

**ABOUT TIME ...
(SOME PATTERNS OF TIME-RECKONING)**

BY

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Abstract

Human time is social time and is complex because time is actually a combination of different times. This dissertation is an exploration of how time is reckoned in essentially socio-cultural contexts. The focus is twofold: examination of the socio-cultural contexts where one reckons time in particular ways, and the examination of the different patterns of time-reckoning that can be observed. Through these, I shall examine if any of these patterns have features that are better explained in terms of their pattern qua pattern rather than in terms of their socio-cultural contexts.

For this purpose, I have focused on two kinds of pattern: temporal directionality and temporal rhythm. These are the patterns I shall be looking for in the several cases covered in this dissertation. By temporal directionality I intend to analyse how the cyclical and linear patterns of time-reckoning are combined in different contexts. Temporal directionality has been traditionally discussed in terms of the linear and the cyclical. Following ideas from Hubert and Mauss, and E. R. Leach I have developed two different models of temporal 'rhythms', the simple and the more complex.

The different case studies in this dissertation are divided into three parts. Each part deals with different subjects and entails a different methodology. Part I relies on literary comparisons of texts that deal with voluntary deaths in different cultures. Part II deals with the personal narrative of a Japanese woman living in U.S.A. Part III is concerned with three different Christian churches in Champaign-Urbana and relies on traditional ethnographic research. Part I deals with individual time-reckoning that is also collective in character. Part II deals with personal time-reckoning, and Part III deals with collective time-reckoning.

There are different ways of combining and, hence, different patterns of temporal directionality. These patterns are context specific. By contrast, temporal rhythms occur in different contexts and may have universal features that may allow for an anthropological discussion of time that is primarily a discussion of time as opposed to specific socio-cultural contexts.

To Tony and Asako

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It has been a privilege to be a graduate student working on a dissertation for so long. True, it has not always been easy; but I also knew that not everybody who wanted to study more and reach a somewhat greater semblance of understanding a small fragment of the world would have had the chance to do so as I had had. However, all good things must come to an end—especially if one has “started” to overstay one’s welcome.

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Although I stubbornly believed that I could probe the topic I had eventually chosen for my dissertation, I am not quite sure that I really knew how I could put all this together. Nor could I have explained my topic all that cogently at the beginning. It was gratifying that so many nevertheless trusted me or just simply helped me whether they thought what I was trying to do was feasible or not.

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happens, neither the region nor the topic of my dissertation have concerned areas of his special interest. That he took me on nevertheless is a reflection both of his open mindedness and generosity in responding to my needs rather than to his interest. He has remained supportive throughout. For instance, receiving short notes about recent publications that may be of use to my research has been a tremendous morale booster over the years. I hope I have learned something about careful scholarship from him. After the retirement of Professor Cunningham, I turned to Professor Plath as my advisor. The ideas for Part I and III of my dissertation developed initially in his stimulating classes. He has been involved in my work the longest, well before he formally became my advisor; he has allowed me to indulge in what at times must have been wild speculations. That has been a great source of encouragement. Over the years when I was actively working on my dissertation, I actually have had two advisors instead of the stipulated one: a rare privilege indeed.

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Chapter II

St Patrick's: the Popular Church:

1. Introduction:

Of the three churches, St Patrick's has the most structured organisation. It makes the most conspicuous effort to welcome the faithful to its fold and is marked by pre-arranged collectivism. Many of the important decisions are made formally through collective deliberation involving both the clergy and the lay parishioners. Its faith community seems to be the most at ease with society as is. The transition from the outside world or the 'secular' to the 'sacred' is smoothest. It is as if the sacred has come half way to meet the secular. Both its architecture and religious service seem geared toward that end.

This chapter will discuss St Patrick's from three related angles: its church members, architecture and religious services.

The discussion of its architecture will focus both on the physical structure of the building as well as on its uses. Having undergone considerable remodelling over the years, its architecture is a palimpsest of the congregation and pastors over the years. As the physical expression of a faith community, the manner in which their buildings are used is as important, if not more so, than the structure of the building.

2. The Church Community:

St Patrick's has the largest number of members, close to fifteen hundred. The way the church is organised both reflects and accommodates its large congregation. It is pre-dominantly an Euro-American church. Among members of minority groups, there are more members of Asian origin than Afro-Americans; the latter seem to be comparative newcomers who do not necessarily have strong ties to the local Afro-American community. Leaving aside the Latinos who cannot always be clearly distinguished physiognomically, two to three percent of the congregation for Sunday services may be classified as members of the two minority groups.

Because of the large concentration of Koreans at St Mary, those of Asian origin at St Patrick's are from other parts of Asia than Korea.

The pastor of St Patrick's gave me permission to do research on the church very promptly and generously. He helped me further by making a point of introducing me as a graduate student in anthropology doing research at St Patrick's. I was thus introduced in the Parish Center (i.e. the social centre), at an open air mass, and in the church bulletin. And when I told him of my intention to compare the sermons given at the three churches, he promptly gave me copies of some of the homilies he had given.

Many other members helped me in a similar vein. The music director lent me a couple of books on church liturgy as well as a copy of a manual for cantors, another official gave me copies both of handouts and a thick manual on a then current program for adult Catholics. Other church officials would invite me to attend the open air mass on Memorial Day and other events organised by the church.

The manner in which I have been received at St Patrick's by many of its members reflects its two characteristics.

Firstly, one is accepted in one's own terms; if one defines oneself in terms of a specific category, a graduate student doing research of the church in my case, one is accepted as such. One might have first come to St Patrick's to participate in support groups in the community at large such as GROW (which focuses on issues related to mental illness, life crises, and loneliness); some of these support groups meet at the Parish Center during weekdays. For many, this acceptance has very frequently been a first step toward becoming more firmly incorporated into the church; there are many groups organised directly under its auspices that could, in one form or another, accommodate most people.

Secondly, this is a church that scrupulously keeps records that are widely shared. Unlike the other two churches, quite a lot of the information I had gleaned about St Patrick's is based on written texts. Some of these documents were private or shared among a small number of people (e.g. members of the relevant committee); many are distributed to the church members at large on a regular basis (e.g. church bulletins, survey reports, candidates for positions of church officials etc.). St Patrick's is the only one of the three churches that now has its own website and can communicate with its members through e-mail.

The collectivist character of St Patrick's has many facets. There are manifold committees both long term and ad hoc serving different purposes, some dealing with various aspects of church affairs, others with issues of faith, and others with community outreach. So far as church affairs are concerned, for example, it has a parish council whose six lay members are regularly elected by the church. All the candidates for this position are introduced to the church on a polling paper, which has a brief biography and 'policy' statement of each of them. There also has been a liturgy committee that meets regularly to decide on the tenor of the services in the following month; music, for example, is made to dovetail more closely with the sermon. Likewise, the monthly newsletter is written by a group of volunteers working together.

As with the newsletter, diverse services are offered by the church. Some of these services are in the nature of community outreach (such as providing food for those in need, sponsoring a Vietnamese family); many more are for church members. These services are provided mainly by different groups of volunteers and are each headed by a co-ordinator. The 'coffee shop' on Sunday is a case in point.

Considerable effort is made to foster a climate of inclusiveness. As the man in charge of the coffee shop said, 'there is something for every one at St Patrick's'. Thus, at the beginning of the fall semester, there is a table set up in the Parish Center to welcome newcomers; new members are mentioned by name in the church newsletter. Likewise, there are quite a few social gatherings that are organised throughout the year. Some are regular like the annual church picnic; others are more ad hoc such as the celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the pastor's ordination. These events are organised separately from the liturgy and are purely secular events (apart from prayers of invocation in gatherings). By contrast, at Salem many of these annual events are marked by a special Sunday service.

Some small groups are more formally organised and follow a format. For example, Renew is a program that had been developed with the approval of the Catholic Bishops of America; there is a manual that suggests the topic for discussion for each meeting. Others are more loosely organised and specific to St Patrick's (e.g. Young Adults' group which preceded the Renew program). The church has tried and is willing to try different formulae to deal with similar issues.

These groups are organised in a similar way to support groups. A support group is a voluntary association where people gather together to help each other deal with specific issues (e.g. divorce, bereavement etc.). Whether loosely or highly organised, they generally meet regularly in small groups to share experiences/feelings and advice related to that particular issue. The groups organised among St Patrick's church members dealt with matters related to individual faith. Because of the nature of faith these groups tend to diversify on a different principle from support groups.

