should first be explored in private. Significant safeguarding failings and associated cover ups were also mentioned.

¹⁰⁵ This is a reference to Transactional Analysis theory, Hay (1995) provides an accessible introduction.

Power

In the focus groups we discussed the impact of hierarchical power and the shame that is engendered particularly when relationships fail and the way that the blame is often apportioned according to one's position in the hierarchy. One person commented that *"I do see shame being used as a means of getting, not deference, but someone to toe the line"*. Anna shared what she perceived to be an abuse of power which caused her shame by her church leadership who told her that she should go back to a mission situation where she had been spiritually abused and suffered a serious sexual assault as this was God's plan for her and in returning home she had failed and needed to go back. Ten years on they still believed their position was the right one and that she was not on plan A for her life. Someone else talked about how their church had been working with those with alcohol, drug and mental health issues but problems began to emerge when those they ministered to wanted to participate beyond the carefully prescribed boundary of a specific event. The consequence was that the archdeacon rang the vicar commenting that *"Well, of course, you realize wealthy people need the gospel too, don't you?"* A specific example was a youth worker *"being publicly shamed from the pulpit as 'one of those who said the Holy Spirit was not a He'"*. They commented how it has taken many years for their view of God *"not to be clouded by the misuse of power from the pulpit"*. A challenge was invoked in one group to *"step back and take a long hard look at what I am doing to people"* as so many do not do this and ask *"what is the impact of our practice as people of power on those around us?"* They also noted that this may be a failing particularly of charismatic evangelicals.

Experiencing structural shame in relation to others

Cultural issues

Denominational approaches to such issues as sexuality and gender cause structural shame, on both sides of the discussion. Some believe their denomination is too accommodating to culture and others not responsive enough although this may be expressed in theological language. An interesting observation was made that shame can depend *"on what expression of church you attend, there are different hierarchies of shame depending on what that particular expression of church prioritises in regards to teaching and culture"*. Another participant noted that *"Much of what the church does in this matter of shame is unintentional but reflects a culture within rather than a purposeful shaming or judging"*.

How do people respond to structural shame?

At the extreme, people respond to this by leaving the church, either the particular local church or sometimes the institutional church. Others switch denomination to find one which is more in keeping with their values. The levels of dissonance that institutional pronouncements and actions can engender can cause significant stress to people and choosing to either collude or not collude and thus confront church hierarchies is a difficult decision.

Theological shame: dissociating/associating

When do people experience theological shame?

People experience theological shame when their view of God or their core beliefs are challenged, opposed, ridiculed or misrepresented.

Experiencing theological shame in relation to the church

Appearing unloving

An example of such views is this *"We are always seen as what we are against, women bishops, gay marriage are the current ones...but there have always been loads. So the Christian church is not seen as being open armed, Jesus gives us two commandments to love God and love people. I am ashamed that we are not known for either of those"*. An unhelpful emphasis on a God who punishes is seen as potentially dissociative and an associative approach being teaching and liturgy which reflects Jesus as portrayed by the gospels. One succinct response was *"Anything the church does that excludes will lose me every time"*. Grace came through as a theme in some of the responses in this area.

Doctrinal differences

Approaches to baptism was one area raised here along with theologies of sickness and healing. Another area was around approaches to worship and spiritual gifts. One participant commented that *"In my diocese things are presented as gospel/salvation issues as a way of ensuring compliance eg I can't support women's ordination or gay relationships and be a Christian. Yes, I support both these things. But I tend to keep it to myself. Not feeling safe is the result."* Again there was significant comment about gender roles and sexuality which could be categorised under this heading. There were comments about women being treated as second class and not being forced into stereotypical roles as well as

the no vote to women Bishops in the Church of England in 2012.

One of the topics that evoked the strongest opinions in this area was people's experiences of healing and deliverance. It is quite easy when in a vulnerable position for people to experience shame that they are inferior, lack faith, have sinned in the past or done something else which the person ministering infers has resulted in the ministry not being successful. Those with physical and mental health issues that are not seen as medically curable sometimes find themselves accused of a lack of faith which leads in some to feeling shamed. This was seen as leading some people to leave the church or to find a church where they could be more anonymous. People had also experienced theological shame personally through a perceived lack of experience of the Holy Spirit or taking a different stance on the Bible.

Teaching on sexuality, women in ministry and divorce were areas of doctrinal difference. There was agreement that churches have a hierarchy of sins although theologically that can be hard to argue. As suggested above, people may feel dissociative shame partly in relation to their theological tradition as different things are particularly shameful. I had a fascinating brief conversation over which coffee shops it was appropriate to go to if you were a left wing liberal Christian. Simon suggested that in liberal catholic churches the top sins are to do with poverty and politics but within evangelicalism it is generally sex. Andy recalled how the biggest obstacle to him potentially getting a job appeared to be that his wife then smoked. Jackie who is in ministry told of how a couple of friends made a joke about her maybe being a prostitute as she was so secretive about what her job was and her fear had been that people would assume she had a negative attitude towards sexuality as she worked for the church. Paula told of her shame as a teenager growing up in the church every time sex was discussed at school where as a Christian it was assumed she was against sex before marriage.

A significant concern in this area is the way that the Bible has been used to justify abuse within the church and the way some women in particular have been encouraged to return to abusive husbands based on a doctrine of submission. Approaches to the Bible can result in people being shamed and Susan told of her mother who was told she couldn't be a good Christian if she didn't believe in the literal truth of the Adam and Eve story and how she has never gone back to church because of the attitude displayed towards her.

Failure

Although not obviously a theological issue there were examples of leaders in some contexts who had taken on a view of ministry that they failed to live up to and then not found the support they hoped for when they had crashed. Simon's experience was of people who have been *"burnt out by the busyness within church. They've given everything to the church. They've gone back to the people who have given them all these tasks and cajoled them into ministry. They've given them no time, no support in their time of need, let alone walked with them. So there is shame, I failed"*. Some then go and look for worship which is about encountering transcendence as an individual which is perhaps one of the reasons why Cathedrals have experienced an increase in attendance. Susan talked about how sometimes it felt as if church members had to be as good as Jesus and there was no acceptance of people who did not live up to this and a sense of we get punished for being human. Amita suggests that shame can be imposed just because you are a woman based on the creation narratives and the tendency to blame Eve and a continued tendency to blame women.

Characteristics of associative churches and Christian institutions

The characteristics of a church which people wanted to be associated with included the following: loving; build community; caring; connected; a concern for the world; believing that everyone is equal in God's eyes and acting as if this is true; committed to salvation, the poor and the environment; faithfulness to the gospel; articulates a hope for the future; believes that God created us for a purpose; engaged in mission; gospel of grace and love; presenting an accepting, loving God; contributing to society.

Characteristics of dissociative churches and Christian institutions

The characteristics of churches that people wanted to dissociate from included an unwillingness to embrace diversity; intolerance; bigotry; unkindness; inability to make decisions or non-consultative decision making; judgmentalism; stinginess; fractiousness; self-righteousness; prioritizing structures and institutionalism; focus on externals rather than loving relationships; hierarchies; leaders whose default is critical parent; distorting scripture.

Experiencing theological shame in relation to self

Compromising biblical views

Illustrative of the sort of comment in this area (which was very much in the minority in the

surveys) was this:

I cannot condone or conform to any practice or belief which contradicts Scripture. Obviously there are issues of interpretation and a lot of 'grey area' but in some cases, Scripture is blatantly disregarded in favour of personal freedom, tradition, human rights, the idea of revising Scripture for the modern day, or a half-truth of "God loves all of us just the way we are."

There were one or two instances of this where people now realised that their response may not have been the most helpful: *"I discouraged someone from working on a Sunday - I feel dreadful about that now as I now work Sundays instead of going to church!"*

How do people respond to theological shame?

For some people again the response is to leave the church. Others are concerned with building a church that reflects their view of who God is. The fight/flight paradigm can be relevant here for some people. Others are part of an institution and make choices depending on what their hopes and expectations are in relation to the institution.

Historical shame: buried

When do people experience buried shame

Buried shame is often about serious misconduct including sexual sin, abuse, bullying and possibly poor practice in a church leader leaving their job. Mental health issues were mentioned by some as an area not always talked about particularly if it impacts the leader's family. Some of the comments associated with this include *"there is always an unspoken wariness which raises its head now and then. People wonder about it, can feel it but often don't know what it is"*; buried shame *"may hinder the Holy Spirit's activity, cause disunity, damage the body of Christ and test love"*; *"The impact is negative as the congregation often 'learn what they live' in church ... as in a family when children 'learn what they live' – issues are not talked about but buried"*. A particular example was a leader's wife who had come out of a "shameful" background but was not allowed to share her real testimony because of protecting the leader. Generally bad decision making by leaders appears to be an issue:

The church where leadership made a bad decision, stuck with it, and forever refuse to go back and repent of that action, rather sticking to their prerogative as leaders with authority, than servants with loving responsibility. Often a church can never progress because of this buried shame. It lies dormant, undealt with, and even continues to simmer into the next generation.

There was little discussion of buried shame in the focus group but one person told how a

church avoided the worst of this after two leaders ran off with each other through taking notice of prophetic words which encouraged trusting in God. The church owned what had happened and tried to learn from their mistakes and in that owned the shame. It is much less likely that this incident will be hidden from future ministers who may not otherwise understand what is going on.

What has been interesting to note is the buried shame within individuals who have taken part in the focus group and how for many of them their current ministry is still a little influenced by their past. There was not a clear consensus on how this may now be processed. What was also noted was that some have buried shame that they are not yet necessarily ready to recognize but it is still having an influence. One example given of this was those who have been abused who don't yet feel free *"to put responsibility where it belongs for things that have been done to us or [in other situations] against us"*. Simon talked of an occasion of a person sharing a confession which involved fifty years of shame yet having shared it was still free of it a year later.

How do people respond to buried shame?

Some people, in seeing how the church responds to such situations, are reluctant to confess to anything as churches seem to find it so hard to deal with shame related issues. Thus one participant reported that

In my experience in previous churches there has been a culture where issues cannot be talked about openly or are hidden away or people are "problem people". For me this image shows my experience of finding church to be a place where I feel less able to be real because of fear of the consequences. Although I find this less so in my current church I am still aware of this feeling. I think giving permission to be real, encouraging respectful dialogue and conversation and encouraging people to share their lives with each other can in part counteract this.

One of the difficulties in not dealing properly with such issues is the way that *"unresolved resentments, hurts and shaming can lie and fester, or cause people to withdraw"*. Another participant noted that after incidents of infidelity in leadership or mistreatment of leaders there can be a climate of mistrust which exists in generations of church members. A similar point was made with a participant suggesting that *"The church or new individuals that do not know of the hidden shame often have to deal with the fallout from this shame without knowing why there is conflict and thus how to resolve it"*.

Summary

This chart summarizes the themes found in each of the six areas of the typology.

Typology Context	Personal	Relational/ Associational Vicarious	Communal	Structural	Theological	Historical
Church	Commitment to and participation; Bad leadership practices; Christian practices; Discipline	Bad behaviour of leaders; Public statements by church; Negative or unloving attitudes;	Theological tradition; Processes; Church practices; Bad leadership	Church practices; Doctrinal or ecclesiological differences; Bad behaviour; Power	Appearing unloving; Doctrinal differences Failure	Bury
Self	Expectation failure; Moral and ethical; Behavioural		Issues re fit or belonging or inadequacy.		Compromising views	Wait until time seems right to deal with it
Others	Diminution or exclusion; Difference; Theology; Unwitting Appropriate conviction	Cultural images	Dissonance; attitudes; cultural values	Cultural issues		
Response	Fight or flight; Feeling judged	Fear of taint by association	Act to promote unity; Revisit core principles	Leaving church; Switch denomination	Flight or fight	Mistrust; Conflict

Table 5.3 Overview of themes from research in relation to the typology of shame in the church

Conclusion

There was evidence of all the elements of the typology in the data and while I added to the words used to describe the dimensions of shame, the revised typology that I had developed before starting the empirical research seemed to adequately encompass the breadth of responses I got. The next stage will be to theologically reflect on the typology drawing on insights from a range of disciplines in order to give a theoretically and theologically rich presentation of it, offering any development or adaptation that seems merited.

CHAPTER 6

REVISITING A TYPOLOGY OF SHAME IN THE CHURCH

THEORIZING/SYNTHESIZING¹⁰⁶

For we still live under the shadow of the myth that remembers that once we were naked and were not ashamed (Schneider 1992:139).

Introduction and context

Shame is experienced from infancy onwards and each day brings the potential of experiencing shame because of the weaknesses one has which may expose one as abnormal (Nussbaum 2004:173). Thus every time I look in the mirror I feel shame as I am fat and regularly I hear messages that reinforce that shame in relation to the scarcity of NHS resources and the supposed simplicity of just eating less to address the issue. Evoking the quotation at the start of this chapter, I remember when I was “normal” sized and not ashamed. However, the reflection I see in the mirror of church also has the capacity to shame me.

My hope for this typology is to offer a model which facilitates conscientization of the destructive nature of shame which estranges, disgrace shame. I am purposefully choosing the term estranges with its resonances of the term “stranger” and my hope that it is possible, having articulated the typology, to identify elements of ministerial praxis which mean that those who are negatively experiencing shame find the sort of response that God expects of God’s people towards the stranger.¹⁰⁷ However, it is important to note that shame is not universally bad and what I am calling constraining or discretion shame is an essential element of what it means to be human. This includes a core of finitude; permission to be human; natural boundaries; development of identity and intimacy; sense of dignity; sense of awe, reverence and modesty; critically examined conscience (Bradshaw 2005:28). This was more inherent in some of the data rather than explicit which may relate to the way that I had designed the data gathering tools to focus more on estranging shame.

Shame is culturally determined, historically western approaches broadly see shame as a negative evaluation of self (Gubrium 2014:7), whereas more collectivist or interdependent cultures shame more often occurs through external expectation or pressure (Bechtel 1994:81). Because church theologically is this more collectivist and interdependent

¹⁰⁶ The nature of the task of theorizing and synthesizing, and the construction of this thesis with two literature reviews means that some of the material in this chapter has been presented previously in a different context.

¹⁰⁷ Cf Deuteronomy 10.17-19.

sort of organization that is perhaps a reason why shaming may be prevalent as a practice and experience. The growth of reality television, and within such programmes an often seen focus on shaming practices, may conceivably reflect the view that contemporary British culture is more of a shame than a guilt culture (Watts 2001:54).¹⁰⁸ Shame is generally seen as a troubling emotion which should be overcome with research suggesting a connection between shame and depression, aggression, addiction, obsession, psychiatric disorders and pathological narcissism (Pembroke 2002:142). The overwhelming nature of shame is captured in some of the definitions and this one is emblematic of those which express how devastating shame can be:

When you are shamed, the space around you is eviscerated. Now your every move draws negative attention. Hostility and disgust are flung at you. It is impossible from outside to even imagine the humiliation that shame brings. All the natural shelter and support around your presence is taken from you...Everything about you is telescoped into the single view of this one shameful thing. Everything else is forgotten. A kind of psychological murdering is done. The mystery of your life is reduced to one thing. You become a "thing of shame" (O'Donohue 1998:115).

While this is only one person's interpretation of how shame can be experienced, as I begin to draw my research to a close I want to keep to the forefront of my reflection what it is I am hoping to be able to mitigate against. I see this as part of the practical theological task leading towards a reformulation of ministerial identity and faithful ministry practice (Poling 2011:190).

In many ways it would be good if this thesis did not have to be written but shaming as a means of social control is a cultural practice (Bechtel 1994:79) which is also part of church practice. Thus a typology of shame can serve to conscientize Christian ministers and help them become aware of the shaming, sometimes inadvertent, that occurs. It may also help people identify and hopefully process what is often a troubling and disturbing experience that may be hard to name or define. In this chapter I will draw together the work that I have done thus far with the intention of presenting a more evidence based typology. This follows a precedent for this approach set in other areas of work and ministry I am involved in: work with children and young people (Schulman and Davies 2007; Cabinet Office 2013) and healthcare chaplaincy (O'Connor 2002; Mowat 2008; Jankowski et al 2011). This is the typology that I used in the research process which had been refined in the light of initial

¹⁰⁸ I am aware of the irony of discussing the views on shame culture by someone who is likely to have experienced this when allegations that he abused vulnerable people were made public: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-25331273> last accessed May 25th 2014.

reading and conversations with people who had experience in my research field.¹⁰⁹ I will discuss each element of the typology summarizing the main findings from the empirical research and offering emblematic quotations, pertinent theory and theology, and noting proposed changes to the model.

Domain	1 Personal	2 Relational/ Associational	3 Communal	4 Structural	5 Theological	6 Historical
Facets of shame	(Non)complying (Non)conforming	Vicarious	(De)stigmatizing (Dis)uniting	(Un)colluding (De)fragmenting	Associative Dissociative	Buried

Table 6.1 Typology used in empirical research process

Personal shame

Personal relates to shame experienced by an individual as a consequence of their relationship with a church. The data analysis from the surveys and the focus groups identified a range of sources of personal shame which included issues around commitment to and participation in church; bad leadership practices; the way Christian practices were presented or understood; church discipline; failure to live up to spiritual expectations; various moral and ethical areas; behaviour; diminution and exclusion; difference; theology; unwitting practice; and appropriate conviction. People's responses to personal shame included feeling judged, fight or flight. Another observation was around the *"dismantling of identity"* that can take place when experiencing shame which draws on some interpretations of the creation narratives (Binau 2006:101).

Personal shame is in some ways the easiest to articulate as when we read about experiences of such shaming our own experiences may come quickly to mind. That was particularly the experience in the first focus group where story followed story and what emerged for several participants was a deep sense of personal hurt typified in the comment *"Nobody's going to help pick you back up, because they're busy shaming you"*. A slightly different perspective, but similarly oppressive practice, was offered by a survey respondent *"It is in our fallen nature to make mistakes and churches can sometimes expect perfection forgetting we are all works in progress"*. There are a range of practices used to subtly shame people which include frowning, a tut-tut, snide comments, turning away, shaking of the head, laughing, gossiping (Braithwaite 1989:57-8) and a number of participants had experienced this, particularly those with children.

¹⁰⁹ This is discussed in Chapter 1.

In the typology used in the research, compliance and conformity were identified as core issues in relation to personal shame and inherent in these words is that shame is cultural. One complies and conforms to norms and mores and what these are varies across Christian tradition and many other cultural factors. Thus personal shame often has a communal origin. When I was young norms and mores involved dress, alcohol, drugs, sex, what one watched, read, listened to and I could feel shame if I transgressed my understanding of what a good Christian girl should do. This may be why some people leave the church: they are expected to comply with and conform to ways of being and doing which they do not experience as authentic. Andrew's comment in the focus group makes a similar point regarding why young people don't attend church *"I think that there is still a stigma that you have to be perfect to be accepted and I think especially young people who don't attend or won't attend because they feel like they're going to be judged the moment they walk in"*. Sadly, what sometimes happens is that shame is self-inflicted and we can assume that others are making judgements when they are not. Each of us has a predisposition to shame which we bring to our membership of church and it may be helpful to be aware of the situations which trigger us. There is thus a challenge as to how people are helped to feel sufficient when what they perhaps experience is feeling insufficient for that particular institution. Conversely, sometimes shaming happens wittingly or unwittingly, as one survey respondent comments:

All of us at some time in our lives use this technique. I catch myself doing this as a parent, wife, with parishioners and as a youth worker. Usually shaming reflects my own disappointment and inability to deal with the situation constructively, rather than any reflection on the other person. As someone who was on the receiving end of much shaming in my life, I disappoint myself that it is so easy to repeat the patterns of the past however unhelpful they were.