A support group might divide into smaller groups by concentrating on a subset of an issue; because the main criterion is the sharing of similar issues, the participants may come from diverse background (e.g. from professionals to blue collar workers). For example, support groups dealing with alcoholism divide between those who are alcoholic and children of alcoholics. Likewise, a bereavement support group might be divided into separate groups depending on the different causes of death (illness, suicide, homicide, and accidents) or the different relations involved (death of a child, of a spouse, of a parent etc.)

This has not been the way different groups are organised at St Patrick's. There is considerable diversity among the different groups organised at St Patrick's; however, there also seems to be considerable uniformity within any one group. This reflected a tendency for people who were alike to gather together.

For example, many of those I interviewed were conscious of their belonging to a particular stage of life and seemed to have expectations that were based on it. Whether or not they belonged to small groups within the church, many of my informants seemed very conscious of sharing similar life experiences with others in a similar stage. A few of the younger interviewees told me that they had attended the campus Catholic church previously. They felt that they were getting too old to mix with undergraduate students now that they were graduate students or left the university for a job (not to mention the fact that they were married as opposed to the mostly single undergraduates).

A group that I came across was composed of young professionally qualified and fairly recently married couples who had to yet to become parents (many have had children since then). Some were still pursuing a graduate degree, while others had recently entered the job market. The group leader who was responsible for recruiting members put some emphasis on

compatibility. However, she herself was surprised when I pointed out that all the men in the group were not only professionally qualified, but that they all held degrees in the natural sciences, either in chemistry or in engineering.

When I talked to the co-ordinator of more structured groups, she told me that she clustered people together based on the similarity of life experiences. Thus, she would put young couples together in one group, and singles in another etc.

The meetings of these groups are pleasant social occasions. Since faith is supposed to permeate all aspects of life, discussion of faith tends to be discussion of personal experiences. One of my informants had told me that he has had the closest relation with people at church; he could comfortably discuss very personal issues. The church has been his family. Some of the church members found their spouse through these groups; and many more made long-term friends. While I was interviewing a church member at her work place, an erstwhile member of her group paid her a surprise visit; he was visiting Champaign-Urbana that day.

The church members of St Patrick's who gave me interviews largely shared two points.

Firstly, they projected an image of belonging to the mainstream; they seemed either to be very well adjusted to their socio-economic environment or to want to belong to and be comfortable in it. They tended not to refer to themselves in a way that would mark them apart from others. In one instance, an interviewee expressed her indignation about being marked apart by others because she was single and not young; underlying this, however, was her feeling that she should belong. As if to re-enforce her point, she stressed the sense of belonging she had at St Patrick's. As she spoke, she put her arms forth and crossed them in front of her as if in a warm hug. Again, one might expect some of the interviewees to be or to have been involved in some conflict or another, either personal or public. If they did, none spoke about it.

Secondly, as a group, they tended to be apolitical. One of the interviewees had said that he had been active in Republican politics. However, he qualified this as an activity outside of the church. Another member has been active in community affairs over the years; and she was pleased that St Patrick's had a liberal approach. Again, however, there was no urgent desire to see the church actively involved in socio-political events. Apart from these two exceptions, none mentioned their political or social views that might concern society at large. In some instances, the interviewees described themselves as apolitical, in one instance, adamantly apolitical. For

the latter, the choice of St Patrick's as her church was enhanced by her disapproval of the more overtly political St Mary.

The tendency both to be apolitical and to avoid conflict can be seen both in its community outreach programme and the way one of its assistant pastors was received. The thrust of the community outreach programme is primarily socio-economic and consists of providing food for the needy, for example. It probably has been the most regularly active and longest sustained of the three churches. One of the assistant pastors was a fiery conservative and took an uncompromising stance on many issues that might be a source of controversy among American Catholics. He once delivered a homily accusing not one sin but a litany of sins, divorce, homosexuality, abortion, pre-marital sex, adultery; the list went on. The approach at St Patrick's is generally not so much to define what might be wrong but to define what is right and to nudge people toward doing the latter. Thus, quite a few church members felt uncomfortable with this assistant pastor. Nevertheless, his presence did not become an open source of conflict. However, he moved away to another parish within a year of his appointment.

3. The Two Buildings:

Reflecting this effort to put the parishioners at ease, "St Patrick's" is both the church building and the adjacent social centre known as the Parish Center. Both are very accessible and bright, letting in natural light. Being the wealthiest of the three churches, many of its furnishings are geared for the comfort of the congregation; and both buildings have heating and air conditioning for both hot and cold weathers. Situated in one of the older tree-lined streets of Urbana, the two buildings have a block all to themselves with a large expanse of manicured lawn and well-groomed trees.

On the south-west corner of the block stands the church, a turn of the century red-brick building, whose spire can be seen rising above mature trees from several blocks away. The Parish Center is at the south-east corner; a single-storey modern-looking square building made of large natural stones and glass. And behind the two is a large asphalted parking lot.

Perhaps because of this rather idyllic surround, there is one noticeable lack at St Patrick's: death. Unlike many European churches, there is neither a cemetery surrounding the church nor are its floors and walls covered by slabs of stones scratched with the names of those

who rest behind them. Neither religious relics or gisants are on display. This is not special to St Patrick's. All the churches in Champaign-Urbana lack immediate physical reminders of death. For reasons of public hygiene, American towns built in the nineteenth century forbade the building of cemeteries adjacent to churches. This absence is however more noticeable at St Patrick's. On one hand, the church is situated in a larger ground that gives the semblance of a small park; on the other, as I shall show in section 5 (The Nuclear Family and the Stages of Life), its manner of time-reckoning re-enforces this impression.

The church building itself has also been remodelled. Reflecting the general tenor of this church, the building is easily accessible. There is a wheelchair accessible wooden ramp at the back of the church for those coming in from the parking lot; the front of the church has been paved into a gentle ramp so that one could walk or wheel straight into church. The paved area gently slopes down to the street. It is hardly noticeable because the area has walls on both sides resembling a courtyard; a few steps, on each side, are tucked discretely close to the entrance.

Space in St Patrick's is more copiously differentiated both in terms of its arrangement as well as its use. This reflects the tendency to observe a greater variety of categories which allows one to shift from one to another. Entering the church building does not completely isolate the worshipper from the outside world. The swinging doors at the front are made of glass as is the partition between the vestibule and the main sanctuary. Facing the altar, one can still catch the gleam of passing cars flash through the vestibule if one sits at the back.

This smooth transition from the secular to the sacred is also marked by the different mix of objects in the vestibule and the nave.

The vestibule also has folding chairs for overflow from the pews and/or for families with small children apt to wander around. There is a bulletin board holding sundry information about the parish, the diocese and about Catholics (mainly clergy) in the U.S.A.; unless one deliberately turns around, the board remains inconspicuous. On either side of the central doors to the nave is a life size statue of St Patrick and a lectern table with a stack of church bulletins and other printed information about the church; people pick the bulletins up as they come in; these are also distributed at the end of the service.

As a place of transition, one has considerable option about how much one marks it. One might make a sign of the cross with holy water in the marble stand by the entrance as one walks

through the vestibule. This would clearly mark both one's entry into and exit from the sacred. Because of the position of the receptacle, this gesture is more observable among the worshippers at St Patrick's than those at St Mary.

Alone among the three churches, one can participate in the service from the vestibule itself. When the church is crowded (and it tends to be for the 9:00 and 10:30 a.m. masses), the overflow is accommodated in the vestibule; so too are families with small children. Greater flexibility is allowed there. Gestures such as kneeling or those related to the exchange of the sign of peace observed in the nave are either curtailed or dropped completely. Likewise, small children are allowed to make noise and wander around more freely; in the nave, the children are under more vigilant supervision by their parent/s.

Objects related to the sacred increase drastically once one enters the nave. St Patrick's is the most decorated. As one enters, one is flanked on one side by a polychrome sculpted tableau of the Last Supper, and on the other with a small alcove where there are several rows of votive candles and a polychrome statue of Mary. Above the altar hangs a large cross with a polychrome statue of Christ crucified; it is flanked on the west side by a rather abstract polychrome representation of the Holy Spirit, and on the east side by a polychrome representation of Christ's baptism.

The altar area is clearly marked as a separate area from the rest of the church, an inner sanctum within the sacred area in fact. Apart from the large cross, the walls there have dark wood panelling. Unlike the nave, the altar is hardly touched by natural light and relies on artificial lighting. As a result, the gestures of those present which tend to be rather dramatic become even more starkly conspicuous; this is especially the case with the priest who puts on shimmery robes that catch the light.

The pews are wooden benches. Each of them has a stack of hard bound books comprising the missal and the reading; they look more formal compared to the missalets provided at St Mary which are discarded after three months. These books are replaced every third year with the renewal of the lectionary, a collection of readings (more about it in Chapter VI).

The Parish Center has a large hall, two large rooms, and several offices housing the pastor and some other church officials. On Sundays, the two large rooms and the hall are used

concurrently with the church building itself. And on weekdays, the Parish Center is, to all intents and purpose, St Patrick's; even the mass is celebrated there. On weekdays, the narrow corridor, which houses the offices of the pastor and other church officials, and the reception the hub of activity; on Sundays, both are empty. The formally well organised nature of St Patrick's can be observed in the neatly arranged mail slots for different church officials and committees that are found between the offices and the reception office.

The use of the two rooms helps differentiate and maintain the congregation into several categories. The use of space varies depending on time. The smaller room is frequently used for the training of catechumens (adults training before their baptism). The training takes place concurrently with the second mass of the day (9:00 a.m.) The larger one, called the multi-purpose room, is used for the Children's Liturgy where a somewhat abbreviated service is conducted. Apart from the ambo (lectern table) the room is sparsely furnished. It is a service catering to younger children many of whom have yet to receive their first communion; they tend to attend with their parent/s and sit on the floor or on window sills. Some of their parents also attend the service in the church building. The service is brief and informal; singing is accompanied by a guitar. There are usually some children who wander about. However, they usually do so within the arc of their respective parent's reach; and when one seems likely to go beyond that, the child is quickly pulled back by the stretched arm of his/her parent. St Patrick's has baby-sitting facility. The Nursery, a relatively small room, is run by volunteers.

The hall in the Parish Center is most responsible for integrating these and other different strands. It can be approached from four large entrances: one from a path leading from the church, two from the parking lot, and another from the street. Unlike the side doors to the church, these are entrances where two to three people could easily walk in together.

From 8:30 to 11:00 a.m., a group of men run the 'Coffee Shop' where coffee and doughnuts are sold. These men encourage mixing among the parishioners. They are friendly to those seated at tables as they bring milk and sugar; when it is known, they would carry a candlelit doughnut to somebody in celebration of his/her birthday. People are seated along several rows of long tables which fosters socialising. Except for the last service (12:00 p.m.)

people attending the three different services can come here either before or after mass¹, so too the catechumens and parents with children attending the Children's mass.

At the beginning of the school semester, special tables are set up in the hall to welcome newcomers to the church. Similarly, whenever there are special appeals, the hall is where people gather to distribute relevant pamphlets, to put up bulletin boards with information on it, to collect signatures etc.

There is little socialising in the church itself before or after the service. Some of those who may not be heading to the Coffee Shop after the service socialise briefly in the small courtyard in front of the church. Since the officiating priest will be standing in the courtyard near the exit greeting the throng of worshippers as they come out, there is little room and time to linger.

The pre-arranged organisation of St Patrick's, as we shall see, can also be seen in its celebration of mass.

4. The Four Services and the Congregation:

Having a large congregation (1'500) and a relatively small church, St Patrick's celebrates mass four times on Sunday mornings. Like many other Catholic churches, there is also a service on Saturday evenings to accommodate those who will not be attending Sunday service. Some parishioners have told me that different kinds of people attend these services respectively. In fact, there were slight but nevertheless noticeable indications of these differences.

Some of their views on differences might have been a reflection of what people tend to assume about others simply in terms of their time-keeping habits. For example, early risers are frequently thought to be well disciplined, while those who sleep late are often considered to be lax. Thus, the worshippers attending the 7:30 a.m. mass are perceived to be either old and/or well organised. That anybody should be dressed and ready to attend church at such an early hour on Sunday -even earlier than the beginning of the standard office hour, 8:00 a.m.- is interpreted as 'being well organised'. This interpretation may not be that far off the mark, however. A mother who attended the 7:30 a.m. mass told me that she wanted to put the Sunday service

¹ Those attending the 10:30 a.m. mass would come before mass.

behind so that her family could do other things. And the children who came with their parents seem to be particularly carefully dressed (e.g. well brushed hair and, in the case of girls, with neatly tied ribbons) The attendance not being as full as with the two subsequent services, one can tell in what kind of grouping the worshippers came in. For example, there will be a gap between two families seated on the same pew so that one could tell them apart at a glance. The boundary among them is very frequently marked by the placing of objects such as a handbag in the gap between them (this pattern obtains in the other masses celebrated at St Patrick's but without the gap). At the same time worshippers seem to keep the same distance among themselves regardless of what kind of social group they belong to. Members of a family would sit as far apart as a couple would between them.

Those who attend the 12:00 p.m. service are seen as those who may not have planned to attend service before but have decided to do so at the last minute. In the perception of other parishioners, they do not seem to score high in terms of consistency, organisation, or commitment to one's faith. This is the only group of worshippers who cannot socialise with other parishioners even if they wanted to in the Coffee Shop. Even the group of men who run the Coffee Shop would be long gone before the arrival of the noontime worshippers. Impressionistically speaking, many of those who attend this service seem to come singly.

The two services in the middle, the 9:00 a.m. and the 10:30 a.m. mass, are the most popular and enjoy the fullest attendance; so much so that there are quite a few worshippers who find themselves standing either at the back of the side aisles or in the vestibule. Many come in together as couples, friends, or as a family. Because of the crowded attendance, these different social units dissolve into one indistinguishable mass in the pews only to reappear at the end of the service as they leave the church. The only indication of a boundary between any two social units may be the placement of objects such as a handbag between them. These are the only services on Sunday attended by a full choir (there is a different choir group for each of the two services).

Many parishioners told me of the difference between those who attended the 9:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. masses. And indeed there were differences; however, these diminished over the period that I had been visiting the church.

When I started visiting the church, the 9:00 a.m. mass was distinctly casual. Many looked like they had showered and combed just before coming. Both the men and women seem to dress comfortably rather than formally. Instead of suits and ties as was more the case in the 10:30 a.m. mass, the 9:00 a.m. men would more likely wear shirts, polo shirts, or, in winter, sweaters with chino trousers. A few men and women wore shorts in summer.

Once a year, the church would organise a service with a Dixieland musical performance. Unlike the usual choir service where the choir performed in the choir loft behind the nave, the Dixieland Band would perform by the altar. This service has been celebrated at 9:00 a.m.

Young families seem to gravitate more toward the 9:00 a.m. service. The 9:00 a.m. mass puts the greatest emphasis on the collective character of the congregation. During the Lord's Prayer, the worshippers link arms not only in the pews, but also across the pews. Suddenly, it feels like the nave is full of people. Standing and chanting together in the nave, the congregation suddenly acquires density. The feeling of density lingers during the exchange of the sign of peace where we turn toward those around us to shake hands (or hug in case of intimacy). Ironically, because of the highly communal gesture of linked arms, the exchange of the sign of peace becomes a particularising event. Usually, those socially closest to each other exchange greetings first (usually by hugging) before they turn to greet others around them.

In terms of the conduct of the service, there is little to mark the 10:30 a.m. mass from the earliest and last services except for the full choir. The difference lies in the congregation who are more soberly clad than the 9:00 group. There has been a trend toward greater casualness over the years. However, when I first started visiting the church there were noticeably more men dressed in full suit or wearing a jacket. Generally, the congregation seemed older than the 9:00 a.m. group. The congregation is composed more of couples than families. This is probably a reflection of a general trend of teenagers gradually dissociating themselves from their natal family in terms of collective activities; they also very often drop out from church attendance.

Overriding these differences in the four services, however, were some common points that marked the congregation of St Patrick's apart from the congregation of the other two churches respectively.