Just by being part of an institution of whatever type, an experience of shame is a possibility. However, what is it about the church which is particularly related to shame is an interesting topic for speculation. Perhaps the starkest response to personal shame being experienced and amplified through poor pastoral practice is this comment which comes in the midst of recounting an experience of rape *"What they lacked was the compassion, the expertise, the ability to truly listen and to treat me as a person rather than a worthless object...What I didn't know when I was raped was that there was worse to come"*. The term nonentity comes close to reflecting how the shame made this person feel and is one which seems to be relevant for the typology.

There are a range of theoretical insights which illuminate personal shame. A succinct and accessible summary sees shame as being “about threats and attacks and how bad or inadequate we feel we are; it’s about judging and being judged” (Gilbert 2009:211). Having a scholarly yet simple explanation to give to others can be helpful in explaining a complex and contested topic and the language of threats, attacks and judging makes it clear that it is not an appropriate behaviour which may help begin to counter the shaming. For many, experience of church involves some dimension of purity guidelines which may lead to discomfort, contradiction or hypocrisy (Douglas 1966:164-5). Associated with purity are concepts of pollution and disgust (Miller 1997:34) and while these words were not used in relation to participants, some seem to feel they were inferred by the behaviour or words of others. A related concern is how this then impacts the person at the core, their identity. It evokes all the debilitating and disabling words associated with shame used in the phenomenological definition such as flawed and worthless. Church should be a place where people do not have to hide parts of themselves as this can mean they hide such parts from God too with a reduction in capacity for healing (deSilva 2000:90). The concept of shame as estranging is reinforced by such observations. The assertion that Jesus restored God’s original approach to purity seeing it as an internal heart issue not an external conformity approach has merit here (Williams 2010:217).

One of the significant theological constructs in relation to personal shame is that humanity is made in the image of God. However, inherent in the concept of the *imago dei* is the question of the identity of this God in whose image we are made (Brueggemann 2001:8), this is a particularly pertinent observation in relation to shame and is one explored further in relation to ministerial praxis. Genesis opening with the image of “The brooding mother-bird with fluttering wings is God’s quickening breath, his invigorating and supportive spirit. Furthermore, God’s spirit is neither masculine nor neuter, but feminine” (Schottroff 1993:25)¹¹⁰ resonates in those times when my gender appears to be a source of shame. Taking this maternal image further, God in Genesis 1 can be seen as a mother giving life to her children, she blesses them and then shares the parental risk of letting them grow, develop and try out their power (Middleton 2005:294-5). Thus for Middleton, the implications of the creation narratives is that humanity should exercise power in a loving, generous, non-coercive way seeking to enhance and empower (2005:295) in what may be

¹¹⁰ Schottroff draws on the work of Buber in this insight.

called a hermeneutic of love (2005:297) which appears to be an apt approach when wanting to respond to shame. That there are writings from the early church which support the idea that Adam and Eve needed to grow and mature and exercising their free will is a part of that process is encouraging, as it suggests that there is a long history of more liberative interpretations of the narratives (Irenaeus 2015:344-7).

Another positive perspective on the creation narratives is to note God's response to Adam and Eve after they realised that they were naked and hid¹¹¹ which was to demonstrate compassion, forgiveness and mercy (Arnold 2008:66) as a first response, mediating a God who shares humanity's sorrows (McKeown 2008:277).¹¹² God chose to find a way of covering their shame and some of the commentators on this passage suggest that in clothing them there was an element of bestowing honour (Wilder 2006:68). There is also a thread in the Old Testament of God responding to cries of help from those experiencing shame such as Hannah, Ruth, Esther, Moses, David, Daniel, Joseph and Job who are then redeemed through honour (Borges 2013:79-80). Reassuring for those experiencing shame is that when taking a broad sweep of scripture one may see God as "not only Yahweh, but also Emmanuel, and who will not leave his beloved creatures to their fates even when they defy him to his face or thrust a spear in his side" (Towner 2001:54).

Having reflected on this dimension of the typology I want to keep both the current terms of conformity and compliance. Although their meaning overlaps I see (non)complying shame being about one's response to articulated rules or guidelines and (non)conformity as one's response to unarticulated norms and mores. In addition I would like to add the word (dis)integrating to reflect the impact personal shame may have on one's inner being. This encompasses the capacity for disintegration of one's self as well as the potential integration if one resists inappropriately imposed shame and the development of a stronger sense of self in God and the *imago dei*. The notion of (in)sufficiency emerged from one of the focus group participants and seems apt to describe personal shame and is a word which encompasses some of this shame I have experienced in the church, particularly when younger. The final word I want to add to the typology is (non)entity as that sums up some of the stories I heard in the focus group and questionnaire responses and gets across the power of the impact shame can have on people which at its most extreme can be I don't

¹¹¹ Genesis 3.21.

¹¹² I am aware of other readings of the text focus more on an angry God who punishes their behaviour but have sought in earlier chapters to offer support for such a reading.

want to exist (Stockitt 2012:48-9).

The words chosen to explore this dimension of shame in the church do two things, firstly they are a reminder of what shame can do to an individual: impart a sense of being insufficient, a nonentity; facilitate disintegration; encourage compliance and conformity which may reinforce some of the other aspects of this type of shame. Secondly, they help identify areas of ministerial praxis which need scrutiny, particularly things which one might inadvertently communicate around norms, mores, expectations, value and worth. Restoring the one who experiences personal shame should be an essential dimension of ministerial praxis and avoiding imposing such an experience through omission as well as commission is part of why conscientization about shame is vital. This comment from a focus group participant echoes in my mind *“People who minister can sometimes be a right pain in the backside. I do not need ministry, I need love”*. That is a salutary comment with which to conclude a reflection on personal shame suggesting that mediating God’s love is perhaps the most significant response one can make.

Relational shame

Relational refers to shame experienced as a consequence of identification with the people within the institution, particularly, but not exclusively leaders. This is vicarious shame which may be something one experiences but finds difficult to identify and name. The data analysis from the surveys and focus group identified the most common causes of vicarious shame as the bad behaviour of leaders, public statements or actions on behalf of the church, negative and unloving attitudes, and cultural images of clergy or Christians.¹¹³ While people discussed their response to some of the elements of vicarious shame there were few clear ways identified to process it, reluctant acceptance seemed to be more prevalent as a response. Some of the reasons why people struggle with the triggers for vicarious shame include the betrayal of the mission of the church, promotion of stereotypes, lack of credibility, hurting people who need loving, being concerned about others inferring personal beliefs, disunity, communicating an out of touch church. One person noted *“It is often the voices I hear representing the church that bring me the most shame”* and another who said that they often experience shame *“at narrow, dogmatic and judgemental interpretations of*

¹¹³ The breadth of blog posts on the television programme Rev are illustrative of how media images can impact life. Ian Paul’s blog summarizes some of the perspectives: <http://www.psephizo.com/?s=Rev&submit=Search> last accessed 24th May 2014.

Christianity". This could be an incentive to develop speak out, offering an alternative voice and resisting being misrepresented by others, perhaps a challenge to be prophetic. However, acting in this way may lead us to experience imputed shame because of our association with those who are stigmatized or shamed in other contexts (Collicutt 2015:123).

Vicarious shame is identified in the literature. It is more likely to happen when one is emotionally close to the person acting shamefully but vicarious shame can be experienced by the self in a range of contexts (Lewis 1971:31). There was nothing in the data to suggest that this element of the typology needed to be amended although the conscientization process may be important as those who have been vicariously shamed may need support as well as the person who experienced the shame themselves. This is particularly true in regard to fallen leaders. Explaining that some within the institution may be experiencing shame because of what had happened may be a helpful strategy and then creating some space to explore all that this means and perhaps including an element of ritual to facilitate processing it can be helpful ministerial praxis.

There are a variety of occasions in the Old Testament when shame is experienced because of the actions or inactions of others. An example of this is when Joab speaks to David about putting shame on the faces of his servants through not recognizing their loyalty¹¹⁴ (Odell 1992:104). In a New Testament context if one is shamed by others then this wounds both the person shamed and their associates, particularly family (Malina 2011:149). One might speculate that shame is part of what contributed to Peter's denial of Jesus¹¹⁵ as he did not want to be associated with someone who had been arrested or perhaps lose face with the servant girl.¹¹⁶ In reflecting on why Peter returned to fishing despite being given a commission¹¹⁷ it may be that Peter was still feeling shame and not worthy of the mission (Bennema 2009:58). Vicarious shame remains the most appropriate term for this dimension of the typology.

Communal shame

Communal relates to shame which is experienced at a group or congregational level. The data analysis from the surveys and focus groups identified theological tradition, institutional processes, church practices, bad leadership, dissonance, attitudinal issues and cultural

¹¹⁴ 2 Samuel 19:6b-7a.

¹¹⁵ Luke 22:54-62.

¹¹⁶ Luke 22:56.

¹¹⁷ John 20:19-29.

values as contributing towards communal shame. Responses included people seeking to act to promote unity (sometimes at the cost of exacerbating the shame), and revisiting core principles. Anthropological research offers some insights into this dimension of shame. Within a collectivist context there is often a prevailing style of thought which exerts a strong influence on an individual's thinking sometimes to the extent that it is not possible to deviate from it (Douglas 1987:13). Sadly, there are a range of issues which result in particular groups being stigmatized and it is common that some people are deemed to be shameful (Nussbaum 2004:174). One might imagine that the church and Christian institutions should be different but as one focus group participant commented "*What it means to have a community who have that kind of accepting love ... is a rare and wonderful thing*". Church services were seen as a place where shame could be experienced with comments from focus group participants such as "*I have this expectation on me to do what everyone else is doing*" and feeling shame for the way it can be inferred that, for example, "*If you love Jesus, you should be on your feet, jumping up and down*".

The reframing of the children's playground saying as "sticks and stones just break your bones. It's names that really harm you" (Nathanson 1987:269) will resonate with some in the church and Christian organizations who get labelled in unhelpful ways and while one may be able to dismiss some of this name calling at times it can be experienced as shame as one realizes that who one is differs from who others think one should be. With the stigmatizing that occurs with name calling "a language of relationships, not attributes, is really needed" (Goffman 1990:13) but the language of attributes is apparent with such terms as divorced, single parent, sick, mentally ill used as a way to categorize people. Being stigmatized and labelled can lead to disaffection, sometimes from others within the particular institution or sometimes more widely.

In his ministry Jesus chose to engage positively with those stigmatized by the wider culture and offered the opportunity of inclusion.¹¹⁸ While at times the gospel stories appear to be talking about individuals they are often examples of groups of people who may suffer shame. Through his death Jesus opened the way to life for those who previously would have been excluded (Collicutt McGrath 2009:99). In a similar vein the beatitudes can be read as "honoured are" rather than "blessed are" which suggests that Jesus gives value to those who are not usually valued (Neyrey 1998:187). In 1 Corinthians Paul re-appropriates the term

¹¹⁸ Chapter 3 offers several many examples of this.

foolish seeing it in a positive light reflecting his faith in God. Sometimes our cultural allegiances make acknowledging and following through on our Christian ones more difficult because we either fear or experience shame that we might be seen as unloving, bigoted, naïve, narrow, or whatever word it is that one finds particularly shaming.

Within biblical culture, groups are the focus not individuals (Malina 2010:17) and one's significance and meaning is found in and from one's social group where there are clear patterns for morality and the world works in a way one is enculturated into (Malina 2008:8). While this may not fully be true of all of contemporary culture there are some ways in which it can be true in the church as one becomes socialized into a particular way of seeing the world. Because shame is very much related to inclusion and belonging, then fundamental to trying to address the disaffection and stigmatizing that is part of communal shame, having the correct perspective on the "other" is important. Bonhoeffer's guidance here is illuminating "Where one person accepts the other as the helper who is a partner given by God, where one is content with understanding-oneself-as-derived-from and destined-for-the-other, in belonging-to-the-other, there human beings are not ashamed (1997:101). If this statement is interpreted communally rather than individualistically then it suggests that stigmatization should be avoided and that acceptance and inclusion should be our default response to those who express their faith differently and scapegoating should be avoided.

Having reflected on the typology, the term disuniting appears to work less well in relation to the data, with disaffecting perhaps being more helpful. Further thought leads me to suggest that (dis)empowering should be added, as the tendency to label can often be that, with people perhaps thinking that they have been written off or disqualified from roles in the church or institution because of particular attributes deemed inappropriate, misunderstood or the object of prejudice.

Structural shame

Structural shame happens at the organizational or denominational level or is the sort of shaming which is embedded in the way that the system works. The data analysis of the surveys and focus groups identified church practices, doctrinal or ecclesiological differences, bad behaviour, power, and cultural issues as potential sources of structural shame. At the extreme people's response was to leave the church, some switched denomination while others experienced significant stress in working out what to do in a difficult situation.

In Matthew 16.16 Jesus asks his disciples "But who do you say I am?" The way that

institutions and churches operate structurally offers an answer to that question, Jesus is mediated through structures and systems as well as people. In some settings there appears to be a dissonance between the Jesus who is preached and the Jesus who is embedded in the structures. A pertinent observation was made in a focus group *“There’s this apparent and, I think, often true, genuine, wholehearted acceptance of people in the beginning, and then the rules kick in”*, this is where the structure impacts practice. This was a recurrent theme with Paula suggesting that people end up being shamed because *“Perhaps they can’t do what’s being expected of them. Perhaps they never were going to be able to do it. That’s where the relationships start to break down”*. In part this may relate also to the theological dimension where one’s theological position may impact what is expected of people as they journey with the church. A survey respondent believed that *“During times of differing views, some may be made to feel their views or responses to a situation are unworthy of the calling of the institution, even their own calling”*.

The power inherent in some hierarchical leadership structures can be problematic, Anna’s story¹¹⁹ of her leaders’ perspective on her actions shows, in her words, that *“power plays a massive part”* and there seemed to be little willingness even ten years on to engage in a discussion that their response may have been wrong. Survey respondents reported this too, for example *“Hierarchical structures and expectations of leadership not being questioned – they are, after all, appointed by God – leads to guilt and shame”*. Similarly, another respondent comments that *“Leaders can often also appear better if not perfect. This is a problem with leadership itself within church contexts and it is the fault of church history, our culture to institutionalise and the expectations/demands of the congregation”*. This means that structurally the leader may also be prone to shame as it is hard to live up to such an impression and others may feel shame because they do not make the grade modelled to them, at least superficially.

The potential of structural shame is supported in some of the literature. Society can be seen using shaming as a sanction although this does not necessarily mean that an individual responds with shame (Bechtel 1994:79). The structural dimension of church is often shaped by other contemporary institutions and may reflect patterns in such entities (Haight 2008:35). Thus where there are oppressive structures, for example, in the surrounding society then they may be replicated in the church. Some argue that institutions

¹¹⁹ See chapter 5.

can “think” and that they construct a “machine for thinking and decision-making on their own behalf” (Douglas 1987:63), one which represents their version of nature and which gives them the capacity to monitor how their society is constituted. Thus order on an untidy experience may be imposed by establishing notions of purity, separation, punishment for transgressions and boundary setting, for example, which leads to amplifying differences such as male and female, in and out so as to establish some semblance of order while disorder is seen as negative and potentially dangerous (Douglas 1966:4). Viewed through this lens structural shame could almost be seen as inevitable by-product of the way that human beings organize themselves. In more specific writing about organizations, there is the suggestion that “shame can flourish in the interface between an organisation and the wider society it inhabits” (Clough 2010:26) which clearly happens over some of the doctrinal debates and scandals faced by the institutional church. Also within organizations outside of the church shame is “ubiquitous – but hidden; plays mercilessly with our deepest insecurities while also revealing and supporting our values and aspirations; it may facilitate social interaction by prompting us to behave appropriately, or it may alienate and isolate” (Clough 2010:26).

Another element of church experience that may be structural in nature is ritual. This can be seen as a way of maintaining or establishing unity and order but which may be used in trying to coerce conformity as well as more positive aspects (Arbuckle 2004:14). Ritual may also, perhaps inadvertently, be a trigger for shame in those who may be sensitive to such things. Within some denominations parts of the liturgy are prescribed or only authorised formulae of words can be used and these may be shame evoking or enhancing. The prayer of humble access (Archbishop’s Council 2000)¹²⁰ is one example of something that when included in a service may evoke shame, it does with me. This discussion also impinges on communal and theological domains of shame.

Some of the prophetic literature addresses the issue of shame and looks forward to the hope of God removing the shame and restoring the honour that had been lost in the exile, while some scholars (House 1989:11) think that the last part of Zephaniah 3.19-20 may

¹²⁰ This is the version I recall from childhood and the lack of worth always seemed to outweigh the mercy of God in my mind: We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou art the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

be a post-exilic addition, it offers an example of the move from shame to honour that is structural in nature as it is about a people group, not specific individuals:

I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord.

Thus there is hope that, eventually, honour may be found in following God. The New Testament church may offer a different way of acting that we have lost to some extent in some expressions of contemporary church as it embodied a new order both social and spiritual which shunned discrimination based on criteria such as race and gender (Percy 2012:75).

Structural understandings of leadership (which may also be theological) can also exacerbate shame whereby the senior leader believes they need to know everything that goes on or have a God-given responsibility for them (as in the Anglican cure of souls). This means that confidentiality is often conditional (beyond safeguarding guidelines) and sometimes this is not explained and individuals can be surprised when an issue gets raised by another. This story is perhaps the most extreme example but shows an approach likely to cause shame: *“After our vicar had found out that the woman’s 16 year old daughter had had an abortion he said something to her along the lines of ‘How’s your daughter feeling now she’s killed her baby?’* Perhaps there needs to be more education for congregations as to how pastoral structures and processes work in church, and also in Christian organizations which have similar policies on pastoral issues.

Initially, I identified collusion and fragmentation as related to structural shame. Collusion can be an issue when because of one’s position one needs to hold an official line while privately disagreeing with it, for example. Fragmentation may occur when groups splinter off or take sides and it is not difficult to begin to identify some of the issues this happens over in contemporary Christianity. The empirical research did not identify any other terms.

Theological shame

Theological shame relates to institutional belief systems and the way in which one’s theological beliefs can engender shame. The analysis of the surveys and the focus group material suggested that appearing unloving, doctrinal differences, compromising biblical

views, and failure were the main issues in theological shame and that there were some characteristics that could be identified of churches which were more associative or dissociative. People responded to this dimension of shame largely in a fight or flight mode. Associative shame may arise when we are identified with a particular theological position which is regarded negatively by some. Dissociative shame can occur when hearing a theological position being espoused that we cannot hold to. Several respondents mentioned the exclusion from the Eucharist of those who were divorced and the shame this caused (from both perspectives). A survey respondent contrasted two different ways that God can be represented, which, while perhaps a little simplistic, does show how theological perspectives can be more or less likely to evoke a response of shame:

I think that often the church forget the real meaning of grace, the fact that there is nothing anyone can do to make God love them more and nothing they can do to make God love them less. God is often portrayed as up there keeping an eye on us, watching our every failing and sin, rather than a loving God who longs to spend time with us, commune with us, lavishly pour out his love on us.