One of the more notable common points was the shared attitude toward children. The children at St Patrick's were the most supervised. If they were in church, they usually stayed in

the pews with their parent/s. Toddlers were held by parents so that their back would usually be turned toward the altar. The arm movements of a parent pacifying a child were circumspect; nobody nearby need fear being jostled by arching elbows. Parental response to a crying child was the promptest; s/he would rush out of the nave with the child in his/her arms, very frequently straight through the vestibule, and outside. The parents' concern about their children's conduct seems to be re-enforced by other members of the congregation who gaze rather disapprovingly at children who have made themselves conspicuous by their behaviour (e.g. crying, or trying to wander in the nave). When I mentioned this in the course of my brief slide presentation, a lay member of the church leadership vigorously agreed with me and shared the following anecdote. On one occasion, a toddler wandered toward the altar and almost toppled a candlestick. As the toddler lurched toward it, the whole congregation groaned and made gestures almost in unison as if to catch the child before the fatal act.

St Patrick's is a moral community in that its members observe certain norms among themselves. More so than the other two churches, it is as if there is a tacit understanding about norms of conduct. If there seems to be a breach, pressure is quietly applied for their observance. As a community, it does not vocally express approval or disapproval. The pattern of spacing among the members of the congregation, the extent of body movements, the handling of children etc. indicate that the community is successful in maintaining conformity.

5. The Services Celebrated by the Officers of the Church:

There are very few variations in the four Sunday services; the type of musical accompaniments is one of the few. In the earliest and latest services, the music director alone provides music; at times a cantor leads the singing from the ambo (lectern table) placed at the west side of the altar. The two choirs, one each for the 9:00 and 10:30 a.m. services, have different repertoires. The 9:00 a.m. choir tends to sing more modern hymns that are, at times, based on folk music. By contrast, the 10:30 a.m. choir tends to sing more traditional and classical hymns. Another difference that I have mentioned is the manner in which the Lord's Prayer is recited during the 9:00 a.m. mass.

The liturgy is decided on a monthly basis through the official format of a committee; this is a meeting of the priest/pastor, a retired priest/assistant pastor, the deacon, the music director

and a few other church officials many of whom, if not all, are lay members. The liturgical theme chosen blends what has been set up by the Vatican through the lectionary with programs currently organised in church. The latter include programs dealing with the catechumens and small groups organised within the church. The music is chosen accordingly.

Different officers of the church may celebrate the mass; however, all four services have the same preacher. Since St Patrick's has a pastor, and an assistant pastor -both priests- as well as a deacon, the three have taken turns delivering a sermon; each will deliver the sermon in all the services for one weekend. Listening to the same sermon delivered four times from 7:30 a.m. on is one strong reason I stopped attending all four services in one day².

The services also reflect the structured collectivist character. Further, boundaries among different categories of people tend to remain constant. The relation between the celebrating officers and the congregation most closely resembles the traditional relation between actors and audience in European and American theatres. Apart from having their names read aloud by the lector at the beginning of the service, officials in the celebration of mass are conspicuously apart from the worshippers. Introit (ritual entry of the chief celebrant of the mass at the beginning of the service) is marked by a procession composed not only by the chief celebrant, a priest or a deacon, and by the young servers, but also by a lector who holds the Gospel aloft. Like the ushers, the lectors remain visible throughout the service; this is also the case with the cantors if there is one. Although the lectors hardly take more than a few minutes to read from the lectionary, they stay at the altar the whole time. Even the Eucharistic ministers who come to the altar only at the beginning of the communion rites and leave after communion are very distinct. This is because of their generally sober attire, and the distinctness of the altar area. The dark wood panelling accentuates their presence as a group when they line up around the altar table.

This stability of classificatory boundaries seems to be extended to the way the world is presented; the world appears to be organised and its many categories such as political and religious institutions (e.g. the state, the diocese, the parish etc.) clearly distinct. This is seen in the petition where the congregation is led to offer prayers for various groups and people. Rather than specific individuals, named or anonymous, groups as categories of people are mentioned (e.g. the homeless, the lonely, the sick). Generally, socio-political institutions are not much

² I was told that this practice has been discontinued. Now the celebrant of each mass preaches too.

mentioned. Reflecting what is happening in the world at large and within the parish, the presentation of categories in the petition is based on an ordered hierarchy of well known institutions or organisations, from the larger or more universal to the more specifically local; for example, from the Catholic Church, to the diocese of Peoria, to the parish of St Patrick's itself, to the many different groups at St Patrick's; or from national leaders to community leaders.

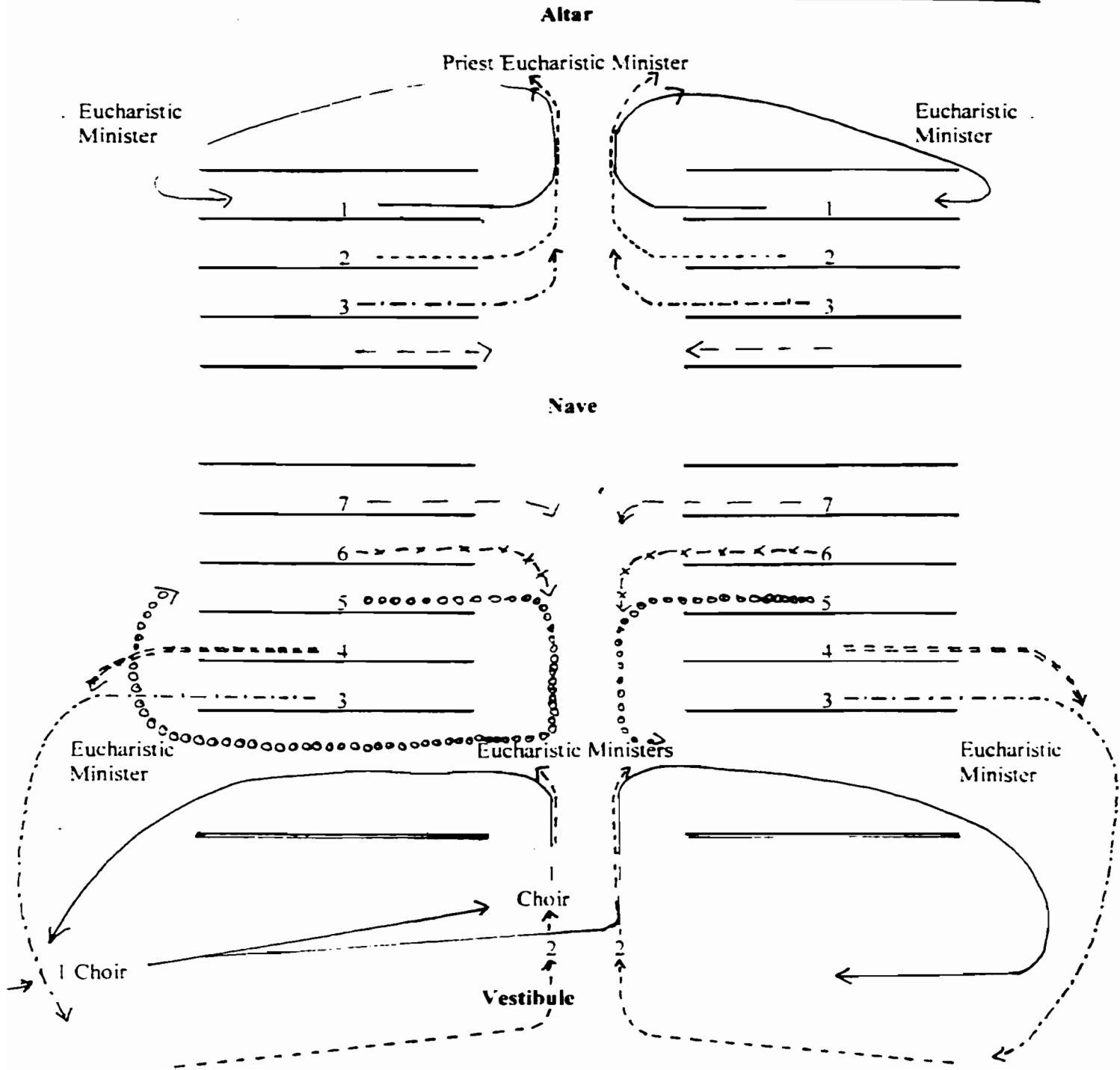
This observance of pre-existing categories is also reflected in St Patrick's more faithful adherence to the twenty-four hour clock. Services seldom run longer than an hour; when they do, they do not exceed the hour by more than fifteen minutes (e.g. Easter). This is the case even when there are special events such as baptism or special appeals that have been incorporated into the service. For example, when the annual appeal from the Bishop of Peoria, their diocesan head, was made, the usual homily was given up to show a film bearing the Bishop's message. Such is the expectation for punctuality that when the mass runs longer than an hour, the courtyard outside starts filling with worshippers coming early for the next service.