Some of the debates around the role of women and sexuality can lead to associative or dissociative shame. As Amita commented in the focus group when asked about actions or teachings of the church which caused shame *“Just being a woman. Genesis. The whole thing about Adam and Eve...They blamed Eve and still continue to blame women”*.

The blaming of women relates to the role and function of founding myths which are the building blocks of other beliefs (Arbuckle 2004:7) and which may be seen as authoritative by those accepting them (Arbuckle 2004:5). There are at least three important types of myth: public – espoused ideals that hold people together; operative – providing a sense of identity and may be different to the public myth; residual – has little or no daily impact but can become powerful at some future time (Arbuckle 2004:8). One might argue that the creation story of Adam and Eve is one which functions in all three ways at different times depending on context and theological tradition and when this story has been used to suggest women are inferior to men this causes untold suffering to women and has done over centuries (Arbuckle 2004:25-6). The empirical research reinforced this view. The challenge then may be to find ways of speaking of God using metaphors encompassing both male and female and reflecting gendered experience of women and men thus enabling theology to be a discourse which is fully human (Børresen 1995:4).

The family metaphors used to describe church can cause problems. I experienced a classic evangelical repentance based conversion in response to an altar call after a baptism

service. Inherent within this was a notion of being in or out and once I too had been baptized by full immersion I was in, part of the family. The construct of the family of God is one which can be problematic given the complex experiences and emotions which come with being part of a human family and the potential for shame as a mode of control seems to be present. While it may be that this new family is welcoming, accepting and helps to meet needs that our own family does not, it is highly likely that some of the dysfunctions of family exist too and these may be shame inducing. How God is mediated as father may be one example, I definitely grew up with a God who was more judging than loving. Other common metaphors for the church are ones which may also evoke shame. Thus the body of Christ,¹²¹ the bride of Christ,¹²² the army of God,¹²³ are all terms which may cause dissonance with our understanding of church but are also words which can be difficult to relate to in the context of our relationship with Christ. For me, for example, body image is a contested area as I am overweight and veer between ambivalence and acceptance. In pastoral encounters I have found that some struggle with the concept of the bride of Christ as it reinforces a sense of shame, disappointment or failure that their own marriage breakdown evoked or a disappointment at singleness, for example. Army is perhaps a more controversial term but army can sound a little too militaristic and have echoes of some of the worst practices of Christianity in colonialism, insensitivity or bullying, or extreme acts carried out in the name of Christ.¹²⁴

Another theological concept which may have a relationship with shame is sanctification. The idea of working towards increased Christ-consciousness rather than Christlikeness (Benner 2012:69) helpful in this regard as this perhaps resonates more with a liberative understanding of being perfect meaning growing in maturity (Berecz 1998:90). However, if one continues to focus on perfection rather than maturity it can be a short step to labelling others as not good enough, impure or defiling.

My primary area of ministry has been as a theological educator with those who work with children and young people. One of the interesting developments in the field is that there has been a movement away from making theological judgements about lifestyle or behaviour. This observation is emblematic of those I hear:

¹²¹ 1 Corinthians 12.

¹²² Revelation 19.7-10.

¹²³ Joel 2.11.

¹²⁴ See, for example, <http://www.alternet.org/tea-party-and-right/10-worst-terror-attacks-extreme-christians-and-far-right-white-men> last accessed May 25th 2014.

Young intellectuals today are unified in their commitment to equality, tolerance and openness. Put these assumptions in religious terms, this means that many thinking Christians in their late teens and early twenties simply do not find much of Christian doctrine compelling or meaningful because they do not think they have any right to make objective judgments about religion, which they see to be essentially subjective (Carlin 2005:501-2).

Carlin goes on to observe that when such young people express doubt they can be shamed and abandoned by elder Christians although this seems less prevalent in the UK than is suggested in his USA context (2005:501-2). This is perhaps another example of how structural and theological issues are influenced or changed by the prevailing cultural context.

Historical shame

Historical shame relates to issues in the past where there is still a residue of what happened embodied in particular people or a group. Thus “Whether it be by explicit decision, implicit agreement, collusion, or a combination of these, communities sometimes decide never to tell the whole story and to keep some past event hidden at all cost” which can lead to rigidity of role, stuck interaction patterns and close monitoring of storytelling to ensure the secret remains safe (Whitehead & Whitehead 2003:17).

The data analysis of the surveys and focus groups identified specific issues which led to such shame including sexual misconduct, mental health issues, abuse, bullying, and poor decision making. Generally, the research suggested that this is an area still dealt with poorly by the relevant authorities and that there was little support or skill to explore it from the perspective of others in the institution. An illustrative comment is this: *“there is always an unspoken wariness which raises its head now and then. People wonder about it, can feel it but often don't know what it is.”* The concept that historical issues have an impact on current experiences is well-established in psychological literature thus “In some instances the original painful experiences happened to previous generations rather than directly to us. In these cases it is the hidden fears and distorted ways of relating that our recent ancestors developed which are surreptitiously and unconsciously passed on to us” (Sieff 2015:2).

I used the term buried shame to describe it in the research but would also like to add the term residual. I would differentiate them thus: residual shame is that part of shame which remains after an incident is over or has been partially dealt with, whereas buried shame is more relevant a term for shame that has never been properly dealt with. An example of residual shame came from a female priest who wrote *“Many of us have to*

remind ourselves that we do not have to apologise for our existence or our calling... Seniority of post can increase this rather than diminish it”.

One emotive term is “clergy killers” used to describe what may happen with a congregation where issues have been suppressed and kept secret (Knusden 1995:81). An associated term is “toxic waste” and the way people act out to cover up a sense of shame or violation because of what may have happened in the past (Knusden 1995:83). In other contexts there may be a lack of awareness of the buried shame which still impacts current relationships. Thus one of the respondents to the survey noted how

a big picture example is the revision of the Nicene creed by the addition of the filioque clause (by unilateral decision of the Western church) and the resulting final split with the Orthodox. Even the protestant and evangelical churches have inherited this split, which remains at the core of the Orthodox grievance, yet no one can seem to find the will to repent of it for the sake of unity.

This comment demonstrates the potential for buried shame at structural levels too. This is reinforced by one of the respondents to the survey who noted that *“Some of the abuse issues of the past bring out buried shame, such as the role of the church in the ‘stolen generations’ of Australian aboriginals, the pattern of enforced migration of British children to the ‘colonies’ or sexual abuse of children through church institutions or individuals in positions of power”*. Such resistance to acknowledging or dealing with such issues can be negative for the particular institution as well as the wider one.

Revised typology

In the light of the discussion above, this is the typology at the end of the research that is presented in this thesis. As I grow to understand shame more then it may well be that this typology evolves but as it stands it has the capacity to challenge my ministerial praxis and encourage me to act in ways which are liberative, empowering and reflective of the Jesus I seek to mediate. The domains offer a way of understanding the different dimensions of shame, realising that it exists at various levels, not just personal. Identifying which domain the shame is originating in gives the opportunity to seek to address it at the right level. The different facets of shame are both verbs and adjectives. The adjectives describe what sort of shame may be experienced and the verbs the behaviours or triggers related to the shame.

Domain:	1 Personal	2 Relational	3 Communal	4 Structural	5 Theological	6 Historical
Facets of shame	(Non)complying (Non)conforming (Dis)integrating (In)sufficiency (Non)entity	Vicarious	(De)stigmatizing (Dis)affecting (Dis)empowering	(Un)colluding (De)fragmenting	Associative Dissociative Dissonant	Buried Residual

Table 6.2 Revised typology

A helpful model to go alongside the typology is provided by Sartain and Katsarou (2011:110-1) who offer a range of diagnostic questions to help one identify what level a problem is impacting or needs to be addressed at: environment, behaviour, skills and abilities, beliefs and values, identity. Thus once one has identified what type of shame is present considering which of these areas need to be considered will facilitate an apt ministerial response.

CHAPTER 7

IMPLICATIONS FOR MINISTERIAL PRAXIS

– SYNTHESIZING, RESPONDING

Moreover, those who help us heal must have come to know their own shame, not because it was a requirement of their training, but because it was utterly necessary to their lives, and their own emotional healing (Lloyd and Sieff 2015:36).

One motivation for this research was to enlighten approaches to ministerial praxis. This chapter is in part a response to my research question but also seeks to synthesize insights from the research and literature. Core to this is conscientization and I have developed a shame examen to facilitate this. I also articulate ways in which ministry may be less shame inducing and in this respect I am focusing on three areas of the typology: personal, communal and structural. Relational, theological and historical shame tend to be more difficult to mitigate against for the individual experiencing it but the section on working with individuals experiencing shame includes some approaches that can be used. Throughout the chapter I am seeing to articulate ways in which I may facilitate what Poling calls faithful ministerial practice (1991:190-1) or what I might call loving, liberative, mindful, attentive presence and praxis. Before I discuss ministerial praxis I offer some brief reflections on ecclesiology as a way of situating responses to shame in the broader context of church.

Ecclesiology

Inherent in the concept of ministerial praxis is an understanding of ecclesiology. While exploring an ecclesiology in relation to shame is a thesis in its own right, I will make some brief observations about my understanding as a consequence of this research process. They emerge from my passion for the church and a long held belief that the church is Christ's body in the world and we need to mediate his body in a way that reflects a loving, caring God. If the kind of church we are reflects the God we believe in (Kane 1986:21) then there have been many times that God has been misrepresented. Being ordained has meant that I have spent time reflecting on what sort of priest I want to be which cannot be disentangled from how I understand church (as well as how I see God). Both reading and responses to the empirical element of the research have led me to reflect further on how I see the church as part of the process of exploring ministerial praxis. What has become clear is that I have power as a priest to explore what it means to create a non-shaming (in relation to disgrace and estranging shame) community. This is particularly true with regard to shaping public

worship and how this may be done in a way which develops non-shaming practices and habits.

Pembroke (2004:97) identified four theological principles deriving from God's covenant with humanity related to institutional belonging. These seem pertinent for the different contexts I minister in and are: a recognition of personhood; being proactive in meeting the needs of others (covenant was initiative of grace); prioritize those most at risk (biblical concern for orphan, alien and widow); the importance of internalising the dominant vision to feel at home. I would have some reservations about the last of these principles if the dominant vision was not healthy and life-affirming. In my context the vision needs to embrace the creation of community and a sense of belonging and home-coming. I want to add a fifth principle of acting in a loving way towards self and others, reflecting the loving nature of God in relation to his people.¹²⁵

Joining the institutional church changed my life, not all experiences have been good but it gave me a purpose, a vocation, a community and a place of belonging (to various degrees over the years). My work as a theological educator in part is to equip God's people for works of service,¹²⁶ that has been a call on my life for as long as I have been conscious of the importance of serving, from teenage years onwards. I realise the church has flaws, that she has and does behave badly but my hope is in the church and when Dykstra argues that he believes that "in and through the church, God in Christ by the power of the Spirit actually makes people's lives better and stronger, more hospitable and gracious, more joyful, generous, and just" (2008:42). I want to respond yes we do and sometimes yes we should, and we need to be liberated from anything that stops us from doing that. Shame is one of those things which individually and corporately may prevent us from being this sort of institution. In a similar vein, Woodhead talks of how the church could "counteract the 'bowling alone' syndrome by offering warm, supportive community and clear moral values, based around church, family and – in the case of parish churches – local society" (2004:405). While what clear moral values are may be a matter of dispute and can be articulated in ways which exacerbate shame, the essence of a "warm, supportive community" is one which can work at mitigating against shame.

In recent years I have encouraged students to reflect on this understanding of church, which is holistic, hopeful and feels a little beyond where institutional church is at times but

¹²⁵ Cf John 3.16.

¹²⁶ Ephesians 4.12.

which is what underpins my formation:

God in Christ promises abundant life for all creation. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the church receives this promise through faith and takes up a way of life that embodies Christ's abundant life in and for the world. The church's ministers are called to embrace this way of life and also to lead particular communities of faith to live it in their own situation (Bass and Dykstra 2008:1).

This abundant life is not free of pain and suffering, it is living in the now but not yet of the Kingdom of God. Sadly communicating such perspectives about the church can be difficult when some public perceptions may be of a boundaried institution where it is clear who is in and out and when identifying with the church may bring with it a range of unhelpful labels. Services and liturgy may also reinforce some of the perceptions of boundaries thus, rituals are “the means by which we seek, establish, and preserve or celebrate order and unity for ourselves and for society...while rituals can have beneficial effects, they can be used to unjustly coerce people into conformity” (Arbuckle 2004:14). I am also becoming more aware of the power of liturgy and the messages that may be inherent, though unintended, in it. Emphasising faith as a journey and process and welcoming people wherever they may be on that journey is integral to my understanding of ministerial praxis. As the church increasingly becomes the provider of services far outside a narrow worship context then there is the potential for those who once would have seen themselves as outsiders to identify more with church and see a particular local expression as “theirs”. Studying shame has reinforced my passion for the church as a place where the shamed can be offered a place to belong and where we can journey alongside people to help them find liberty in Christ from that shame.

In a previous research project (Collins-Mayo et al 2010) we wrote about the importance of authentic church suggesting that “the deep-seated need to belong, together with the basic human instinct to care for those to whom we belong, lies at the heart of the Christian faith. It is the story of Scripture, beginning with Adam and fulfilled in the New Jerusalem” (Collins-Mayo et al 2010:125). The Eucharist is perhaps the ritual which most deeply reflects who the church is to be, offering a model of the companionship God wants from the people of God (Hauerwas & Wells 2006:13) and an intense experience of Christ's presence and activity as the practice he instituted the night before he died (Collins-Mayo et al 2010:127). Evocatively, Hauerwas and Wells talk about the ebb and flow inherent in life based around regular celebration of the Eucharist which involves “a constant sending out to love and serve and share, a constant return and gathering to praise and repent and ask”

(2006:19).¹²⁷ The love God has for God's people is glimpsed at in the baptism of Jesus and "ultimately, the promise of this is that God's people mean everything to God" (Hauerwas and Wells 2006:15). Although this thesis was written as part of my ordination training I had spent nearly thirty years working in Christian institutions and came to ordination with a very strong sense of the importance of every member ministry which was part of my understanding of what it meant to be a Christian from teenage years. I resonate with the notion that "All Christians, by their baptism, are 'ordained' to share in Christ's work in the world. There is no healing, counseling, witnessing, speaking, interpretation, living or dying the clergy can do that is not the responsibility of every other Christian" (Hauerwas & Willimon 1989:113). It could not be otherwise when building non-shaming churches as the whole body needs to embrace the vision of being a place of belonging and acceptance, honour and respect.

Shame examen

The spiritual exercise commonly known as the examen comes from the writings of Ignatius of Loyola, a soldier who experienced a dramatic conversion to Christianity and who is best known for his spiritual exercises (Ignatius 1991).¹²⁸ The word examen is Latin in origin meaning examination or weigh accurately (Oxford Dictionary 2015). One way of understanding this thesis has been to see it as, in part, an examen of shame in ministerial praxis. It has been helpful to have an opportunity to reflect on my own experiences and ministry so that as a newly ordained priest I might be more aware and mindful of how I am ministering and the impact of that on others. My starting point for developing a shame examen for church leaders was this version of the original:

Of the things that I have done today;
a) which do I now feel most happy about? I will thank God for these times.
b) which do I now feel most discomfort about? I will ask for God's help to cope better with such situations in the future, and, where fitting, I will say that I am sorry
(Hebblethwaite 1999:144).

It has the merit of being simple, God focused and encouraging action in response to the reflection. A shame examen is conceivably a weekly or monthly task and the balance of starting with those things which are positive about one's praxis seems wise, as a focus solely

¹²⁷ A much fuller discussion of the gift of the church is found in the book and it offers a biblically rooted understanding of what I would call authentic church.

¹²⁸ I am aware that there are feminist critiques of the writings of Ignatius, see Dyckman, Garvin & Liebert (2001) for a liberative perspective.

on shame could reinforce our shame, thus the second part uses the term “discomfort” acknowledging that shame will only be one dimension of what causes this. These are the questions I am proposing for ministers:

Asking the Holy Spirit to guide us, reflecting back on the last week:

- a) What ministerial praxis (actions, encounters, thoughts, feelings) do I feel most happy about? I will thank God for these experiences.
- b) What ministerial praxis do I now feel discomfort about? I will ask for God’s help to practise differently in the future, and, where appropriate, I will say that I am sorry.

Prompts to reflect on shaming praxis:

- Have my actions caused shame to those I minister alongside?
- In my interactions with individuals have I put pressure on them to comply or conform against their better judgement?
- Have I said or done anything to make someone feel that they are insufficient or not important?
- Do I act in ways which stigmatize or disempower?
- Are there ways in which the structures I am part of or represent are colluding with others which causes shame?
- Have the actions of my denomination or equivalent caused fragmentation leading to shame?
- Do I act in ways which are dissonant to my theology or which cause others to dissociate from the church?

If it seemed appropriate, these questions may help a church member to reflect on their experiences of shame if that is a pastoral issue it seems appropriate to engage with:

Asking the Holy Spirit to guide us, reflecting back on experiences of church:

- a) What engagement with church do I feel most happy about? I will thank God for these experiences.
- b) What engagement with church do I feel discomfort about? I will ask for God’s help to deal with these feelings and remember that I am a unique human being created in the image of and loved by God and worthy of being treated with respect and dignity.

Prompts to reflect on shaming experiences:

- In my experience of church have I ever felt the need to conform or comply in ways which have caused me shame?
- Have I ever been made to feel that I am insufficient or not important?
- Are there times I feel shame because of the ways in which church leaders have acted?
- Have I ever felt stigmatized or disempowered in my encounters with church?
- Are there ways in which the structures of the church collude or fragment which causes me shame?
- Do any theological issues cause me dissonance or to dissociate from the church?

It is important in engaging in such practices that to work out whether it is something to do alone or whether it is more appropriate to do this alongside someone who has skills to help,

in pastoral supervision, for example. It may even be helpful to do this in a well facilitated group so that people feel less alone in their experiences and could provide helpful feedback on the ministry of the church.

Personal shame

The research identified issues of compliance, conformity, disintegration, insufficiency and feeling like a nonentity as relating to personal shame. Some of these words reflect the power of shame in impacting self-esteem and the potential for manipulation and bullying. “The individual within the collective is never, or hardly ever, conscious of the prevailing thought style which almost always exerts an absolutely compulsive force upon his thinking, and with which it is not possible to be at variance” (Douglas citing Fleck 1987:13). While this might feel like an overstatement given the social and cultural changes that have taken place if we have experienced being a lone voice then we may well have experienced some of the marginalization and scapegoating that comes along with such a position. The research provided many examples of such things but also identified ways in which church leaders may mitigate against causing personal shame and these are explored below.

Self-awareness

Self-awareness is vital in seeking to develop a culture of non-shaming in ministry as some shaming is clearly inadvertent. There are several dangers in a lack of self-awareness such as the risk of projecting shame on to others while not acknowledging or processing our own (McNish 2004:185). Another is the danger of abandoning those experiencing shame because it is too uncomfortable to respond more positively to them because of what it evokes in oneself (Rustomjee 2008:154). Other areas include an awareness of the impact of the form of services, the content of preaching, teaching and liturgy, expectations - both spoken and unspoken, cultural norms and how these are experienced by those both inside and outside of the church. One participant made an insightful observation:

It is important to be aware of what the internal dialogues may be for people who feel that they need to comply to a particular way of being Christian, for example, and to help people see that it is important for them to become who they are in Christ, or to feel a sense of belonging rather than feeling a need to comply or conform.

This is also something church leaders need to consider for themselves as there can be pressure to comply or conform as leaders and being aware of predispositions to do this in

certain areas can be important. The need to attend to self-care may be significant here too, in responding to a picture of Rodin's bronze of a naked Eve¹²⁹ a participant commented that *"This image sums up how a lot of clergy feel about themselves, alone, protecting and comforting oneself"*. The metaphor of the wounded healer (Nouwen 1979) is one which has nourished me in my self-awareness and the importance of attending to my own healing and journey towards wholeness being vital if I am attempting to facilitate this in others (Nolte and Dreyer 2010:1).

Being aware of what is communicated as a Christian leader is important in trying to create a less shaming environment. This came out strongly in focus groups, thus Paula believes that *"leaders who are able to show humility, being at the front, are more inclusive than leaders who ... have an arrogance about them"*. Amita added the importance of leaders being able to laugh at themselves when things go wrong. The power inherent in Christian leadership needs exercising in a self-aware way as some of the shame experienced by participants was called by abusive or unthinking uses of power. An example of this is a leader who

is manipulating a group to turn to their point of view. There have been times in the past when it is easier to not complain about the way they achieve the result if you share the desire for the same ultimate goal. I felt as if the desired goal had been achieved but after the meeting I felt cheap, dirty, that there must have been a better way to achieve this same outcome.

I wonder what the leader who acted like this thought or if they had any awareness of the inappropriateness of their behaviour?

Building high quality relationships: inclusivity and authenticity

A decision faced by everyone who seeks to join a group or an institution is "am I in or out?" Sadly churches have reputations for being places where cliques may flourish and people can be made to feel an outsider. The research responses bear this out: *"Less judgement to people who aren't like us. Less academic and middle class and 'slick' expressions of church; more authenticity. A more equal environment; for women, for gay people, for young people, for example"*. One participant suggested that the church should end

the notion that it has any right to moral judgement of behaviours and accept the reality of the human condition. We should stop responding to the game that has us commenting on right and wrong and get on with serving and loving. We should

¹²⁹ See <http://www.musee-rodin.fr/en/collections/sculptures/eve> for a picture of the sculpture.

consciously develop positive institutional attributes like affirming, cooperating, partnering, celebrating etc.

Thus practising inclusivity as a church and particularly as a church leader can be vital in people feeling that they have a sense of belonging. I asked one of the focus groups if they had experience of people stopping coming to church because they were made to feel bad about themselves and there was a strong feeling that this was the case with specific examples offered.

However, good quality caring, nurturing relationships can contribute towards healing or relief from shame (Wimberly 1999:111; Savage 2007:59; Young 2011:12), as Sieff notes “ultimately it is what we experience within the context of healing relationships that enables us to ameliorate shame” (2015:233). This may include physical holding or touching to replenish emotional stores (Kaufman 1985:50; Raphael 2003:105). In a world where safeguarding is an essential element of practice how this is done both appropriately and safely may need exploring but does suggest that for embodied humanity, the body and touch is important and signifies acceptance and incorporation.

Churches and Christian organizations have the capacity to build community and facilitate individuals in the development of bonds and healthy connections (Bellous 2008:196) and hopefully move away from negative ways of relating that can contribute to experiencing shame. Thus the kind of community created is also important. One possibility is to explore the communal identity which is inherent in notions of belonging to a divine household and being part of the family of God (Wimberly 2011b:61-2) which for some may mean redeeming the concept of family. The length of time it can take some people to be able to share or even perhaps acknowledge their shame means that a constant presence can be important. Love is a powerful instrument in supporting those experiencing shame (Albers 1995:129). As one participant noted *“What it means to have a community who have that kind of accepting love, I think, is a rare and wonderful thing. But it can happen ... I’d be looking to see a community of love and acceptance develop, for some very specific giftings within there, too, who can listen long term to people”*. This suggests that pastoral care should not just be clergycentric as they are the ones who in many settings are likely to move on. Thus highlighted is the importance of developing the “carrying capacity” (Newbrough 1995:24) of a community, which in more church oriented language is perhaps what could be

called a functioning body of Christ with every member ministry.¹³⁰

If leaders are authentic about who they are and their own struggles and failures, (within the constraint of those still enabling those they lead to feel safe), this facilitates both high quality relationships and a community which allows people to flourish. Jackie shared that *"I personally would quite like it if my church leader was vulnerable and was open about their failings. I would relate and say, we're all in the same boat. Let's come and work this through together"*. It may also mean seeking to build trust and being sensitive as to what the issues are that destroy trust. Giving a range of perspectives on an issue may also be more helpful, encouraging people to locate their own beliefs within a spectrum as opposed to being told what to think. Liberating people to believe that they can be who they are at church rather than having to put on a mask or carefully guard their words would contribute to them experiencing less shame.

What emerged in the focus groups was that within such high quality relationships it was easier to raise issues without an individual experiencing shame. Although there was an awareness that some individuals were more shame prone than others and even with the best intentions someone may feel shame. There was no clear consensus on whether experiencing shame on such occasions was appropriate although the majority belief was that it was usually unhelpful. Paula observed that *"if we feel accepted unconditionally by someone then them saying to you that's not really the best way of doing things, that's the wrong way of doing things doesn't make you feel ashamed"*. Simon commented that *"sometimes the church is so passive aggressive that we don't know what to do when somebody actually looks us in the eye and says 'Do you know what? That was wrong. You've behaved really badly there.'"* In both these examples guilt, I have done something wrong, may be the appropriate response but the danger is it moves into shame, there is something wrong with me, particularly if addressed with lack of sensitivity and skill. This may involve identifying the most appropriate person to raise an issue or establishing a culture of mutual accountability where there is the freedom to encourage people to take seriously the injunction to love God, neighbour and self¹³¹ as many issues seem to arise from a failing in one of these areas.

¹³⁰ 1 Corinthians 12.

¹³¹ Luke 10.27.

Communal shame

Communal shame was found to involve such elements as stigmatizing, disaffection and disempowerment. Such words suggest the way the shame may be used as an agent of social control in a church which can sometimes be to inhibit people doing something or to encourage a particular action, for example.

Conscientization

Shame is not always easily identified nor is there always awareness of its potential impact on the church. Thus a process of conscientization may be needed. An understanding of the shame and honour cultural context much of the Bible was written in may be a starting point to reflect on how shame may be present in the church today. Communicating that the church can change *“may be messy but the creativity it generates will be exciting”*.

Considering looking at every aspect of the ministry of the church through the lens of shame may be a useful task for a leadership team to do. However, there also needs to be an awareness that sometimes shame just happens as a consequence of being human and having a healthy attitude towards it may be useful. Thus Simon shared how *“At some point, way back when, I just made one of those decisions in life, I thought I’d far rather share my shame. I’m not hot on the whole confession route, I’d rather share my shame communally and with other people who are willing to share their shame.”* He strongly asserted that it is often an issue of we won’t share our shame rather than can’t. Openly talking about shame takes away its power but it is important to ensure that it is safe to do so.

Another aspect of conscientization can be affirming the importance of people sharing doubts, struggles or concerns making it clear that these are not a source of shame but a part of the Christian journey. Alongside this can be the importance of ensuring that church members know that the clergy are accessible and want to ensure that pastoral care needs are met. Amita talked about how people feel they cannot ask to see the clergy as they seem so busy and they don’t want to add to their burden and they may feel shame if they have to. This is an issue to be addressed in ministerial praxis.

The God we mediate

A significant area of ministerial praxis to reflect on both individually and corporately is what sort of God we mediate. For churches with visual representations of God as part of the fabric this can be a particularly pertinent question. I am aware how growing up in a church

named after St Peter gave me a positive image of a caring God in Jesus who called his ministers to love and care for God's people¹³² although my broader perception of God was not always like that. That our early experiences of human care may influence our perceptions of God is significant to note (Catford 2010:7). Unhelpful perspectives include seeing God as accuser, judge, disapproving, disinterested or disgusted (Watson 2005:6-7). This suggests that we may be presented through our contact with church with concepts of God where messages are absorbed that result in feelings of shame and sinfulness rather than perceiving ourselves as loved, unique and precious. Pruyser, writing well before current debates about the atonement, suggests¹³³ that if we seek to present God as love as John's gospel does then "it is pedagogically most important that God's image as well as man's [sic] behaviour be continually purged of the traces of hostility, cruelty, pride, insolence, truculence, suspicion, and vengeance which tend to accrue" (1964:29). He goes on to suggest that the words and ideas that we use in teaching should promote and be consistent with qualities such as mercy, charity, benevolence, hopefulness and cheerfulness arguing that symbols should reflect God's grace and compassionate mercy (Pruyser 1964:29).

The God we mediate will in part reflect our theology. A non-shaming approach to ministry also coalesces with the concept of virtuous theology which is "about being with people in their emotional turmoil, uncertainty, despair, and fear of vulnerability and death, but above all it is about a sustained effort to give honour and care to all humans equally" (Campbell 2003:295). As shame so often involves experiences of worthlessness, to strive for an equality in the honour and care offered to others is an essential element of seeking to be a church where estranging shame does not feature. It is immensely difficult as a church leader to appear to honour and care for others equally and this will not result in equality as the need people have for care and honour may vary over time and between individuals. In many ways it could be an attitudinal matter and something which the whole church embraces so that the stranger who walks through the door experiences being honoured and cared for regardless of who they are and what they may be able to offer the church.

¹³² Cf Jesus' encounter with Peter in John 21.15-19.

¹³³ See, for example, Tidball, D., Hilborn, D., Thacker, J. (2007). *The Atonement Debate*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Leadership

Approaches to and styles of leadership can have a significant impact on experiences of shame. Setting an appropriate culture and offering a “facilitating environment” (Nussbaum 2004:296) which affirms human dignity will reduce the potential for people to experience shame. An interesting element of this is the idea that “we need to protect spaces within which people explore and confront aspects of their humanity that are problematic and may occasion shame, whether to themselves or others” (Nussbaum 2004:296). Drawing out the shame dimension of many Bible stories may help in this process.¹³⁴

Team ministry may be a more appropriate leadership model to reduce shame, particularly for the leader. One participant commented that *“I think there is an increasing need for people in leadership to recognise their need to surround themselves with a team who can contribute gifts they themselves do not have. This requires humility and a recognition of servant leadership”*. An environment which is non-hierarchical where each member is able to bring their gifts and be recognized for their unique contribution creates an atmosphere which feels inclusive. It also mitigates against authoritarian leadership which one participant believed *“more and more causes ‘angst’ – feelings of unsettledness, of half-heartedness, of a lack of full participation engagement in church matters”*. Being welcoming and hospitable and allowing those who have these gifts to focus on this can facilitate creating a culture where someone is accepted for who they are without a pressure to conform to a cultural set of norms which may be constraining and alienating. The way that children are included can be particularly pertinent here as a recurrent theme through the research was the way people experienced shame because of reactions to their children. Leaders need to set the culture in these areas particularly since children may well pick up on their parents feelings and if shame is one of them children may begin to associate church with their parent’s discomfort and this attitude may be passed on to them. While not writing about the church, Clough’s observation that *“a leadership that values individual staff and their contribution and creates a safe environment for learning, risk-taking and innovation will encourage a shared pride in the organisation and its values, and enhance its internal cohesiveness and its public face”* (2010:32) seems relevant. This contrasts with some of the research findings relating to communal, structural and theological shame in the

¹³⁴ It would be rare for anyone to do anything more shameful than David in 2 Samuel 11.

typology.

Storytelling

Storytelling can be an important tool to use in responding to shame as stories encourage the adoption of a fresh perspective (Wimberly 1999:15). “Narrative not only reflects meaning but also creates it” (Mercer 2010:88). Testimony is an approach to storytelling with a long history and tradition and can be seen as a liberating and community building practice which helps [young] people “not to be ashamed of their experiences, but to share their experiences in the hope and knowledge that their stories will be received by an encouraging community, and will also serve as encouragement for others” (Wright 2008:195). While not all shame experiences may be appropriate to share in this way it can be encouraging to hear someone publicly speak about something one has also experienced in some dimension.

Structural

Within the typology, structural shame involves collusion and fragmentation. I am including worship and ritual under structural shame drawing on my experience as an Anglican priest where there are rules which decree what is permissible in this area. However, there are some aspects of the discussion which also fit within the communal area. It is at the structural level (and sometimes the communal) where the importance of challenge emerges and being willing to speak out against policies or practices which may shame or reinforce shaming. This may happen in two ways. Firstly, the church speaking out against such things in the wider society¹³⁵ which may contribute to a more positive perspective of the institution and an appreciation that the established church does not collude with the state. Secondly, clergy and church members challenging the policies and practices of the institution they are a part of which are shaming.

Worship and ritual

Worship and ritual have both potential for shaming and for facilitating release from shame. However, there is a distinct lack of such resources to help people process difficult experiences or shame (Anderson and Foley 2001:x). The term worship is used to describe overtly Christian acts and ritual may be seen as acts that have significance but this may be

¹³⁵ See <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/letters/letters-courageous-bishops-are-right-to-speak-out-9147745.html> accessed 15th January 2015 for responses to this.

theological, psychological, sociological or a combination of these. Ritual can be defined more broadly as “an imaginative and interpretative act through which we express and create meaning in our lives” (Anderson and Foley 2001:34). I also use liturgy to describe Christian ritual which is “an activity through which a community celebrates its values, passes on its norms and recreates a sense of its own identity through memory and forgiveness” (Green 1987:17). It may be important to note that “sacred rituals must respect and balance human stories – both individual and communal – with the divine narrative without manipulation or deceit” (Anderson & Foley 2001:43).

Consideration of the level of vulnerability and fragility within a group or congregation should perhaps be part of careful liturgical preparation to mitigate against shaming (Watson 2005:22). Ensuring visitors were helped to navigate services and the before and after elements of church was one way of avoiding inadvertent shame which involves giving clear direction, not making assumptions and considering literacy levels and specific needs.

Confession merits particular attention in relation to shame, particularly when writing as an Anglican priest where it is an integral part of many authorised services. One participant noted the unhelpfulness of having confession early on in a service, this is not to suggest that all penitential aspects of worship should be removed but thought given as to how and where they are included. Although confession and absolution relate more to guilt than shame as the words tend to focus on what one has done (or not done). The comment reflects the times when thinking about our guilt may also trigger shame. I have found Pembroke’s (2010) reflections illuminating in this regard. He argues that there are times when one should confess shame related failure as well as include a liturgy of affirmation focusing on the mercy of God, thus adopting more of a therapeutic than juridical approach (2010:40). He draws on Ellens’ model which proposed that “(pain / shame / guilt / anxiety) + (passion / compassion / mercy / grace) = (forgiveness / affirmation / healing / actualization)” (2010:40). This can combine both forgiveness for guilt and affirmation for shame (2010:41).¹³⁶ In prayers based on such a formula, forgiveness deals with the guilt and

¹³⁶ He gives an example written by Sandra Jebb of such liturgy: God of grace and goodness, your mercy comes to us in ways that continually surprise us. You offer your mercy with no strings attached when we come to you with hearts ready and open. Forgive us those times when we focus on ourselves, and lack faith in your strength, love, and willingness to help us. Forgive us when we block out your call to take up new challenges, because we believe we’re not able or equipped to do them. Forgive us when fear makes us small, and doubt invades our hopefulness; when we make all sorts of excuses, and try to hide from your loving gaze. Loving God, In our busy daily schedules from sunrise to sunset remind us again of your loving presence hovering near us and in us. Free us from the shame, self-doubt, and lack of faith that hinder us in the moment by moment possibilities that you set before us. Breathe your Spirit afresh on us so that we may be empowered to live in freedom, to act

affirmation, the shame. A further suggestion is that a greater variety of media could be used to mediate God's grace and mercy including Scripture, music, images and icons and that gazing on an image of Christ may be healing for some (Pembroke 2010:41). This emphasises the need for me as an Anglican to be aware of all the possibilities within worship services so that they can be constructed in a sensitive way particularly when shame may be a focus on the readings and or the sermon. In other settings church leaders may be freer to adapt the order and content of the liturgy to take note of some of these issues.

Positively, preaching, teaching and discussion were mentioned of ways of communicating about shame and raising people's awareness in a liberating way. Some specific ideas for this included making it clear that we live in an imperfect world, we all make mistakes, that Jesus doesn't see any sin as greater than another as reflected in the people he forgave, emphasizing Christ's solidarity with us on the cross. Focusing on loving God and loving others as the things that Jesus said were most important rather than conforming to church ideals or norms was also mentioned. The story of Christ is particularly significant and the incarnation "constellates the shame archetype for us. Jesus' birth, his ministry, his death, and his resurrection gives us a paradigmatic model of shame transformed and resurrected" (McNish 2004:203-4). A further emphasis in preaching is justification by grace as this mediates unconditional acceptance. That humanity is fundamentally good and the alienation with God may perhaps be better construed as "the brokenheartedness of frail humans rather than sin, guilt, and offense against a divine despot" (Pattison 2011:26) with the story of Zacchaeus¹³⁷ being paradigmatic for what the church could offer those who are shamed.

However, Amita talked about the tendency for worship to sometimes seem like a banking approach to education (Freire 1996:53) *"you come and you get your fuel and off you go. It runs out at the end of the week, so you come back again. It's not a case of take it, chew on it, think about it, come back to me with it, can we talk about it?"* This approach leaves little room for exploration, doubt, the consideration of personal views. Perhaps encouraging the use of technology and social media to interact with what is happening might be appropriate in some contexts. Tradition can also be problematic in relation to shame thus The Book of Common Prayer instructs the priest to inform an ill person that their

courageously, and to be active and fearless bearers of healing and mercy. We ask this through your Son Jesus, who touched and healed all who came to him. Amen.

¹³⁷ Luke 19.1-10.

sickness is God's visitation and that God chastises and scourges those he loves (Campbell 1985:86), a perspective which is still occasionally seen. It is hard to see how being informed of this might not add shame to everything else that is being experienced.

The disposition of the person facilitating worship or ritual is a vital element. People suffering from shame are vulnerable and there is the potential for them to be further damaged by inappropriate liturgy or ritual. This is particularly true when working with individuals and the importance of demonstrating grace, humility, servant leadership and the capacity to listen attentively and be present is an integral part of what is offered (Ramshaw 1987:19-23). Careful consideration needs to be taken of any exclusion from the eucharist and the psychological impact this may have on individuals as one talks about being family or community, are the messages presented coherent and faithful (Ramshaw 1987:23). An often mentioned area was the importance of reassuring parents about the behaviour of the children, an area where some education of the congregation regarding being welcoming and inclusive was identified.