Despite the crowded nave, order is maintained throughout the services. This is largely due to the ushers, usually male and dressed in blazers. They more directly interact with the congregation and act as quiet overseers of the service. Four of them stand in the nave close to the connecting doors to the vestibule and control the flow of people both into and within the nave. They allocate seating in a crowded nave and are responsible for the collection and act as a link between the secular and religious in the nave. One of them takes up the collection while leading a few worshippers -usually a nuclear family- carrying the host and wine to the altar. The ushers choose these worshippers just before the service.

The ushers are very active during communion. They signal the beginning of communion by opening the connecting door to the vestibule widely, and work closely with the priest and seven Eucharistic ministers (those who offer the host and wine to the worshippers). The priest and the Eucharistic ministers divide into two groups, so too the ushers. Between the two sets of groups, communion becomes well choreographed and different groupings within the nave (e.g. front, and rear, each pew, the choir, the vestibule) retain their integrity.

Two ushers assume responsibility of the front half of the nave, and the other two of the rear half, the vestibule and the choir. Those in front guide the worshippers to line up for communion in the centre aisle a pew at a time starting from the first one. At any one time, no

Diagram 1: Communion at St Patrick's



more than three pews on each side of the front nave seem to be in motion, one settling down to their pew after receiving communion, another receiving communion one worshipper at a time, and the last lining up to receive communion. The two Eucharistic ministers standing near the swinging doors in the central aisle face the vestibule while the ushers first guide choir members from the loft and those in the vestibule to receive communion in two lines. Thence starting from the furthest rear pew, the ushers guide those in the last three pews from the side aisles through the vestibule for communion. As the last member of the last three pews finish receiving communion, the ministers turn around to face the altar and the ushers who have moved to the centre aisle direct people from the fourth last pew onward to line up for communion (cf attached diagram).

The ushers are general overseers. When an old, dishevelled and probably inebriated man walked into the nave in the middle of the service and started collecting matches by the votive candles, two ushers came promptly up to him. After exchanging a few words, with their hand on his shoulder, they gently nudged him out telling him about coffee and doughnuts in the Parish Center.

St Patrick's presents an ordered society; and it mediates its members to it as such. The whole is made of the sum of its parts; many of its constituent parts tend to be carefully prepared in advance so that they tally to make a coherent whole.

6. An 'American Church':

A member of St Patrick's congregation volunteered the information that the church was a truly 'American church'. Of course, there are many ways to be 'American'. And the two other churches may be equally American and even share some of the virtues that make St Patrick's one. There is, however, one way in which St Patrick's is 'American' unlike the other two. Being most at ease with American society, St Patrick's seems to have the least complicated relation with it. Apart from its Sunday services, this easy relation is seen in the annual open-air service held on Memorial Day, the last Monday in May.

This service is celebrated in one of the prettier, if not prettiest, cemetery in Champaign-Urbana. Sandwiched between a country club and its golf course on one hand and a small nature preserve on the other, the cemetery is situated in one of the very few places in Champaign-Urbana where there are noticeable undulations in the land. Its many mature trees

with large grass covered clearing give the feeling of a park. The cemetery is especially colourful on Memorial Day. Peonies are frequently in bloom next to many graves, which are decked with wreaths of bright usually artificial flowers and/or miniature American flags. Walking up to the plot where mass is celebrated, one sees Legionnaires in their uniform gathering together readying their guns for a salute at another site.

The mass is held in the Catholic plot with a life-size statue of Christ on the cross as a backdrop. It attracts a sizeable congregation numbering somewhere close to seventy or eighty seated in folding chairs provided by a funeral home. During the period of 1989 to 1993, the main focus of this dissertation, the front row was usually occupied by members of the Knights of Columbus (a lay Catholic male organisation); their military-like uniform is more colourful than the military one; they were the first to receive communion among the congregation. Their presence underlined the military character of Memorial Day; there was one military man by them. In later years, members of this organisation were no longer visible.

The mass is celebrated while, elsewhere, the Legionnaires fire their salute to the fallen. Its site and the size of its congregation make the occasion more intimate; instead of a well-rehearsed choir, a few cantors lead the singing while playing portable instruments, such as a guitar; and the priest preaches without a microphone. The mass is concluded by a rousing singing of 'God Bless America'. The specialness of the day is further marked by a breakfast that is offered to the congregation back at the Parish Center. It had been the custom in many churches for people attending a funeral to gather together for food after the service. It is a time when the living rally together. And there is a friendly atmosphere among the handful that have returned to the Parish Center.

The celebration of the Memorial Day mass at a cemetery seems to emphasise the distance between the living and the dead. The cemetery is in a distinctly separate location from the church; and the dead are acknowledged as a general category. Although Memorial Day began in order to commemorate the war dead of the Civil War its historicity is underplayed in the service. Instead, it is those who died fighting in wars and, by extension, the dead in general who are recognised. Because the dead constitute a general category, those attending the service, the living, also become a general category. This stark contrast between the living and the dead is attenuated somewhat by the sermon in which the priest acknowledges the private losses of the

individual members of the congregation. Also, after the service, some members of the congregation are seen wandering off to individual graves to pay their respects.

Overall though, even the celebration of Memorial Day stresses the image of St Patrick's as the church for the living where dying seems to have little space. This emphasis is partly due to the patterns of time-reckoning that are presented in the regular services. The following section will focus on this.

7. Stages of Life and the Nuclear Family:

Like all Catholic churches, St Patrick's follows the liturgical calendar where the periods leading to Easter and to Christmas are the two temporal high points. The calendrical observance is cyclical on an annual basis and highlights important phases in the life cycle of Christ. Within this universal pattern of time-keeping among Catholic churches, there are other patterns that are specific to St Patrick's.

There are four kinds of time-keeping that are saliently presented in Sunday services at St Patrick's. In terms of its organisation, there is the relatively strict adherence to the twenty-four hour clock. And in terms of representation there are time-keeping associated with the different stages of life, with the nuclear family, and, related to that of a nuclear family, one based on the educational system. The four different kinds of time-keeping combined presents us with a world based on an apparently well-established classificatory scheme. However, the very fact of combining several different systems creates as much ambiguity as clarity.

It is within the context of punctuality that other kinds of time-reckoning which are more representational in character are incorporated. One such pattern of time-reckoning is the one related to the stages of life. As I have mentioned earlier, different services attract somewhat different congregations, which can be seen in terms of different stages of life. The stages of life are presented to the extent that they overlap with the patterns of time-reckoning associated with a nuclear family. Weddings, like funerals, are usually purely family matters and are observed outside of the regular weekly services. However, the inception of a nuclear family is marked publicly during the regular services through baptism. The parents, the godparents and the infant gather in one corner of the altar early on in the service.

More clearly than the other two churches, St Patrick's has promoted the nuclear family as a basic social unit. The majority of those who were selected to walk up to the altar for the

Offertory (i.e. to hand the host and wine for the communion service and the collection of money from that service) were nuclear families, that is, a father and a mother, and their children. Less frequently, a single parent would do so with her children (the single parent tended to be female). And even less frequently, a couple or two friends would be chosen to walk up the aisle. The majority of adults seemed to be between their mid-twenties and forties. Visibly elderly people (sixty upward) or ill people seemed not to be chosen.

The saliency of the nuclear family was manifest during the first communion celebration I observed; first communion mass is a special occasion celebrated separately from the regular services. During the ritual, two parents came up to the ambo to offer their prayers. The 'mother' and 'father' in question were recruited from two different families. And when these children lined up for communion, they were told to come up to the altar with their parent/s and, if any, siblings. Quite a few children had their grandparents with them as well. However, they were in a procession with the others forming a separate group; they followed the group of nuclear families with their respective first communicant for communion; by the time they had come up to the altar, the first group had had gone back to their pews.

The lifespan of a nuclear family seems to end when the children reach adulthood and strike out on their own. The children accompanying their parent/s for the Offertory are young; the older ones seeming no more than teenagers. I have not noticed elderly parent/s accompanied by their middle-aged children.

The importance of the nuclear family and, hence, of its lifespan is implicit in the manner in which children are differentiated into age groups that closely reflect the classificatory scheme in the educational system. From the perspective of a child, one's life starts with baptism and subsequent attendance of mass with one's parents. After a while, one might start attending the children's liturgy at the Parish Center (typically, pre-communion children would be somewhere up to the second grade in elementary school; nowadays, children receive their first communion when they are seven or so). After one's first communion, one would attend the main church building for worship. Chances are, one is more likely to attend the 9:00 a.m. mass with one's parents who are still somewhat younger than the average member of the congregation attending the 10:30 a.m. mass. As a student in a high school or junior high school, one might attend age

specific organised groups for further religious studies and preparations for confirmation (usually around the age of fifteen).

The interaction between these somewhat different patterns of time-keeping has had the greatest impact on time-keeping related to the stages of life. The stages of life that are presented at St Patrick's do not include some of the later stages such as being a grandparent or, ultimately, death. As I have mentioned in the context of both its architecture and of its Memorial Day celebration, the spatial arrangement of the church re-enforces this. The church would seem to be bathed in green, evergreen, not only because of its patron saint, St Patrick (whose colour is green)³.

Once the children attain adulthood (probably eighteen or older), the parents revert to being a couple. Note here that Champaign-Urbana is a town where a large number of people have moved in from elsewhere and where a sizeable portion of its population is transient. This geographical and occupational mobility is frequently replicated in the next generation. Thus, many children move away from Champaign-Urbana once they reach adulthood, leaving their parents behind for college and/or for a job.

As a couple who have completed the task of raising a family, they are older than a couple starting one. However, the difference of age among these post-nuclear-family couples seems to matter less. For example, whether any one couple are grandparents or not is not really relevant in the context of the congregation. Thus, though somewhat loose the division is between couples with young children and older couples on their own. It is marked, albeit loosely, by the different services each group attends, the 9:00 a.m. for the younger ones, and the 10:30 a.m. for the older couples.

³ I raised the relative absence of collective representation of death and ageing –with more emphasis on death- with the pastor. Having mentioned that American culture denies death, he pointed out, among other things, that the Liturgy, not to mention the Liturgical calendar, centres around the death and suffering of Christ. Prominently displayed atop of the altar is a large polychrome statue of Christ on the Cross; and the sign of the cross that one makes at the beginning and end of the service is another reminder of death. He also pointed out that he mentions issues related to death in his homilies. He argued that all these and more had a cumulative effect on the faithful, so that when the time came they would reach out both to the image and rituals related to death. It is also the case that, when needed, small organised groups within the church participate in the caring of the ill, in arranging a luncheon for the bereaved family after the funeral service, and providing bereavement service. I believe that this does not necessarily contradict the absence of collective representation of death in the services. The contradiction between the two cultures, of the Church and of the local society, on this matter is resolved primarily on individual bases when the need arises.

At the collective level, such as a church, the blending of the time-reckoning of a nuclear family with that of the stages of life has been at the expense of the latter. It is not that the emphasis on the nuclear family per se has undermined the public discourse on ageing and death and, hence, time-reckoning based on the completion of the stages of life. Rather, the conditions that allowed for the emphasis on one have contributed to the undermining of the other.

Moreover, old age, especially retirement, and even death or the past life of the dead do have a place. At the familial level a family is very frequently more than just a nuclear family. The inter- and intra-generational kinship ties do not have a public forum where they are represented; they seem to belong to the 'private' domain where, for example, family reunions thrive

Underlying these is the fact that there are two social units that are largely accepted and are given public forum for expression. One is the consensual union of two adults. The other is the pairing of a parent/guardian with a child; more frequently than not, this is seen as a unit made of a biological parent and his/her child. Increasingly, there is an acknowledgement of the different ways in which either of these units, combined or separate, are organised. However, not all options are given equal presentation in public. Although the nuclear family in the form of a husband and wife and their children is but one option among many, it is the one that St Patrick's seems to put most emphasis on. It is also one that features most prominently in public discourse in the U.S.A.

As I have mentioned in section 5 (An American Church), the sense of historical continuity of society is rather weak in the time presented at St Patrick's. This may not mean that there is a lack of awareness of societal continuity. Continuity would seem to imply the perpetuation of the stability of the present. I shall explore the significance of the absence of explicit historical presentation in the Chapter VII (The Conclusion).

In this context, the emphasis on the nuclear family, a social unit composed of two generations, or on the couple, a single generation unit, would put more emphasis on the present. As we have seen in Part II, at least three generations would seem to be necessary for a sense of linear continuity of time. And the stages of life are more clearly a repetitive process within this linear continuity.

Chapter III:

St Mary: the Activist Church

1. Introduction: the Setting

St Mary is situated a block north of University Avenue, an east-west street which is viewed by many people nowadays as the dividing line between the primarily Afro-American residential area (north) and the rest of the town¹. Actually, what is now considered an Afro-American area was more ethnically mixed before; the several blocks surrounding St Mary were predominantly Euro-American till the early 60s². The parish of St Mary was once a geographical unit with a good number of Catholic residents. Over the years, many individual houses along University Avenue, especially on the south side have given way to businesses or apartments catering largely to an expanded student population.

With local demographic changes in the last few decades, a good portion of the 'parish' of St Mary has moved out of its geographical boundary. Catholics are a minority among Afro-Americans, and students tend to attend campus churches. The church members of St Mary are mostly people who have crossed the geographical boundaries of other parishes. The church is probably the most different among the five Catholic churches in Champaign-Urbana. It has been involved in the Sanctuary Movement³ for example.

From my point of view, three things differentiate St Mary from the other two churches. Firstly, it is the most multi-ethnic of the three. Secondly, it has the simplest organisation both in the running of Sunday services and as a church. Finally, it has the least easily defined pattern of time-reckoning at the collective level.

Section 2 will describe the faith community of St Mary. Generally, it is a community of people who seem to seek and, therefore, are accepting of diversity. For many, this is expressed strongly in terms of their individualism and an almost non-conformist casualness. The latter is

¹ Neighbourhoods in Champaign-Urbana are multi-ethnic. In most instances, Euro-Americans pre-dominate. There is, however, one area where the residents are predominantly Afro-American. Both St Mary and Salem are found close to the Southern "boundary" of this area, University Avenue

² Personal communications from Doris Hoskins who has been chronicling local history. She has helped me with other historical aspects related to Champaign-Urbana, especially to the three churches.

³ Somewhat similarly to the Underground Railway for runaway slaves, protective shelter is offered to Latin American refugees.

reflected in the pattern of their decision-making. The relative simplicity we see in church organisation is also visible in its building. There is a connection between this simplicity and the character of its faith community (section 3).

Section 4 will describe some features of a typical Sunday service at St Mary that make it the most casual of the three churches. It would seem that many church members are comfortable with this. This section will briefly touch upon how a church that seems to put so much emphasis on diversity can function as a community to the point of celebrating mass together.

Section 5 discusses the pattern of time-reckoning that emerges in these observations. To facilitate this discussion, I shall resort to Fabian's idea on co-evalness (1983).

2. St Mary, a Faith Community:

St Mary has the smallest number of members, about two hundred and fifty⁴. Judging from church attendance, I would suspect that the number has increased somewhat over the years. However, it still remains a small church in terms of membership; in terms of building, it was the largest of the three before the summer of 1993.

Partly because of its location, St Mary has attracted a multi-ethnic congregation for some while. Talking impressionistically, at least 40% of those who attend Sunday service nowadays are non-Euro-Americans. Many of its Afro-American members have been long-time residents in Champaign-Urbana. There might have been more Afro-American members earlier; most have died, and their children had mostly moved out of town. Now, the church has a sizeable Korean congregation, by far the largest of the minority group there. There are very few of Asian origin who are not of Korean ethnicity; I only know of two. This probably reflects both a lack of *entente* among diverse Asian groups and a desire to maintain the distinctness of one's ethnic identity. Though not as noticeable, there is also a Latino presence there.

Both the casualness and individualism of the church were indicated even in my reception.

When I approached the pastor for permission to do research on the church, I was told offhandedly that this being a free country, I was free to do so. Since then I have just been

⁴ 1989 – 90 figure.

another person attending church with rather unusual habits such as taking pictures or notes of the service and of the church members. There was, I felt, the least need to explain myself here.