Taking responsibility

With regard to structural shame, taking responsibility for what the institution has done may be significant in mitigating shame. This may involve apologizing for actions on behalf of the institution, and may include the historical as well as the contemporary. The differentiation between legal and ethical responsibility is another area one respondent identified as important to note. This may be linked to a growing mistrust of institutions and the feeling that everything should be transparent and above board. This can be difficult at times but erring on the side of caution sometimes just results in buried shame as responsibility was never taken for something which went wrong. When something does go wrong this may require corporate soul searching to try and see what signs may have been missed or identify safeguards which could have been put in place, a corporate vulnerability is necessary. This may also relate to vicarious shame.¹³⁸

Mirroring

One of the elements to emerge in the church was the way in which the institution had, at various times, caused particular groups of people to feel diminished, women were the most

¹³⁸ Hammeal-Urban (2015) offers much wisdom for responding to situations of betrayal and restoring trust.

often mentioned group because of the debates about women in the episcopacy which were taking place while I was doing my empirical research. While she does not use the language of shame, that it is experienced seems implicit in what Schaller (2008:507) writes about failed mirroring towards people with disabilities, which is just one example of an attribute which may attract failed mirroring. Mirroring is seeing oneself in the face of another and Schaller explains how some people with disabilities cope with the stare from strangers because they have friends and family who mirror in an appropriate way (2008:516). She also talks about the “mirroring face of the holy” (Schaller 2008:5168) and how negative images of God from our childhood can lead to poor God images and self-images through faulty mirroring, particularly when one hears oppressive theology about the cause of disabilities, for example. Schaller describes the process whereby “the mirroring individual communicates that the other is ‘perfectly imperfect’ – loved as she is with her physical, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual particularities” and then discusses envisioning a God who gazes at us lovingly” (2008:519). It may be valuable to look at mirroring through an institutional lens reflecting on how churches or organizations mirror back something of how they see the identity of particular groups and how, as a consequence shame, is felt.

Training

Several participants mentioned the need for training for leaders in a range of areas to reduce the frequency of inadvertent or inappropriate shaming. Management and good employment practice were mentioned by several along with financial and administrative skills to develop confidence in clergy and to avoid feeling threatened by others more competent in these areas. Training in ways of treating people was also mentioned because sometimes people are shamed because of a lack of people skills which may apply to leaders or members. Training in new ways of leading collectively and inclusively was also raised. This is mentioned under structural shame as overall strategies for training are normally denominational responsibilities.

Working with individuals experiencing shame

Naming and reframing

The research suggested that shame was not always easy to recognize until awareness was raised and even then sometimes it was difficult to acknowledge or own. If it is spoken out then the hold it has may begin to diminish and it may facilitate an impetus to change

(Whitehead and Whitehead 2003:99). The acknowledgement of shame may help in repairing social bonds rather than the potential of conflict which can come with a lack of acknowledgement (Scheff & Retzinger 2001:60). One area of reframing which may be necessary is perceptions of God who may be seen as, for example, punitive, loving conditionally, abandoning (Catford 2010:7). Such views of God derived sometimes from inadequate childhood care or experiences can lead to burying or ignoring parts of oneself which appear unacceptable in church (Catford 2010:28). Theological and biblical insights may be helpful with this as well as some of the practices suggested below.

Creating a safe space

For an individual experiencing shame, creating a safe space where they can express themselves when they are ready underpins many of the other approaches to working with individuals in this context. One of the dilemmas the research uncovered is that for some people a church leader is not a safe person. This comment is illustrative of several:

No I would not like to talk to a church leader because they are the leader and I would feel that they would always look at me in light of my revelations. I have no idea how someone could help me unless that person was someone I could confide in and trust to remain neutral about me. There is no-one in my church who fits this role.

Communicating that this is not the case may be important but this also needs to be true. This is in part a theological issue around how individuals are seen in the light of all being made in the image of God¹³⁹ and of equal worth and of sins being forgiven.¹⁴⁰ In an educational setting I strive for space which is open, boundaried and hospitable (Palmer 1993:71) and these are useful concepts for considering in relation to ministry with those experiencing shame as well bearing in mind the importance of trying to remove or reduce barriers or obstacles to liberation.

Listening

It almost seems too obvious to say that listening is the most important thing to do with people who have experienced shame but it was the activity most identified as necessary in the research. This is a consistent theme in literature on pastoral practice also, thus “Listening is that crucial act of love for which human beings long. With careful listening can

¹³⁹ Genesis 1.27.

¹⁴⁰ Hebrews 8.12.

come the gifts of being heard, known, understood” (Moschella 2008:254). More specifically, what was emphasized in the responses was the importance of a non-judgemental empathetic listening ear, reflecting back as appropriate, taking note of both verbal and non-verbal cues. The importance of taking time to gain trust was stressed. Helping people to see that they are not alone in having such feelings was also mentioned by several participants. Listening needed to be discerning listening trying to identify what the core issues were and distinguishing between sources of shame. Exploring a range of different perspectives on the issue may be helpful as may be validating the right to have a different perspective from others in the church. Identifying strategies to try and deal with shame in a healthy way was a further step which may include exploring what resources someone has both spiritually and practically to gain strength from. For many participants prayer framed their response along with seeking to mediate how God sees an individual. As one person noted *“It’s a very long term process, listening, listening and listening, identifying, trying to create a new pattern of behaviour”*. Connected to this is the importance of presence and the damage done if one is defective in one’s presence towards someone experiencing shame as this can reinforce rather than ameliorate it (Pembroke 2002:140). Availability may well be more important than skill in such relationships (Pembroke 2002:74) although training would still be important to reduce the likelihood of inappropriate support being offered. It may be that in some situations referral to professional counselling or psychotherapy is needed with the church continuing to provide some measure of pastoral support all the while continuing to communicate the acceptance and affirmation discussed below rather than exacerbating the shame through seemingly rejecting a person.

Acceptance, affirmation and assurance

A recurring theme in the data was offering acceptance and affirmation along with an assurance of God’s love. Responses on this theme included *“Say it is okay to be as we are, God always loves us”*, *“Love, love and more love. Mixed with acceptance and compassion as consistently as possible”* and *“Personally I would try and explain that God accepts you however you come. I would try and help by showing acceptance and care through my behaviour and attitudes towards that person”*. Related elements included seeing individuals as a person not a problem, encouraging rather than condemning, helping people see the good in themselves, recognizing we have all fallen short – they are not alone, and trying to help people to love themselves. It may be that a person experiencing shame needs to be

sought out rather than expecting them to come to us. Illustrative of a variation on this was *"Most people don't need to be told they've done wrong, but pretending that they haven't doesn't help and makes us look dishonest"*. Clearly this latter comment only applies to some areas of shame and reassuring people that they were not at fault can be imperative.

Although the concepts sound straightforward it can be challenging to offer acceptance, affirmation and assurance. For example, establishing appropriate boundaries and realistic expectations may be necessary which may sometimes have to be held in tension with loving acceptance. An insightful observation was *"Recognising that it may be difficult for them to accept love and kindness and they may try to push it/me away, so it is important to see beyond any behaviour and let consistent warmth and acceptance do its work"*. For shame to be alleviated the acceptance and affirmation needs to be internalized (Morrison 1996:112). Sometimes the presenting issue will not be the original source of the shame that is being experienced and a person may have got trapped in shame based responses or have become particularly shame prone. It may take some time to uncover the original trigger. Self-affirmation may also be a part of what is required but for this to happen it may be that the opportunity offered to receive affirmation and acceptance needs to be accessible and risk free (de Hooge et al 2012:945), a challenge for ministers

Issues around forgiveness may emerge but are best engaged with when a person is ready which may take a considerable time and meanwhile being affirming and loving is important. People who have experienced shame may well be sensitive to being treated as a "case" where the aim is to close the case. Thus one person talked about *"trying to make sure I avoid anything that would give the impression that I am avoiding them"*. Another insight was trying to ensure that the church doesn't add to their shame which may require addressing issues or even people in the church if there is any inappropriate behaviour. To feel God's forgiveness we need acceptance from God's people, the capacity to internalize this forgiveness which results in a more loving conscience (Cloud 1990:268).

One of the responses to defining shame was about owning what is appropriate and throwing off what is not. This is perhaps part of the journey of offering acceptance, affirmation and assurance as it involves being honest about what the issues are yet accepting the person regardless. One area which emerged as pertinent was to help people process failures or what they perceive as failure. However, one of the dilemmas was the time this sometimes takes and the seeming impossibility for some individuals to reframe things in a way that helps them to move on. Andy talked about the difficulty of that with

one of his friends *“But, actually, the shame that they’ve come away from that past is so extreme that, yes, they’re desperate to know that they’re loved and valued. But the shame that they’re feeling is just so extreme. They’ve got no framework of how to accept that”*. Paula talked about the importance of differentiating between *“letting people understand where they’re going wrong, and shaming them. I don’t think the two are comparable at all”*. She went on to talk about the way Jesus treated people outside of the church and the way he *“showed love and compassion. He didn’t give them a blooming great big telling off”*. She believes that *“to attach shame to any behaviour, attaches it back to the person”*. Out of some difficult experiences with church herself, she argues that, despite how someone maybe living their life, *“I think it’s still our job to show love and compassion to them. Not to say, this love and compassion is dependent on you progressing along the journey. Because I think, should that progression come to a halt, is then the love and compassion going to come to a halt?”* Sadly, some of the responses to the research suggests that the answer to this question is yes. Thus developing a culture of acceptance, affirmation and assurance is vital.

Helping people to feel sufficient

This is a slight nuance from the previous section and focuses on the importance of acknowledging our shared humanity and membership of the body of Christ. One useful insight was from Simon who emphasized the importance from his experience of *“offering and receiving respect, and being treated as an equal, not as an object in ministry”*. A similar statement was made: *“people who minister can sometimes be a right pain in the backside. I do not need ministry; I need love”*. McNish describes the position of the minister: *“Our task as pastors is to legitimize, validate and hold the shame experience of our people, to help them face it and surround it with a strengthened ego position within the context of trustworthy Christian community”* (2003:19). Several church members responded about what they were looking for in a church leader when wanting to discuss shame. For example *“There is nothing worse than turning to a higher authority in the church and still feeling judged by them when you are looking for support”*, and *“God has no favourites we all come to him from the same starting point and that is how we should see ourselves, including clergy”*. One participant talked about the importance of helping people move from shame to anger and seeking justice in situations where someone disclosed a shaming experience and enabling them to respond actively rather than passively. A respondent suggested that in his experience as a spiritual director shame was sometimes masking anger at the church or was

a response to crass pastoral activity and facilitating people to see this was part of helping them process and move on from it. It was also important to try and encourage people to see that the feelings of insufficiency were unmerited.

Building community

This is the communal version of acceptance, affirmation and assurance and encourages an institutional capacity to engage with shame and particularly those who have been significantly impacted by it who may be held within community (Bailey 2013:90). One of the themes to emerge in this section was the importance of incorporating someone who felt shame into a *“loving community and through things like fun and hospitality help the person value themselves and explore their preconceptions of faith and God”*. There were other responses around inviting people to coffee, or meals and generally trying to include them in things which happened in the church helping them to find acceptance within a wider circle. One leader commented that *“I think a functioning community is the most important part of ‘my’ ministry”*, such an approach is affirmed by others who see that nurturing community is an integral role of pastors (Bailey 2013: 91). Another participant suggests that *“There is a need to be real with one another and open with each other. Too often the shame comes from what we feel others think. My experience is that when people get down to real conversations and build real relationships love and acceptance are naturally demonstrated”*. What is integral to this is appropriate and effective communication patterns which contribute to building community (Scheff & Retzinger 2001:38).

Self-perception and biblical perspectives

Challenging and changing negative self-perceptions is an element of supporting those who are experiencing shame. For some, using the Bible to help them see themselves and their shame as God sees them can be beneficial (Tracy 2005:83). That we are made in the image of God¹⁴¹ is a starting point:

the image of God is a promise and an assurance that one’s humanity is not determined by philosophical, theological, social or cultural constructs, but is held and sustained by the very hand of God as he reaches out to affirm the humanness of each person irrespective of their circumstances ... the doctrine of the imago Dei is a deeply pastoral doctrine which offers hope to the hopeless, comfort to the downhearted and a wholeness to those whose lives have been broken and damaged by fate and circumstances (Swinton 2000:32).

¹⁴¹ Genesis 1.27.

Another insight is from Philippians 2.5 “Let the same mind be in you that is in Christ Jesus” which infers wholeness and well-being (Wimberly 1999:14). Through his death, Jesus bore his shame, understanding this can help with self-perception (Tennent 2007:95).

Reading the gospels there are many stories which may help people change their self-perception. The woman with the haemorrhage¹⁴² and the woman caught in adultery¹⁴³ who Jesus did not condemn, were the most frequently cited stories to help people understand the response of Jesus to shame. A participant comments on the former story that it “*says a great deal about the pain, loneliness and desperation people can feel, Jesus embodies what the church should do in those situations. When a person filled with shame reaches out we should stop and engage with that person, talk to them and value them*”. Such stories are important because they “*show Jesus accepting individuals as they are in that moment, not condemning their past, or parading it before them and the onlookers. He shows great warmth and gentleness in acknowledging these people have a future*”. Examples where someone did something wrong but was then restored can also be helpful. The prodigal son¹⁴⁴ was suggested as illustrative of the “*love of God in extreme measure*” and the shame and guilt felt by the son. The story of David and Uriah¹⁴⁵ was offered as another example of God continuing to love us when we fall, restoring and working through us. The way Jesus responded to Peter’s indiscretions¹⁴⁶ is another useful illustration as is Zacchaeus.¹⁴⁷ The choice of Mary as the mother of Jesus may provide hope to some, as one participant comments “*God has a purpose for us all, however small, scared or like a ‘nobody’ we may feel. The shame Mary must have felt and the pain she went through but all for a meaning*”. Encouraging a theological interpretation of such stories helps those experiencing shame encounter God and understand the character of the God the Bible mediates (Green 2011:4-5).

Creative media

If one understands creativity as part of what it means to be made in the image of God, then creative activities may open people up to God and their own potential (Ford 2011:84-5).

¹⁴² Luke 8.43-48.

¹⁴³ John 7.53-8.11.

¹⁴⁴ Luke 15.11-32.

¹⁴⁵ 2 Samuel 11.5-27.

¹⁴⁶ John 21.1-19.

¹⁴⁷ Luke 19.1-10.

Creativity also embraces the notion that formulaic ministry will not necessarily work as each person's experience of shame is different and they may respond to a variety of resources, rituals or symbols (Albers 1995:139). Holmes uses the term "creative repair" (2011:67) to describe the role that engaging in creative activities has for those who work in pastoral contexts and one may speculate that the same could be true of those who have experienced shame and that similar results may be found. The use of art and literature in facilitating the exploration of "problematic aspects of their personality, without undue anxiety" (Nussbaum 2004:296) is one to be explored. However, one may need to be wary of recommending material that is deemed shameful within the cultural context the person is in, although this could liberate as well as exacerbate shame. Art journaling is a tool that may be helpful in exploring emotions, Soneff (2008:5) talks about "finding peace in the midst of emotional turmoil" through using introspective journaling using a range of media in the context of a healing journal. Similarly therapeutic journal writing may assist some people given its reflective and reflexive nature (Thompson 2011:15) and may help one find one's own voice in relation to things that may have been "previously unknown, unspeakable, or unacknowledged" (Thompson 2011:31). It may also help in the identification of coping strategies (Thompson 2011:31). However, advocating such practices may need to be done with caution, with appropriate support and ideally with some personal experience of the discipline.

Drawing on appropriate resources

Resources which seem appropriate to support and help someone experiencing shame may partly depend on one's spiritual tradition. Thus one respondent talked about the importance of prayer ministry and exposing someone to gracious loving. The necessity of trying to deal adult to adult rather than putting someone into child in transactional analysis terms (Berne 1964) was also recommended. The need to sit with someone and encourage and allow them to express anger was involved in many cases. With this in mind, examples of biblical righteous anger can be useful along with examples where someone did something wrong and was chastised for it, particularly the sort of wrong that the person you are working with experienced towards themselves. For some, very practical activities such as banging nails into a wooden cross or writing or drawing things and burning them can be helpful. Reminding people that "*their first allegiance is to God, not to the church*" may be beneficial in some contexts. There are also occasions where these sorts of processes need

to be done corporately, not just individually. There is some evidence that spiritual practices can be helpful with difficult emotions such as shame. For example, centring prayer, resting in a loving God may lead to a release of emotional wounds (Ferguson et al 2010:305).¹⁴⁸

Several authors focus on the significance of gazing upon the face of Christ and how this being seen may be significant in transforming one's shame (Goodliff 2005:99; Pattison 2013:61; Pembroke 2010:41; Stockitt 2012:152).

Forgiveness, repentance and restoration

A small number of participants focused on the importance of confession, forgiveness and repentance as part of responding to shame. For example: *"Priests are God's ministers and have a duty - as we all do - not to overlook wrongdoing or to lead someone to believe they have not sinned when they have. They also have a duty to do so sometimes sensitively or very directly as the situation demands."* However, some made it clear that this was only appropriate in contexts where the person concerned was experiencing the conviction of the Holy Spirit and was being drawn to repentance. Some framed this within an emphasis of God's grace understanding that God knows and loves us while seeking to show empathy and understanding themselves. One participant discussed the difference between healthy and unhealthy shame with the former bringing about repentance and restoration of relationship and the dangers of shame without hope and redemption. Forgiveness is clearly associated with guilt, with shame it is more complex but there are some elements of shame where one needs to forgive oneself or others which may be a slow process (de Smet 2007:117).

Referral

As one participant noted *"It's important to recognise my own limitations to the help I can offer, otherwise, the person may suffer more shame"* thus referring someone on to professional counselling or to someone with more expertise in this area should always be considered. However, continuing to support the person can be important as they may feel more shame if they feel they have just been passed on because they are too difficult.

¹⁴⁸ They describe four moments of centring prayer (based on Keating's model) with the first being a sacred word (beginning of the prayer), the second rest (sense of God's Presence, Peace, Interior Silence), the third unloading (as a result of the deep rest of body, mind and spirit, the defense mechanisms relax and the undigested emotional material of early life emerges from the unconscious at times in the form of a bombardment of thoughts of primitive emotions) and the fourth evacuation (or primitive emotions and thoughts and return to sacred words). (Ferguson et al 2010:311).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to explore ministerial praxis in the light of the research findings and literature and identify both ways in which shame can be mitigated against and ways of working with those who have experienced shame.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARIZING THE JOURNEY – RESPONDING

Shame is an incredibly inarticulate emotion. It's something you bathe in, it's not something you wax eloquent about. It's such a deep, dark, ugly thing, there are very few words for it (Ronson 2015a:271).

[Theology] involves imagining a future that is consistent with the God we come to know (Bondi 1995:11).

When I began working on this thesis in 2010 shame was still a relatively obscure topic, however, over the intervening years shame as a topic for debate has gained greater prominence in popular culture through authors such as Brown's (2012) TED talk which has been seen nearly 5 million times.¹⁴⁹ Ronson (2015a) who discusses social media and shaming, and Jacquet (2015) who explores the role of shaming in relation to political change. *The New Yorker* had a feature focusing on public shame (Schwartz 2015) and the devastating impact of this. *Christianity Today* had as its cover story in March 2015 "The Return of Shame" suggesting that "we feel less guilty than ever before – and more ashamed than ever before" seeing this as a "major shift in western morality" (Crouch 2015:33). This shift Crouch describes as a postmodern fame-shame culture where "the only true crime is to publicly exclude – and thus shame – others. Talk of right and wrong is troubling when it is accompanied by seeming indifference to the experience of shame that accompanies judgment of 'immorality'" (2015:39). This has led to a reframing by some of the traditional gospel message with a focus on Jesus' engagement with the marginalized of society and noting a challenge I have faced in this thesis of the way that Jesus does exclude or shame which challenges this revised narrative (Crouch 2015:39). However, a response to this can be the move from fame to honour, thus "the remedy for shame is not becoming famous. It is not even being affirmed. It is being incorporated into a community with new, different, and better standards for honor. It's a community where weakness is not excluded but valued" (Crouch 2015:41). This hopefully means that shame as a topic will be easier to raise in church settings.

The writing of this thesis has been a journey for me, one which will not end, but at this stage I want to put some marker posts down as to where I have got to. The practical theological endeavour leads to change and articulating the implications of what I have learnt

¹⁴⁹ At the time of writing in March 2015.

for the transformation of my praxis is an appropriate conclusion for the task. I will discuss four main areas: shame, ministerial praxis, being a practical theologian and theological education as these four areas encompass the scope of this thesis. Following this chapter I add to my autoethnographical writing, in an afterword offering a final reflection on my journey.

Shame

Many people have memories that haunt them such as the one I described of the public weigh-in during a Maths lesson and I am well aware of the fears from the past that still have some hold on me today (deMello 1984:232). Shame is an integral part of many of these memories and some of these fears. However much the Bible may say “Do not worry” (e.g. Matthew 6.25f) I still do, and then feel shame for not having the faith in God that I believe I should have. This is despite reading Psalms¹⁵⁰ which make it clear that doubt and fear are part of the experience of God’s people. One of the main things that I have learnt about shame is that significant elements of it come from an inability to live up to an ideal that may be prescribed by the church, our own expectations, our projections on to God or others, or our interpretation of the Bible. This ideal can be the audience that we feel shame in front of although shame may also be experienced in the presence of people.

My biblical understanding of shame seeks to take seriously the notion of two horizons (Thiselton 1980:xix) recognizing that the biblical text and the limitations of the cultural context I am reading it in are both important. The first instance of shame encountered in the Bible led to Adam and Eve hiding from God who responded in a compassionate way by clothing them although they did still have to live with the consequences of their actions. However, my theological tradition means I resonate with a Christocentric hermeneutic (Pietersen 2011:70) which suggests that through his death on the cross Jesus enables us to reconcile our own shameful experiences (McNish 2003:19) and to attain immortality (Irenaeus 2015:347). This enables me to embrace the acceptance and belonging seen in the encounters of Jesus with those experiencing shame and seek to demonstrate this in my own ministry.

Shame is culturally determined and can be felt about almost anything and one’s predispositions, personal values, socialization, family and community context may be a

¹⁵⁰ Eg Psalm 77.

significant influence on what we experience shame over. Shame can also be reinforced externally by a range of nonverbal signals (Braithwaite 1989:57-8). While I have learnt that discretion shame is valuable and necessary for society and communities to function as well as for self-respect and the respect of others, estranging or disgrace shame does appear to be the blight that other authors have identified (Goodliff 2005:4; McNish 2004:1; O'Donohue 1998:161, Pattison 2000:2). I used the term "shame which inhibits" earlier in the thesis and neither that nor discretion fully capture this more positive dimension of shame. Both discretion and inhibition can have negative connotations and sound cautious and perhaps uninviting as a habit. The notion of foresight shame perhaps takes into account the thinking through one does sometimes about one's actions but some of discretion shame is perhaps more instinctive than this having internalized some of the cultural mores. The same criticism would be true of judicious shame but this has a wider scope possibly in considering the contextual nature of shame. Thus in talking about different types of shame I may use the term judicious as an alternative to discretion as it sounds shrewd rather than cautious and this may make it more attractive to some.

While still agreeing that there is a lack of consensus as to the meaning or nature of shame, in articulating a typology of shame in the church I have sought to offer an understanding which can inform ministerial praxis underpinned by both theoretical and theological insights as well as empirical study. In part I am doing this to promote conscientization as shame is not always recognized or acknowledged and it is at times confused with guilt.

Domain:	1 Personal	2 Relational	3 Communal	4 Structural	5 Theological	6 Historical
Facets of shame	(Non)complying (Non)conforming (Dis)integrating (In)sufficiency (Non)entity	Vicarious	(De)stigmatizing (Dis)affecting (Dis)empowering	(Un)colluding (De)fragmenting	Associative Dissociative Dissonant	Buried Residual

Table 8.1 Final typology of shame in the church

Thus encouraging church leaders to consider the different domains of the typology and the propensity for shame to occur may facilitate more mindful (Johns 2004:2) or faithful (Poling 1991:190-1) practice. By being aware of some of the facets or indicators of shame in relation to behaviour, feeling or experience as denoted by the typology, shame may be more readily identified. What this may involve is finding the questions and language to discuss issues relating to shame with individuals or groups. For example, while fully believing in

each member of the body of Christ fulfilling their part I am also aware of the respondents in my research who experience encouragement to get more involved in the church negatively with some finding it shaming when they did not want to or were not able to commit to additional responsibilities.

Although I researched the typology in the context of the church, there is nothing necessarily religious about it outside of the theological domain, and as my initial story about school suggests, institutions can engage in shaming, inadvertently or as a tactic to encourage conformity. Thus there may be the potential to develop some training for managers in a range of settings from the typology and it may well also offer some insights for professionals working with clients in helping them to identify their behaviour or some of the underlying issues of negative experiences. For example, the tendency to withdraw, identified in relation to vicarious shame in an organizational context, is one which managers need to be aware of and seek to explore and help their staff process (Chi et al 2015:1).

Returning to the phenomenological definition of shame in Chapter 1, there is nothing in my empirical research to refute it but a more concise workable definition will be beneficial in taking forward the research:

Shame can cause us to act both positively and negatively, it is contextual and related to an audience including an ideal or internalised other. Positively it may constrain our behaviour in ways which maintain appropriate boundaries, self-respect, facilitates intimacy, discretion, dignity and is facilitated by our conscience. Negatively, shame may involve disgrace, estrangement, exclusion, believing oneself to be worthless, flawed, contaminated, unlovable and manifest in a variety of ways including physiological, withdrawal and rage.

This definition encapsulates the main characteristics of shame as revealed in the research.

Honouring

I have a growing awareness of the importance of honouring as a ministerial praxis towards individuals both one to one and in public, through social media as well as in teaching, church activities and so on. In honouring others one could be seen as sharing the honour of Christ. It is one way of trying to provide a counterbalance against the shame people may be carrying although in and of itself it cannot redress the shame. This seems to be a key theme emerging from the research, that some shaming can be avoided if an attitude is adopted of consciously treating everyone with honour (Campbell 2003:295) and will be discussed further below.

Ministerial praxis

The God I believe in will determine how I understand the church, and both impact the ministerial praxis I inhabit, although the scope to explore this in detail has been limited. Over the course of this research I have learned that one of the most crucial tasks of ministerial praxis in relation to shame is to create an environment in which inappropriate shaming does not happen and where people feel safe to share their shame if this is what they need to do. An awareness that experiencing shame may increase self-sufficiency and reduce reliance on family and friends (Chao et al 2011:208) suggests that one may need to be proactive in reaching out to those who may want to withdraw. Integral to this is an understanding of hospitality that creates a space “where the dignity of every human person is vouchsafed, embraced, and protected, deep within the heart of the church” (Beck 2011: 140). This involves cultivating an atmosphere of belonging, acceptance and affirmation where people feel liberated to be who they are. The injunction of Jesus to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself”¹⁵¹ is perhaps a good starting point for exploring how to set such a culture. However, experience suggests that it can require a proper understanding of what it means to love ourselves to appropriate this verse which may include “having integrity, taking care of yourself and being self-protective when it is required” (Layder 2004:36). This may also include a resilience towards shame and the capacity to process shaming incidents in a way which does not leave a lasting legacy. The shame examen described in the previous chapter may help with conscientization of shame and working it through with God and sometimes a trusted other.

One of the challenges of ministerial praxis that I have become more aware of is how to describe the relationship one has with those one ministers to as I have had to reflect on this from the new perspective of being ordained. I speculate that some of the experiences of shame that emerged through the research were because of a lack of understanding on one or both sides as to how to frame such relationships. Youth work literature discusses the idea of “like a friend” (Young 1999:72), or “friends of” rather than “friends with” drawing on incarnational theology (Richards 2014:124). While experience suggests that young people can understand the nuance of this because of the difference in age and a power dimension

¹⁵¹ Luke 10.27.

that is clear in many contexts, it can be harder with adults.¹⁵² Although talking about nursing, Campbell's notion of "skilled companionship" (1985:49-50) is one that that resonates. He suggests that it encompasses "closeness which is not sexually stereotyped; it implies movement and change; it expresses mutuality; and it requires commitment but within defined limits" (Campbell 1985:49). Such companionship involves bodily presence, helping a person move forward in their journey, a degree of mutuality inherent in being with rather than just doing to, and a limited commitment realizing that there are other dimensions to the life of the carer as well as often a time limited relationship. What I particularly like about the use of the term companionship is its echoes of the Eucharist with the term deriving from an old French term *compaignon* which can be literally translated as "one who breaks bread with another" (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com>). It is also a term resonant of the friendship with God that is inherent in the eschatological vision of the banquet found in the gospels (Hauerwas & Wells 2006:16).

There is a closed Facebook group for Curates and there are regular posts which in essence describe situations where shame is being experienced. It is clear that at the point of posting on Facebook strong emotions are felt. In reading about organizational life I encountered the concept of seeing which of five levels a problem is impacting or needs to be addressed at: environment, behaviour, skills and abilities, beliefs and values, identity (Sartain and Katsarou 2011:110-1). I have found it helpful to think this through as sometimes simple changes in environment or behaviour can provide a solution to a problem, other times it is much more complex and attention needs to be given to articulating values and/or building consensus. I have also found it liberating when I see that it is a role issue and almost anyone in a similar role would be facing the same challenges or dilemmas. This model has helped me ameliorate shame as I have been able to process where the issue belongs and then give it the attention it merits rather than getting consumed by it.

I have been completing this thesis while inhabiting two different worlds, this is a challenge with regard to ministerial identity and acknowledgement of the reality that there will often be multiple communities of practice, what Wenger-Trayner et al (2015) call "Landscapes of Practice". I work at a confessionally evangelical charismatic theological college and am doing my curacy at a church which has signed up to the inclusive church

¹⁵² I am not here debating the wisdom or otherwise of reciprocal friendship between a minister and those they minister to, that is a much wider debate but seeking to find ways to conceptualize the relationship in regard to mitigating shame in ministerial praxis.

movement (<http://inclusive-church.org.uk>). While I believe in working within the values of any institution I am part of (although willing to challenge them if needed), one of the things that is non-negotiable for me is to believe that I am acting with integrity in my ministerial praxis. This desire has served to reinforce a Christocentric approach to ministry that I have had for many years and which has been the focus of other research where I have explored the ministry of Jesus as recorded in Luke's gospel and kenosis, drawing on the Christ hymn in Philippians 2.5-11 (Nash 2008). The insights I gained there still nourish my understanding of ministerial praxis. As part of that research I articulated a manifesto¹⁵³ which incorporated kenotic, servant oriented, agapic ministry (2008:216-9) which when I look at it through the lens of shame still seems to be an approach which is compatible with my desire to offer non-shaming ministerial praxis at an individual level. A phrase I find helpful in seeking to do this derives from The Message's paraphrase of John 1.8 where the role of John the Baptist is to "show the way to the light" and what I am increasingly aware of is that my role is facilitating people in their own understanding of Jesus and the consequences for them of choosing to follow him rather than the more dogmatic version of faith I grew up with where others told me how I should live. This is perhaps what helps me to dwell in different worlds yet feel that I can minister with integrity and in ways which give me life.

Being a practical theologian

When I started work on this thesis early reading suggested I was researching a marginalized subject in the context of a marginalized discipline. This no longer appears to be the case for either dimension although there are a plethora of approaches and a wide variety of definitions. I particularly like the idea that

practical theologians are unapologetic change agents. Much of our work aims at critically assessing what is destructive and diminishing of our lives and what can be changed in order that individuals, communities or societies can strive toward a more just common good (Cahalan & Mikoski 2014:6).¹⁵⁴

This thesis is a piece of practical theology and one of the tensions that has hovered continually in the background as I have thought, researched and written is the extent to

¹⁵³ While the focus of the research was incarnational urban youth work, as I have reflected over the years the manifesto reflects my approach to ministry in whatever context so it feels relevant to share it here.

¹⁵⁴ Cahalan and Mikoski list these as key features: attentive to theory-practice complexity; practice and performance oriented; oriented to multidimensional dynamics of social context and embodiment; holistic; interdisciplinary; open-ended, flexible and porous; theologically normed; hermeneutical; interventionist and critically constructive; teleological and eschatological; self-reflective and self-identified which reflect much of the approach adopted in this thesis (2014:7).

which I write to established academic conventions or take an approach more akin to the reflective writing that is the underpinning of my theological endeavour. Walton notes that a reflective approach can be risky (2014:xii) and is less well understood as a genre. What this thesis has reinforced however, is the significance of reflexivity in theology and an enhanced commitment to seeking to identify in my own work as well as the work of others, the ways in which I am meaning making is “relational, provisional, embodied and located” (Walton 2014:xvi). I have also become more aware of the way my embodied theology and theological tradition can seem dissonant at times and I have explored a little of this regarding ministerial praxis.

I have found that adding a dimension of autoethnographical writing has enhanced my experience of research and my approach to practical theology as it enabled me to explore reflexivity in depth, become aware of some of the issues that may face participants in research and ensure that I remained aware of the impact of the research on me throughout the journey. In reading what others say about their own autoethnographic endeavours the propensity to experience shame is present, thus: “It’s [autoethnography] voluntarily standing up naked in front of your peers, colleagues, family, and the academy, which is a bold decision!” (Forber-Pratt 2015:1). I have been challenged on making that decision but it was the only way I felt I could approach the topic with integrity, I could have made the same journey without writing it up but that would have felt as if I were submitting an incomplete thesis.

I have become more aware of the breadth of sources in practical theology through art and literature as well as more traditional texts and while Rodin’s *Eve* featured prominently in some of my early thinking I have also read a range of songs, poems, novels and plays which, while I have not directly cited many of them in this thesis, have helped me understand shame as part of the human condition and they will help shape my teaching on shame in the future.¹⁵⁵

As both a priest and educator I am committed to formation and my particular contribution to the process in the light of this thesis is how shame impacts that and how we may minister differently to avoid shaming people in ways which are not compatible with the God we seek to mediate. With this in mind I have also been influenced by Campbell’s view of practical theology as virtuous theology which is “about being with people in their

¹⁵⁵ These include Janis Ian’s song *At Seventeen*, Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*, Lewis’ *Till we have faces*, Miller’s *The Crucible*, Picoult’s *Salem Falls*, Robinson’s *Home*, *Gilead* and *Lila*.

emotional turmoil, uncertainty, despair, and fear of vulnerability and death, but above all it is about a sustained effort to give honour and care to all humans equally” (2003:295). These perspectives reinforce the idea that theology is done in community, not alone and I recognize that I have been influenced by many people and contexts and in being willing to be open to fresh perspectives the changes that have taken place in my theological thinking are reflected in who I am and what I do.

I offered my own definition of practical theology earlier in the thesis and repeat it now as a reminder of the sort of scholar I have sought to be in researching and writing this thesis. Thus I am a practical theologian who sees the discipline as a

holistic, creative, experiential, contextual, socio-politically aware, interdisciplinary, analytical, integrative, dynamic, communal, loving, theological, reflexive endeavour with a primary focus on exploring, developing and transforming praxis.

This is the vision I keep in mind and take forward in my ministry and find that from day to day different elements of this definition seem to be more apt in the situations that I face.

Theological education

As a theological educator I wanted to consider my research from that perspective also. This section draws on some of the empirical research as well as my own reflections.

Conscientization

My ministerial education encouraged both self-awareness and insight into some of the issues that I would face as a priest. I believe that shame should be an overt topic included in the curriculum in some way as sometimes hearing something named or articulated can help one recognize a similar tendency or issue in oneself and thus encourage seeking help before the matter becomes serious and the shame intensified. Two respondents with extensive experience of supporting clergy identified several areas where shame may occur which needs processing. The first area of experiences were around self-perception as ministers including gut feelings about not measuring up; a sense of inadequacy – feeling never good enough; dissonance between outside presentation and reality of life; difference between intellectual and emotional responses to issues; and the difficulty of accepting the latter sometimes (eg I know I don’t have to be perfect but feel like I do); frustration at having given into temptation and feeling should have done better: passion that can’t be controlled. A second area relates to religious dimensions such as feeling of causing displeasure to God;

feeling like prayer life is inadequate; not measuring up to standards of holiness. A third area involves others such as a congregational pressure to be perfect; difference in standards between what we expect of others and of ourselves; expectations on the family; false ideas about discipleship; loss of faith; not understanding what it means to be a public representative of Christ. I have become more conscious of the breadth of examples I need to share when teaching on leadership and ministerial praxis and have found that being willing to share liberates others to do so too.

The research suggested that there was great diversity as to how theological education institutions approached shame as a topic ranging from a well-integrated theme to located in cross-cultural mission or pastoral care modules or down to the personal choice of a tutor. One respondent posited that because shame was seen as emotional rather than logical and curriculum was largely determined by men it did not merit talking about.

For some it was important to raise awareness about shame as it *“is very debilitating mentally emotionally and spiritually and limits the development of faith and the growth of maturity of church members”*. Suggestions were made as to what should be taught including some wise psychological education; helping people understand both unhealthy shame with an awareness of people’s true identity and value in God; and healthy shame promoting modesty and right behaviour. Another person used the terms legitimate or illegitimate to describe shame, with legitimate being that which encouraged people to address issues inconsistent with their faith and illegitimate often the consequence of inequality and power relationships. They go on to suggest that this happens because of *“a lack of self-awareness in clergy of what they are doing and its effects on people, or even because of clergy lacking a clear enough self-identity to deal with people expressing views or supporting practices contrary to their views”*. Clergy need to be able to help people process both healthy and unhealthy shame. One person offered a list of areas where training was needed: awareness, diversity training, communication training, leadership skills, discipling skills, handling difficult conversations, change management skills. I ran an optional session on shame in the church and got a very positive response from students (both ordinands and youth work students) and intend to include a short section on it in my teaching on leadership in the future.