Interviewing members of St Mary has frequently been the beginning of a friendly relation between my informants and me. Many have extended their friendship to me, and most continued to exchange greetings with me for as long as I continued to visit the church. It was not that they were unaware of my doing research there; but this seemed to matter the least. Some of those I interviewed were remarkable in their spontaneous display of generosity. For example, I was taken to share lunch at a diner while I interviewed a couple about St Mary; the invitation was extended the first time I approached them. Another gave me an interview a few weeks after the death of her husband to keep a promise she made with me earlier for an interview⁵.

The casualness which very frequently underplays formality inherent in an established organisation and liturgy can also be seen in the simplicity, which is at times tantamount to an apparent absence of a formal decision-making structure. There are individuals who are each responsible for certain tasks (finance, social gathering, liturgy etc.) Generally, they make decisions on their own or in informal consultation with others. A meeting of any one group for decision-making purpose is not scheduled long in advance in the church calendar. There is little pre-planned co-ordination. The pastor works on his sermon independently from the choir. And the choir itself tended to practice very quickly a few minutes before the service started; the music director made his selection during this practice.

There are two kinds of organised activities at St Mary. One is related to the organisation of social gatherings for church members, and the other to the political interests of some of them. The women's group is the only one whose organisation is based on the church; it is fairly loosely organised; they meet on alternate months. The women's group tends to have an all-purpose mission; they would furnish the church with missalets, gifts for the needy at Thanksgiving and Christmas, and organise social events. It would seem that each event is handled by a handful of them, at times by even fewer.

As one of my interviewees at St Patrick's had pointed out disapprovingly, St Mary is more obviously politicised. Political issues are most likely to be discussed and a common stance adopted here. Most of their organised activities are focused on foreign policy issues, especially

⁵ The interview was initially arranged for the day he died. When I turned up at her house unaware of her very recent bereavement, the new widow came out to greet me and promised another interview.

Latin America. For example, the church had been one of the local centres for the Sanctuary Movement. The meeting of church members involved in this was fairly ad hoc; occasionally, a meeting would be mentioned in the church bulletin; the priest also mentioned the meeting at the end of the mass and asked for a get-together at the rectory immediately afterward. Given the nature of involvement, one had to be fairly committed to join; and unity among the group seemed to be based primarily on issues rather than socio-economic networking. Nowadays, though, one seldom hears the Sanctuary Movement mentioned in church.

Even the choice of the church with which St Mary had paired herself has been an overtly political expression. Its choice of a sister church has been based on its foreign policy stand; the sister church is in a poor parish in El Salvador⁶. From time to time, there have been organised trips by church members to its sister church in El Salvador. They have taken supplies there; and they would report their observations on their return. There have been frequent exchanges of letters between the two parishes.

Apart from these more regular commitments, the congregation has occasionally been asked to sign a petition to their Congressmen or politicians over some foreign policy issues. This again has been done on an ad hoc basis with the appeal being made at the end of mass.

The casualness of church organisation does not necessarily mean that church members have been individually averse to organisation. I have on occasion heard some church members complain about the relative lack of organisation at St Mary with regards, for example, to the manner in which the congregation approach the altar for communion. And many seem to be quite organised in their own way as individuals. The casualness is not a reflection of an overall lack of organisation. It is rather a reflection of an acceptance of and respect for a gathering of people who each have their own special way of being organised. In fact, many of them seem to be rather particular about the way they organise themselves as an individual or family even if it means becoming conspicuously isolated.

Many Euro-American interviewees have stated that they had visited quite a few churches before settling on St Mary; and the decisive factor, they said, was ethnic diversity. And considerable effort has been made to make St Mary multi-cultural. For the last six years or so,

⁶ In the case both of Salem and St Patrick's, overseas connection is based largely on personal connections. A few years after my data collection was over, St Patrick's adopted a sister parish in Israel. The selection owed largely to the active presence of a church member who came from that area. They have also supported the missionary cum

for example, the congregation has been singing the Lord's Prayer both in English and in Korean. A romanised sheet music is attached to the back page of the hymnal. Quite a few non-Koreans sing along in Korean. Likewise the verses of the credo are sung alternately in English, Korean and Spanish. When I first visited the church, a reading in some of the Sunday services could be in different languages such as Korean or Spanish.

Underlying this preference for ethnic diversity (not all my interviewees gave this as a reason for joining) is a more generalised preference for diversity.

Although most group activities are fairly casually organised, there is one group that is consistently well organised: the Korean congregation. They have their own newsletter that is printed out every week and is put next to the church bulletin for general distribution.⁷ Going out of church after service, the Koreans gathered together sometimes socialising, and at times listening to a particular person addressing them all. If the Koreans are conspicuous as a group within the church, they also go out of their way to befriend other church members. For Christmas and Easter, they would frequently do something special (e.g. Christmas choir, eggs for Easter) for all the church members. In 1992, they had put up an exhibition including pictures and videos of Korea and especially Korean Catholics to which all the members present at the service were invited. Many of them (including some men) dressed in their national clothes and served food and drinks that were representative of their country.

It is difficult for me to gauge how welcome the Koreans are among other church members. As an Asian myself in a society that is conscious of physiognomic traits as determinants of 'race' and where ethnically based animosity is frowned upon, I am not likely to hear people make unfavourable comments if such is their true inclination. If there are some who are not so ready to share church service together with the Koreans (I understand that some of them attend the evening mass on Saturdays instead), there are also a sizeable number of members who are some more enthusiastically so than others⁸. Whichever way, it is difficult to imagine

aid efforts of one of its members who has been a lay missionary in Africa. Salem has occasionally supported aid efforts to Liberia. The move has been spearheaded by one of their deacons who is actually from Liberia.

⁷ The church bulletin in English provides fairly simple information, the Korean church bulletin, by contrast, provide copious information. In fact, even compared to the bulletins of the other two churches, it is probably the most informative. The bulletin provides translation of all three readings for Sunday service, information about various groups organised among the Korean church members as well as among the members of St Mary in general; it also is a social forum where members can exchange news about what might be on sale. The bulletin also provides news about the Catholic Church in Korea and, at times, about the Vatican.

⁸ Quite a few non-Korean members join in the singing of the Lord's Prayer in Korean by reading its transcription in Roman letters attached to the hymnal.

how such a well organised and, in many ways, separate group could be accommodated in other churches. 'Sharing' a church in the case of other Korean congregations in non-Korean churches means sharing the same space but not the same time. In other words, there would be two 'churches' each with their own pastor in one building. The Korean church will be renting the building from the other one.

This predilection for diversity at St Mary is also seen in the range of children's behaviour, which can be anything from being well behaved and staying with their parent/s throughout, to running noisily around the church during service or playing with each other across the pews. There is some control. However, the children are allowed much greater leeway than would be tolerated either in Salem or in St Patrick's. Another case in point is the choir member who read a newspaper during service. Being in the choir loft as the choir was then, she was not conspicuous to the congregation at large. However, it is difficult to imagine such an obvious display of difference being accepted with relative equanimity by the rest of the choir, let alone the congregation, in either of the two other churches.

Generally, the members of St Mary are very conscious of themselves and the difference between themselves and others. They seem comfortable about this and to expect it. Unlike my interviewees from the other two churches, many of those from St Mary would talk about aspects of their lives that marked them apart from others. Very frequently, the aspects of their lives that they referred to were very personal, but they generally talked about them in a matter-of-fact way. Further, they seemed comfortable referring to disagreements they have had in the past or are now having with others; they generally would do so in a mild but firm tone. I doubt that my interviewees from the other two churches actually led entirely conflict-free lives; oblique references might have been made, but they were usually not mentioned explicitly.

Even though many of them were mild-mannered, the members of St Mary generally seemed to have very strong personal opinions on some issues and held on to them. After all, St Mary has been the church that most emphasised the fact that following 'God's words' could lead to conflict; there was merit in being involved in such a conflict. As the priest preached: 'there is no loyalty stronger than the voice of conscience.'

An elderly man explained that he had joined St Mary after a disagreement with the pastor of another church and have stayed on ever since⁹. A young man said that his amity would only be extended to those who accepted his marriage; quite a few of his family members had not and, hence, he no longer was on speaking terms with them. A woman told me that she did not fit in among the members of St Mary, nor with people in general, because her circumstances were very different. Or again, an interracial couple told me that they could not be together earlier in their youth because of strong opposition.