Formation and facilitating the development of a non-shaming culture

Formation is an integral part of theological education and there are a range of issues which related to shame and formation. Perhaps the most important is helping students find

healthy ways of dealing with their own shame so they can deal with others. A range of suggestions were made as to how to help people to process their shame.¹⁵⁶ This includes listening and refraining from judging as God is the one who judges us, being aware that our first response is that which is remembered and this should be compassionate and loving. As one of the participants noted, it is important to communicate that *“There’s nothing you can do to make God love you any more than he does already. There’s nothing you can do that can make God love you any less than he already does”*. Biblical material can be useful including looking at Jesus and the way he accepted those on the margins of society. Another person had this suggestion *“Jesus says ‘come to me’. His love is unconditional and for everybody. Welcome everybody, take time to listen to their story. Try very hard not to judge, an outward persona may hide a very different person”*. The importance of seeing shame within the wider setting was identified by one participant:

If it is necessary to challenge someone, it should be done in a transparent way, with privacy and a chance for them to respond and discuss the best way forward. Where other church members are aware or affected by the “shame”, it would be important to help the “shamed” person to reconcile with them and experience grace within their church community as far as possible in addition to reconciling with God.

A further caution was the danger of people having shame imposed on them: *“Shame can be put on us by others ie from abuse ... the victim is always full of shame, even though it’s not their fault and we can pick up shame ourselves though the mistakes we make. Please know and understand the difference and be prepared for it to take time”*.

Another issue may be encouraging the exploration of prejudice and learning to identify attitudes which may be a significant source of shame. Related to this is offering good teaching and practice on relationships, particularly men and women working alongside each other and offering a positive hermeneutic of some of the verses used to shame women clergy. Facilitating space for dialogue and accepting and allowing difference is significant in developing a non-shaming culture. The threads which came through most strongly from church members were about leaving judging to God; creating space for dialogue; and encouraging people to respond as Jesus did. This comment was emblematic of the responses:

Read and digest the gospels and let Jesus’ actions and words shape and challenge your own. Focus on compassion and mercy rather than trying to make people conform or

¹⁵⁶ Although some of this material overlaps with the more general discussion on this topic I am choosing to keep it separate as examples of what approaches may be advocated by theological educators and thus experienced in theological institutions.

behave as you think they should. However, also be bold in challenging people when they themselves are acting in ways which shame or embarrass others eg being judgemental, declaring who God finds unacceptable. Be slow to criticize others and be willing to confess your own faults publicly on occasion.

This comment suggests that formation is significant and facilitating ordinands and others in ministerial training to work out what sort of minister they want to be is an integral part of the theological educator's role. As one respondent suggested "*Don't forget what it was like to be a member of the church without being in leadership*". Another contribution highlighted the difference between supporting one another to lead better, more Godly lives and judging and shaming others. Related to this is the importance of not feeling shame when our ministry fails to "*rescue*" people or we don't see the change that we hoped for in individuals, groups or a congregation.

Modelling

Several participants raised the issue of theological educators modelling a non-shaming culture. This is a response that merits reflection:

If people are being educated within a shaming culture then that is what the student will learn. For example, missing morning prayer is seen as shameful and this can be taken on by the fellow students. Thinking they have a right to be questioning the issue without first understanding the reason why the student missed prayer. My experience at college was that it was easier to ask for forgiveness than permission as permission was rarely granted. This in itself presents an unhealthy attitude.

In formational contexts attitudes and approaches may be caught as much as taught and examining my own praxis has helped me to work out the difference between encouraging appropriate and professional behaviour, for example, arriving on time for a lecture and engendering a climate of fear where people arrive on time because of what may happen if they don't. I am also aware that timekeeping as an issue relates to both my values and personality and that my approach to ministerial praxis needs to take into account where my preferences may not coalesce with others.

Challenging shaming behaviour when observed is important to model how others may do it in a parish or other context. If such behaviour is not challenged then it may appear that it is being condoned. A participant commented that we should "*show love and acceptance to all, don't make people feel ashamed, that is not the way to help people find God's forgiveness*". More specifically,

there is a need for clergy to be open-minded about what their theological values are and that they may differ to others. Even if they continue to disagree, this should be an opportunity for dialogue and learning rather than finger-pointing. There should be an understanding of the impact of labels that people carry (that aren't easily shaken off) when the finger has been pointed.

This has been apparent in some of the debates taking place during the period of my research such as around women in ministry and same sex marriage. Again this may relate to values and personality as another respondent noted the importance of addressing issues believing that they would rather be a person who speaks the truth than follows the crowd and turns a blind eye.

I have been employed in ministry since 1984 but have found that since being ordained there are some distinctive issues that I did not experience previously. The ontological nature of being a priest means that I sometimes feel that my conduct is unpriestly and I feel more shame at some thoughts and actions than I have done in the past. While I have always sought to be consistent in private and public I am more aware of the implications of my behaviour when I have a dog collar on as in essence I am a representative of God and the church and am aware that generalizations may be made out of what has been observed of me. This is perhaps the significant difference for clergy – they are more exposed, more vulnerable and perhaps more judged than other professionals, particularly those who are in a church who live among the communities they serve. It is perhaps helpful to be reminded of the way that God clothed Adam and Eve when they became aware of their nakedness and while as priests we may feel more acutely a fear of exposure, of a metaphorical nakedness and sense of helplessness that God has compassion on us and will meet us at our point of need is important to remember and communicate.

Conclusion

The trigger to writing this thesis was beginning training for ordination in the Church of England. As the foreword explains, I have been aware of the negative implications of shame in my life for many years and in becoming formally a part of the institutional church it began to feel important that I explore this in relation to future ministry. The research question which emerged from my initial reading, writing and thinking was *How might an understanding of shame in the church inform approaches to ministerial praxis?* The first chapter explains how this question evolved into developing a typology as an expression of understanding shame in the church. The typology was explored through empirical research,

revised in the light of it, and offers six different domains in which shame may occur: personal, relational, communal, structural, theological and historical and expresses ways in which this shame may be manifested or experienced. I found that personal shame involved issues of (non)compliance, (non)conformity, (dis)integration, (in)sufficiency, (non)entity. Relational shame was about vicarious experiences. Communal shame involved (de)stigmatizing, (dis)affecting, (dis)empowering. Structural shame including (un)colluding and (de)fragmenting. Theological shame focused on being associative, dissociative or dissonant. Historical shame involved residual and buried issues. This is my original contribution to the field along with the associated approach to ministerial praxis derived from the typology, research and reading which focuses on mitigating shame in one's own practice at both an individual and corporate level and in responding to those who have experienced shame. This includes what I have called a shame examen which may help identify occasions of shaming and being shamed which one may not have been aware of at the time.

My intention was to undertake a piece of practical theology while demonstrating an understanding of good practice in qualitative research methods. This involved synthesising processes from both fields and overtly naming which element of the process different chapters covered. In particular, I decided to embrace autoethnographical writing to enable me to engage fully with reflexivity issues as I could not, with integrity, ask people questions about a sensitive topic I had not first explored my own responses to. The elements of the process were noticing, reflexivity, identifying, describing, naming, focusing, investigating, analysing, evaluating, theorizing, synthesizing, responding. The particular research tools used were an internet questionnaire and focus groups which along with literature provided an opportunity to triangulate findings. My thinking, learning and practice were particularly challenged in the areas of understanding shame, ministerial praxis, doing practical theology and theological education which were the underpinning concepts for this thesis and reflect also the two main loci of my ministry. This process has enabled me to make a contribution to the particular task of practical theology which involves ensuring that "the church's public proclamations and praxis-in-the-world faithfully reflect the nature and purpose of God's continuing mission to the world" (Swinton 2000:12) although understandings of what this mean will be contextual and contested, my lens has been shame. In the future I would like to explore my experiences further with a focus on spiritual life writing understanding that

“our grasp of what is of utmost significance is as likely to be emotional and embodied as it is to be critical and rational” (Walton 2015:7).

This thesis offers significant material to enable conscientization to occur about shame in the church which is necessary because of the complexity of the concept which includes some difficulty in identifying it, differentiating it from guilt and formulating responses to those who are experiencing shame. The typology offers an accessible model which enables ministers to consider both their context and their own praxis. The insights on ministerial praxis offer material which could easily be developed into teaching material which can inform initial or continuing ministerial education. Within a local church the thesis may offer useful material for training those engaged in pastoral care, mission and worship in reflecting on how these areas of ministry may be done in a non-shaming way and also what signs there may be that someone is experiencing shame and how to respond. It may also be useful in considering culture setting in the church and articulating underpinning values and practices.

There are several areas of future research emerging from this thesis. One is to test the typology in a local church context including auditing activities, teaching and using adapted versions of the questionnaires and focus groups. The shame examen could be researched among both church leaders and church members. Another area is to research the relevance of the typology in other institutional contexts, for example education. Researching curricula for theological education is another area along with developing some training materials and testing them out in a variety of contexts. Developing audit tools which enable ministers to review their own practice is another development. There is scope for research into particular ministerial settings or contexts to explore how shame is used, experienced, processed and worked through. Articulating a comprehensive biblical and or theological definition is an area which is under-researched. My particular interest is to research children and youth workers and their understandings of and approaches to shame as I speculate that many children and young people have an early formative experience such as mine at school which can adversely influence them.

My typology of shame in the church offers a model and vocabulary to discuss an element of church life which is not often overtly discussed but which may be damaging the life and witness of individuals, groups, congregations or in some cases denominations. The implications discussed for ministerial praxis offer ways in which shame can be mitigated but also how those who have experienced shame can be supported. This thesis provides an

opportunity for conscientization about an area of life which is often misunderstood, ignored or suppressed but which if addressed properly offers the potential of embracing the life in all its fullness offered by Jesus¹⁵⁷ both individually and through the embodiment of Christ in the church.

¹⁵⁷ John 10.10.

AFTERWORD
CHANGED PERSPECTIVE
REFLEXIVITY, RESPONDING

Treasure island map

As I reflect on landscapes of shame in the church it seems that at this point of the journey I have a treasure island map where my beloved seascapes surround the varied landscapes on the island which includes the barren and wilderness spots as well as pastoral idylls.

Treasure, in the shape of opportunities for faithful ministerial praxis, is to be found all over the map, some buried, some there for all to see if you know what to look for. The metaphor of treasure is the one which has emerged as this part of my journey has come to an end.

I have a box with treasure in it, all sorts of things that have significance to me gathered over the course of my life. If the proverbial fire engulfed our house, it is that box I would grab. There is little of value to anyone else in that box, it reflects what is important to me and evokes memories of relationships, achievements, joy and wonder. Some of my treasure is memories where there was nothing to put in the box as I did not see the significance of an event or object, like the time my parents buried “gold” at the end of a rainbow which was wrapped in cloth with an S on it. Finding faith for me was, eventually, like the parable Jesus tells in Matthew 13.44 where someone sells all they have to buy the field where they have found the hidden treasure. That this treasure was to be found in an earthen vessel¹⁵⁸ served to remind me of the fragility of humanity, and particularly my own vulnerability. When I read, and then heard, this part of the ordination service: “Remember always with thanksgiving that the treasure now to be entrusted to you is Christ's own flock, bought by the shedding of his blood on the cross. It is to him that you will render account for your stewardship of his people” (Archbishops’ Council 2014) I was offered a new lens through which to see my ministerial praxis, people were treasure, to be treasured, this noun and verb were new for me in this context. If I think of those I treasure, disgrace shaming is something I would never want to inflict on them. Instead I want to cherish, protect, value and honour them in much the same as I want to do with my own diverse treasures while acknowledging their right to choose how they respond to my ministry, metaphorically where on the treasure island they want to be (if they want to be there at all).

¹⁵⁸ Cf 2 Corinthians 4.7 KJV.

The long and winding road

I have always had a strong sense of duty which can leak into over-responsibility and I need to be careful of the tension between a willingness to be accountable for my ministry with a lack of capacity to trust God with people and to fully honour their autonomy. I also feel pulled in many directions with multiple roles and responsibilities and regularly reflect on how the pieces fit together and try to check any propensity to feel shame because the pie chart is not divided into the correct proportions. A more holistic image is perhaps the mandala which I use quite often as a tool for reflection appreciating the opportunity to encounter a sacred space (Fincher 2009:2) and bring into consciousness some of the unconscious thoughts that have an impact on who I am and what I do (Fincher 2009:1). I have slowly become more aware that it does require courage to share very personal material as part of academic work (Kelly and Livholts 2014:22) as this may change people's perceptions of me, not always positively.

Part way through this thesis I celebrated thirty years in ministry, longevity has been a value since early on and as part of exploring this I researched the idea of regenerative practice (Nash 2010). While training for ordination I reflected on how this concept might relate to this new phase of my journey and defined regenerative ministerial practice as:

a holistic approach to ministry that pays attention to the personal, vocational/professional and structural domains with the intention of facilitating ministry which enhances well-being, is life giving, facilitating effectual, fruitful, reflective, wise and ethical ministry which benefits the church and community as well as the minister (amended from Nash 2010:54).

I can now see that the typology is a further step in exploring what for me is regenerative ministry and an added lens through which I explore the personal, communal, structural and other domains that both frame and underpin ministry. In some ways the desire to both survive and thrive in ministry has been a thread I can see going back many years. William Stafford's poem articulates more beautifully than I could the way this and other threads are part of the fabric of my life.

The way it is

There's a thread that you follow. It goes among
things that change. But it doesn't change.
People wonder about what you are pursuing.
You have to explain about the thread.
But it is hard for others to see.
While you hold it you can't get lost.
Tragedies happen; people get hurt
or die; and you suffer and get old.

Nothing you do can stop time's unfolding.
You don't ever let go of the thread.

(St William Stafford, "The Way It Is" from Ask Me: 100 Essential Poems. Copyright©1998, 2014 by the Estate of William Stafford. Reprinted with the permission of The PermissionsCompany, Inc. on behalf of Graywolf Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota, www.graywolfpress.org)

It feels like I have picked up a new thread through this research which will run through what remains of my ministry, a desire to see people liberated from the shame that Jesus has borne for us and that they themselves, society or church may inadvertently or even inappropriately impose. I long to see people become "their child-of-God selves".¹⁵⁹

The promised land

In Martin Luther King's last ever speech he talks about how God has "allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land" (1968). I resonate with this as I have begun to conceptualize an approach to ministry that gives me a glimpse of a promised land of an approach to ministerial praxis which refutes disgrace shaming as part of the repertoire of the minister. The concept of an agapic approach to ministry which involves self-giving (Pembroke 2004:19)¹⁶⁰ is a logical progression of, and perhaps a simpler way to express the kenotic incarnational ministry I have studied before (Nash 2008:216-9) and in looking back at my journals from ordination training I use phrases such as wanting to be "an accepting, affirming, inclusive priest who mediates God's love to others". However, I do go on to note that a realistic understanding of humility is a helpful correlation to this. Thus humility means "accepting ourselves and others just as we are, limitations, vulnerabilities, and major imperfections included, as already equally valuable and beloved of God without our having to prove our worth by what we accomplish, what we own, what we do right, or by our status in society and in the church" (Bondi 1995:32). This is a helpful almost correction to the notion of an agapic approach as it reminds me I am not Jesus and need to serve with an awareness of my weaknesses and limitations as well as my desires. I still flirt with shame over some of these things but an awareness of it helps me to mitigate against it lingering or impacting my ministry in a significant way. I am also much more aware of the importance of how I mediate the God I serve. In my teenage and early adult years my understanding of God was more about obedience, conformity and sacrifice and while I live some of that out still, that is not the God I predominantly want to preach or mediate. My first sermon once ordained was about God's love, the sermon the first time I presided was

¹⁵⁹ The Message paraphrase of part of John 1.13-14 (Peterson 2002).

¹⁶⁰ Although Pembroke uses the phrase in relation to human services.

also about love and my placement reflection from my ordination training was on love (Nash 2012a). I concluded my final journal after two years of ordination training with these words:

In reflecting on what sort of deacon and priest I want to be it is one who seeks to mediate God's love and compassion, who reminds people that we are created in God's image and are precious and have a unique contribution to make to the world. I want to be open to the guiding of the Holy Spirit, willing to take risks, creative, inclusive, welcoming and passionate. I want to manifest the fruit of the Spirit and see the further unfolding of what I have seen for many years as core aspects of my ministry: equipping the saints for works of service¹⁶¹ and joining in with the liberative work of God.¹⁶²

I would now add “particularly in relation to the shame people experience” to the last sentence. I end this thesis looking at a pastoral landscape full of hope, no longer an idyll, I have seen too much to see it like that anymore. But the sun illuminates the long and winding road ahead and I hope that my ministerial praxis will reflect the journey of learning I have been on in this thesis.

¹⁶¹ Ephesians 4.10.

¹⁶² Isaiah 61.1f.

APPENDIX 1

SURVEY MONKEY QUESTIONNAIRES

Typology Survey: Theological Educators

Researching shame in the church

My name is Sally Nash, I work as the Director of the Midlands Centre for Youth Ministry based at St John's Nottingham and am involved in training people for Christian ministry. I am also a self-supporting Curate at Hodge Hill in Birmingham. (See <http://www.stjohns-nottm.ac.uk/revd-dr-sally-nash/> for more information)

You are being invited to take part in a research study that is part of my PhD with the Queen's Foundation and Birmingham University. The research is part of my initial ministerial education which I hope to complete by the end of my Curacy. Before you decide whether or not to take part it is important to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve.

I have had a long term interest in how sometimes we experience shame because of the way that people working on behalf of institutions such as the church act. I want to explore how understanding the sources and causes of different types of shame might help me make some recommendations as to how church leaders may act in ways that reduces the chances of this happening and how training may raise awareness of this. A simple definition of shame is something that we experience when we see ourselves as flawed, inferior, defective or worthless. We think we have fallen short of the person we want to be (or the person God or a significant other wants us to be). My definition of institutional shame is that it is a negative consequence of practices, structures, processes, behaviour, attitudes and liturgy that people encounter through their involvement in and with the church, which fail to reflect the reality of the church as exemplifying the love, life, work and example of Christ and which engender shame in individuals, groups or communities.

I am seeking to recruit people to complete a questionnaire that will help me explore my research topic. The survey is anonymous, I will not know who has completed it so I am assuming that completion of the survey includes your informed consent to participate. Please read this information carefully and consider whether this is a topic you wish to respond to a questionnaire on. It should take around 20 minutes to complete. Feel free to miss out any questions that you don't want to answer. Once submitted you cannot withdraw your answers. I only require three pieces of personal data, sex, denomination and what role you have in the church. If you would like to keep the potential to withdraw then please add a pseudonym so I can identify your contribution. You can withdraw up until the point I have written up my thesis which I anticipate to be December 2013.

The benefits of taking part may be to help you understand the topic better and to be able to influence thinking on this area. I appreciate that shame is a difficult topic for some and taking part may trigger issues, thoughts or memories that you may then want to process further. In this case I would encourage you to talk to an appropriate person about this such as a wise friend, your spiritual director, the adviser for clergy pastoral care if you are ordained or your minister/priest if you are not or access independent support through a local counselling service or similar.

Information that you contribute to the research will be kept securely on a password protected computer. Data will be used in my thesis which will be available once complete in libraries at Queen's Foundation, the University of Birmingham and St John's. The research may also be used in conference papers, journal articles, books or other print or online publications.

If you require further information to help you decide whether or not to participate then please contact me. If you would like to take part in further research on this topic then please email me.

Thanks for considering taking part in my research.

Revd Dr Sally Nash

1. Please answer the following questions:

Please answer the following questions: Male or female and pseudonym if using one

Denomination

Ordained church leader/lay church leader/theological educator/church member/other

2. a) When have you felt shame over something someone else connected with the church has said or done?

b) Why do you think you feel shame in these circumstances?

3. a) What issues in the church cause disunity?

b) Have you ever acted in a way that you were not fully happy with to promote unity? How did this make you feel?

4. What causes disharmony at church? How can this be addressed? How does it make people feel?

5. a) In what ways do you experience the church as expecting people to be compliant or acting in a way they say you should?

b) Do you ever not comply, not do what the church wants. How does that make you feel?

6. a) Thinking about the wider church, the denomination and national policies, are there any beliefs, practices or attitudes that you cannot conform to?

b) Are there situations where non-conformity causes you shame?

c) Have you ever felt shame because you have conformed to denominational expectations?

7. a) Are there any issues in the wider church which cause disaffection with the church or Christianity?

b) How are any of these related to shame?

A rectangular text input field with a light gray border. It contains no text. On the right side, there are two small square buttons, one above the other, each with a downward-pointing arrow. On the bottom left, there is a small square button with a left-pointing arrow, and on the bottom right, a small square button with a right-pointing arrow.

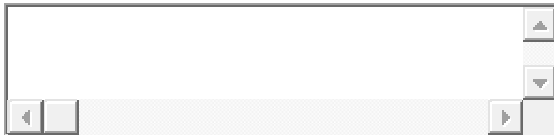
8. a) At the denominational or ecumenical (all churches) level what issues cause fragmentation?

b) Do any of these issues bring shame to people, if so how?

A rectangular text input field with a light gray border. It contains no text. On the right side, there are two small square buttons, one above the other, each with a downward-pointing arrow. On the bottom left, there is a small square button with a left-pointing arrow, and on the bottom right, a small square button with a right-pointing arrow.

9. a) Are there any beliefs, attitudes or practices in the church which makes you want to associate with it?

b) Are there any beliefs, attitudes, or practices in the church which make you want to disassociate with it?

A rectangular text input field with a light gray border. It contains no text. On the right side, there are two small square buttons, one above the other, each with a downward-pointing arrow. On the bottom left, there is a small square button with a left-pointing arrow, and on the bottom right, a small square button with a right-pointing arrow.

10. Sometimes things from the past have caused shame and still have an impact on the present. I am calling this buried shame.

a) Can you think of any examples of buried shame in a church setting?

b) What impact do you think they have on the church now?

A rectangular text input field with a light gray border. It contains no text. On the right side, there are two small square buttons, one above the other, each with a downward-pointing arrow. On the bottom left, there is a small square button with a left-pointing arrow, and on the bottom right, a small square button with a right-pointing arrow.

Typology Survey – church leaders

Institutional shame in the church

My name is Sally Nash, I work as the Director of the Midlands Centre for Youth Ministry based at St John's Nottingham and am involved in training people for Christian ministry. I am also a self-supporting Curate at Hodge Hill in Birmingham. (See <http://www.stjohns-nottm.ac.uk/revd-dr-sally-nash/> for more information)

You are being invited to take part in a research study that is part of my PhD with the Queen's Foundation and Birmingham University. The research is part of my initial ministerial education which I hope to complete by the end of my Curacy. Before you decide whether or not to take part it is important to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve.

I have had a long term interest in how sometimes we experience shame because of the way that people working on behalf of institutions such as the church act. I want to explore how understanding the sources and causes of different types of shame might help me make some recommendations as to how church leaders may act in ways that reduces the chances of this happening and how training may raise awareness of this. A simple definition of shame is something that we experience when we see ourselves as flawed, inferior, defective or worthless. We think we have fallen short of the person we want to be (or the person God or a significant other wants us to be). My definition of institutional shame is that it is a negative consequence of practices, structures, processes, behaviour, attitudes and liturgy that people encounter through their involvement in and with the church, which fail to reflect the reality of the church as exemplifying the love, life, work and example of Christ and which engender shame in individuals, groups or communities.

I am seeking to recruit people to complete a questionnaire that will help me explore my research topic. The survey is anonymous, I will not know who has completed it so I am assuming that completion of the survey includes your informed consent to participate. Please read this information carefully and consider whether this is a topic you wish to respond to a questionnaire on. It should take around 20 minutes to complete. Feel free to miss out any questions that you don't want to answer. Once submitted you cannot withdraw your answers. I only require three pieces of personal data, sex, denomination and what role you have in the church. If you would like to keep the potential to withdraw then please add a pseudonym so I can identify your contribution. You can withdraw up until the point I have written up my thesis which I anticipate to be December 2013.

The benefits of taking part may be to help you understand the topic better and to be able to influence thinking on this area. I appreciate that shame is a difficult topic for some and taking part may trigger issues, thoughts or memories that you may then want to process further. In this case I would encourage you to talk to an appropriate person about this such as a wise friend, your spiritual director, the adviser for clergy pastoral care if you are ordained or your minister/priest if you are not or access independent support through a local counselling service or similar.

Information that you contribute to the research will be kept securely on a password protected computer. Data will be used in my thesis which will be available once complete in libraries at Queen's Foundation, the University of Birmingham and St John's. The research may also be used in conference papers, journal articles, books or other print or online publications.

If you require further information to help you decide whether or not to participate then please contact me. If you would like to take part in further research on this topic then please email me.

Thanks for considering taking part in my research.

Revd Dr Sally Nash

1. Please tick all that apply

☐

Female

☐

Male

☐

Clergy

☐

Youth worker

☐

Other church leader

☐

Theological student

Denomination plus pseudonym if using

Next

2. a) What might someone "hear" this message about in a church context?

b) What are the issues someone might think this about in a church context?



3. a) Is there anything that the church does or says that might lead to this response?

b) How might you help someone who is feeling like this?

<http://www.musee-rodin.fr/en/collections/sculptures/eve>

4. Have you ever used shaming as a technique or approach to an issue or a person (positively or negatively)? If yes, please give details.

5. a) Have you ever felt shame over something someone else connected with the church (locally or nationally) has said or done? If yes please give details.

b) If yes, why do you think you felt shame in that context

6. Have you ever been subject to shaming by a congregation member, other minister or church hierarchy?

If yes please say over what (general area) and how you responded to it.

7. a) Reflecting back over the past month or so what are you most ashamed of doing/not doing, saying, thinking (answer at whatever level you are comfortable with)...

b) What do you do when you feel like this? How could you best be helped?

8. Biblically, the opposite to shame is often honour.

a) How do you help people feel honoured?

b) Are there people in your church who are honoured in that context but shamed outside of the church?

Typology survey – church members

Institutional shame in the church - members

My name is Sally Nash, I work as the Director of the Midlands Centre for Youth Ministry based at St John's Nottingham and am involved in training people for Christian ministry. I am also a self-supporting Curate at Hodge Hill in Birmingham. (See <http://www.stjohns-nottm.ac.uk/revd-dr-sally-nash/> for more information)

You are being invited to take part in a research study that is part of my PhD with the Queen's Foundation and Birmingham University. The research is part of my initial ministerial education which I hope to complete by the end of my Curacy. Before you decide whether or not to take part it is important to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve.

I have had a long term interest in how sometimes we experience shame because of the way that people working on behalf of institutions such as the church act. I want to explore how understanding the sources and causes of different types of shame might help me make some recommendations as to how church leaders may act in ways that reduces the chances of this happening and how training may raise awareness of this. A simple definition of shame is something that we experience when we see ourselves as flawed, inferior, defective or worthless. We think we have fallen short of the person we want to be (or the person God or a significant other wants us to be). My definition of institutional shame is that it is a negative consequence of practices, structures, processes, behaviour, attitudes and liturgy that people encounter through their involvement in and with the church, which fail to reflect the reality of the church as exemplifying the love, life, work and example of Christ and which engender shame in individuals, groups or communities.

I am seeking to recruit people to complete a questionnaire that will help me explore my research topic. The survey is anonymous, I will not know who has completed it so I am assuming that completion of the survey includes your informed consent to participate. Please read this information carefully and consider whether this is a topic you wish to respond to a questionnaire on. It should take around 20 minutes to complete. Feel free to miss out any questions that you don't want to answer. Once submitted you cannot withdraw your answers. I only require three pieces of personal data, sex, denomination and what role you have in the church. If you would like to keep the potential to withdraw then please add a pseudonym so I can identify your contribution. You can withdraw up until the point I have written up my thesis which I anticipate to be December 2013.

The benefits of taking part may be to help you understand the topic better and to be able to influence thinking on this area. I appreciate that shame is a difficult topic for some and taking part may trigger issues, thoughts or memories that you may then want to process further. In this case I would encourage you to talk to an appropriate person about this such as a wise friend, your spiritual director, the adviser for clergy pastoral care if you are ordained or your minister/priest if you are not or access independent support through a local counselling service or similar.

Information that you contribute to the research will be kept securely on a password protected computer. Data will be used in my thesis which will be available once complete in libraries at Queen's Foundation, the University of Birmingham and St John's. The research may also be used in conference papers, journal articles, books or other print or online publications.

If you require further information to help you decide whether or not to participate then please contact me. If you would like to take part in further research on this topic then please email me.

Thanks for considering taking part in my research.

Revd Dr Sally Nash 

1. Please answer the following questions:

Please answer the following questions: Sex plus pseudonym if using

Length of church attendance

Denomination

Next

2. a) If you saw or heard this at church what sort of things do you think it might be about?

b) Have you ever felt like this finger was pointed at you? If so, what was it about?

a) If you saw or heard this at church what sort of things do you think it might be about? b) Have you ever felt like this finger was pointed at you? If so, what was it about?



3. This is a picture of Rodin's sculpture of Eve.

a) Is there anything that the church does or says that might lead to someone responding like this?

b) How might you help someone who is feeling like this?

<http://www.musee-rodin.fr/en/collections/sculptures/eve>

**4. Has the church (or someone in the church) ever made you feel uncomfortable in being yourself?
If yes, please give details.**

**5. When children misbehave we sometimes send them to sit on the naughty step.
Is there anything that the church does which makes people feel like they should be sent to sit on the naughty step?**

6. a) Have you ever felt shame over something someone else connected with the church (locally or nationally) has said or done? If yes please give details.

b) If yes, why do you think you felt shame over what someone else did?

7. a) Reflecting back over the past month or so what are you most ashamed of doing/not doing, saying, thinking...

b) Do you think you could talk to your church leader about this? Give reasons for your answer.

c) What is the best way to help you when you feel ashamed?

8. Biblically, the opposite to shame is often honour.

a) Do you ever feel honoured at church, if so how and about what?

b) How do you think the church could honour people more?

APPENDIX 2
FOCUS GROUP CONSENT FORM AND INFORMATION SHEET

Focus Group Participant Consent Form

Title of the project: Institutional shame in the church Researcher: Revd Dr Sally Nash

Context of research: PhD Queen's Foundation/University of Birmingham

Please delete as necessary:

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1 I have understood the information sheet provided | Yes | No |
| 2 I agree to take part in the research described in the information sheet | Yes | No |
| 3 I agree to the session being audio recorded | Yes | No |
| 4 I would like to see a copy of the notes of the session | Yes | No |
| 5 I would like to receive a summary of the research findings | Yes | No |
| 6 I understand I can withdraw at any time without giving a reason | Yes | No |
| 7 Options re confidentiality and anonymity, please say yes to one of these: | | |
| I would like any contributions I make to be completely anonymous | Yes | No |
| I am willing for my contributions to be used with a pseudonym | Yes | No |
| I am willing for my job title to be used in relation to my contributions | Yes | No |
| I am willing for my name to be used in relation to my contributions | Yes | No |
| 8 I agree to the information obtained being used in the PhD, at conferences and in any subsequent publications in print or online | Yes | No |

Name of participant

Date

Signature

Name of person taking consent

Date

Signature

If you require further information before signing this consent form then please email Sally:

Participant Information Form Focus Groups: Institutional Shame in the Church

My name is Sally Nash, I work as the Director of the Midlands Centre for Youth Ministry based at St John's Nottingham and am involved in training people for Christian ministry. I am also a self-supporting Curate at Hodge Hill in Birmingham. If you are interested, you can find out more details about me on St John's website www.stjohns-nottm.ac.uk including some of the areas I have researched in the past.

You are being invited to take part in a research study that will form part of my thesis for a PhD with the Queen's Foundation and Birmingham University. The research is part of my initial ministerial education which I hope to complete by the end of my Curacy. Before you decide whether or not to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve.

I have had a long term interest in how sometimes we experience shame because of the way that people working on behalf of institutions such as the church act. I want to explore how understanding the sources and causes of different types of shame might help me make some recommendations as to how church leaders may act in ways that reduces the chances of this happening and how training may raise awareness of this. A simple definition of shame is something that we experience when we see ourselves as flawed, inferior, defective or worthless. We think we have fallen short of the person we want to be (or the person God or a significant other wants us to be). My definition of institutional shame is that it is a negative consequence of practices, structures, processes, behaviour, attitudes and liturgy that people encounter through their involvement in and with the church, which fail to reflect the reality of the church as exemplifying the love, life, work and example of Christ and which engender shame in individuals, groups or communities.

I am seeking to recruit people to take part in focus groups to explore my research topic. This will involve spending 1.5 hours with up to five other people who have a similar role to you responding to different media illustrating shame as well as discussing some questions. The session will be audio recorded. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are free to not answer any of the questions or join in any of the activities or to leave at any time during the session. You will also be able to discuss the topic of institutional shame without sharing any personal stories if this is what you prefer although you may be asked for personal reactions to things like pictures and songs. You can withdraw your responses to the point of my finishing the writing up of my thesis, I anticipate this will be the end of December 2013.

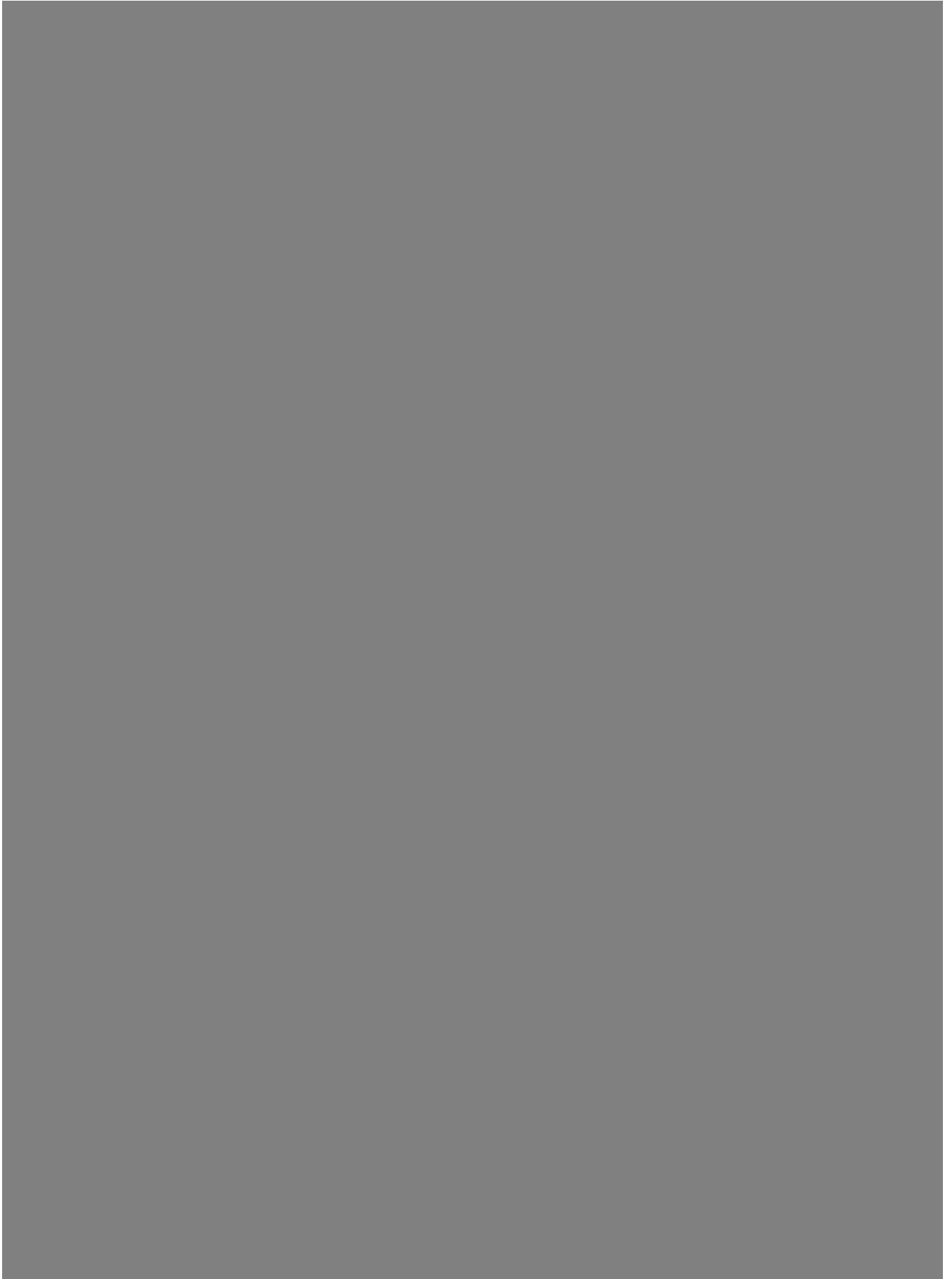
The benefits of taking part may be to help you understand the topic better and to be able to influence thinking on this area. I appreciate that shame is a difficult topic for some and taking part may trigger issues, thoughts or memories that you may then want to process further. In this case I would encourage you to talk to an appropriate person about this such as a wise friend, your spiritual director, the adviser for clergy pastoral care if you are ordained or your priest if you are not or access independent support through a local counselling service or similar.

Information that you contribute to the research will be kept securely on a password protected computer and in a secure location in my study. The data generated will be used in my thesis which will be available once complete in the libraries at Queen's Foundation, the University of Birmingham and St John's Nottingham. The consent form gives you four options as to how your contributions may be used in the final research, you can choose to remain completely anonymous, be given a pseudonym, be referred to in relation to your job title or if you choose, use your name. The research may also be used in conference papers, journal articles, books or other print or online publications. If you would like to take part in the project then please complete and return the attached consent form.

If you require further information to help you decide whether or not to participate then please contact me. If you have concerns about the way in which the study is conducted then contact one of my supervisors – Revd Dr David Hewlet [REDACTED] or Prof Stephen Pattison [REDACTED]

Revd Dr Sally Nash Director, Midlands Centre for Youth Ministry
MCYM, St John's, Chilwell Lane, Bramcote, Nottingham, NG9 3DS [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

APPENDIX 3
ETHICAL CLEARANCE



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