An acknowledgement of their differences with others was a reflection of their self-assertiveness and/or confidence in their individuality. Thus many members seem to take matters to hand and try to negotiate their own terms with the world; even if doing so puts them at variance with most people. Being isolated or standing out in the process seemed to bother them least.

An elderly Afro-American woman socialises easily with people of different ethnicity. This is not because she is colour blind; she is not. She has a strong sense of self and seems comfortable in different social contexts. Thus, she has participated actively in voluntary organisations be they almost exclusively Afro-American, Euro-American or mixed. In the racial climate now, people who voluntarily cross ethnic boundaries, especially in the older generation, are a rarity and tend to stand out. Having done so when it was even more difficult by marrying a Euro-American first, and several decades later an Afro-American, she takes crossing ethnic boundaries in her stride. She lives in a house, which she had built 'brick by brick' with her children.

A youngish couple with several children laughingly said that they came to St Mary as opposed to another Catholic church because they wanted to be independent from his parents, long established members there. Coming to church, they would invariably back their van into the smaller parking lot so that they could leave easily. And they lived in a house that had been specially built to their taste. Another couple had pointed out that they had moved to Champaign-Urbana to focus on the family rather than on a profitable career.

⁹ If one left a church as a result of a disagreement with the pastor, one tends to come back to it after the latter's departure. For example, there was a sudden influx of worshippers at both Catholic churches when there was a conflict in another Catholic church in town. However, most seem to have returned to that church once the pastor in question had been re-assigned.

A European immigrant woman had established a refuge for underprivileged youth from problem families, mostly Afro-American. Her efforts were initially met with considerable opposition; but she persevered with a handful of supporters who also have been members of St Mary. She has insisted on running the refuge as a Christian venture; doing so excludes her from receiving grants from federal agencies. Another Euro-American woman who lost her child through miscarriage started a support group for women in similar situations.

Going to St Mary seems to be part of this self-assertiveness. Just as many church members organise their lives in their own way, they also seem to be asserting their individual interpretative right.

The elderly Euro-American woman who told me, on being interviewed, that she could not speak for her husband was from St Mary. I noticed that her approach to people was generally friendly but shy and meek. However, she firmly stated that faith was an individual matter and, therefore, she would only speak for herself; I had given her no indication that I would be interested in anybody but her. At that time, her husband was wheelchair bound after suffering from a stroke that had, among other things, affected his speech. Even among the most reticent, many would take it upon themselves to assume the voice of the other in such circumstances.

Some other interviewees had told me that they preferred the simplicity of St Mary. One in particular stated that she disliked the ornateness of other churches. In this simplicity, she found she could really pray. A sparsely decorated church such as St Mary is also a church, which has few organised representations of faith.

This emphasis on individualism is seen in the way the service is conducted. However, we shall first examine the physical setting of this church, the 'simple' church.

3. The Two Buildings:

St Mary is the oldest Catholic church in town; and it has changed less over the years than St Patrick's. Like St Patrick's, St Mary has two buildings adjacent to each other. However, the pattern is a more traditional one: one is the church building itself, and the other the rectory.

St Mary seems to be an oasis of stability while things around her continue to change. The neighbourhood has changed not only in terms of demographics, but also in terms of big

organisations involved in the area. The two buildings were sandwiched between the local mental health centre, a neighbour to the west on the same block, and a large hospital a block east. The mental health centre was in a building that had been used to house a diocesan school until 1968, St Mary Catholic School. This building was razed a few years ago; instead, there is a rather large parking lot. By contrast, the hospital building has been expanding over the years. The hospital is run by an order of Catholic nuns and has strong connections with the church. Weekday mass is celebrated in the hospital chapel rather than in church.

St Mary most projects the image of frugality, simplicity and casual seclusion.

The rectory, outwardly an imposing brick house built a few years after the church, is the residential quarter of the pastor of St Mary. Occasionally, other priests are known to live there too. Its furnishing is Spartan. The rectory, especially the basement, is used for Sunday schools and for meetings of church related groups such as the Sanctuary group or the Korean congregation. More frequently than not though, the Korean congregation meet in the front yard of the rectory in warmer weather.

The church building is used for sacerdotal purposes only.

St Mary has the largest capacity¹⁰ but the smallest in attendance (185 on average) of the three churches; the attendance looks even sparser because of the high ceiling and size of the nave. It is also the least concerned about creature comfort. It is the least warm in winter, and the most hot in summer; two large and loud fans at both sides of the altar combined with open windows allow for some circulation of air even in the most stultifying summer. I understand that the church has been repainted after a fire. Now, there are patches with peeling paint¹¹. The old building has had less remodelling than St Patrick's.

If St Patrick's allows for a smooth transition from the outside to the inner sanctum of the church, St Mary is more like the traditional sanctuary. The break from the outside world is more complete. It is a place of quiet seclusion rather than one of protective refuge as the old church building of Salem was. Architecturally, one crosses several thresholds before one enters the nave at St Mary.

The front entrance is one of the few areas where there has been some remodelling. I have been told that a set of stairs each led straight to the two doors in front. Now, one goes up six

¹⁰ Approximately 450 as opposed to 250 to 280 that can be accommodated in St Patrick's or in the old church building of Salem.

wide steps to a small enclosed courtyard and thence through either set of heavy metal doors on both sides of the church (there is a ramp for wheelchair access at the back). One enters a dark and wide but shallow vestry/vestibule, which is bare. There are bulletin boards displaying pictures of El Salvador or of other projects that the church or its members are involved in, and a side table against each of the two walls sandwiched by swinging glass doors leading to the main sanctuary. The church bulletin, a single sheet paper, the Korean newsletter are stacked on these tables for one to pick up; none is left if one is late. Holy water is put in small inconspicuous receptacles that are by the doors to the main sanctuary. By the central door there is a small room where parents can retire with their young children and attend mass at the same time through the large window pane; not all parents use this 'cry room'.

The main sanctuary itself has a high ceiling and, coming from the dark vestibule, looks suffused with natural light filtered through stained glass windows. Actually, the old church building at Salem was brighter. The pews are large wood benches that could comfortably seat eight to ten people. These are lined along both sides of the central aisle; half size benches, seating four, are arranged along the side aisles.

At St Patrick's many of its decorations were made by professionals, St Mary is adorned with the handiwork of the congregation. The decor is rather muted. At the back of the nave a collage is hanging with the names of the congregation cut out in different coloured felt. And banners made of collages hung from along the pillars. Seasonal decorations such as poinsettias for Christmas are placed in front of the altar; and once they have served their purpose, they are given away to some of members attending mass. There is also a reproduction of the little manger on the left of the altar at Christmas time.

A few years ago the piano was moved to the left hand (east side) corner of the altar¹². This followed the disbanding of the choir; initially there were two cantors cum musicians by the altar who led the singing.

4. The Service:

Sunday services at St Mary are the most casually organised of the three churches and allows for considerable improvisation. It is also the simplest and quietest¹³. There is an emphasis

¹¹ It got a fresh coat of paint and new and quieter wall-mounted fans in the summer of 1999.

on equality. The distinctions between the altar and the nave and between the different officers involved in the service and the ordinary members are least marked at St Mary. Considerable effort has been made over the years to incorporate Korean and Spanish texts into the liturgy.

Improvisation takes the form, among other things, of adding to the basic liturgical structure. Sunday service can and frequently does last longer than the stipulated hour. Running overtime by ten or fifteen minutes is very common; even thirty minutes is not unknown. Once, the service lasted for well over two hours. Although some leave after the first hour (or soon after communion) many stay on till the end no matter how long the service has become. If there is a baptism, it is incorporated into the service without curtailing the usual liturgy. At St Mary, it is an addition to the regular service. Similarly when the pastor or a church member wants to address the congregation on whatever issue, special time of varying length is allotted to them.

The relative lack of differentiation between the officers and other members of the church can be seen in the management of the choir, the 'recruitment' and role of the ushers, and the conduct of the lectors.

The music director of St Mary was the only one among the three churches who was truly an amateur. Recruited from among the members, s/he was a proficient musician who would primarily be defined by his/her other qualifications; being an unremunerated music director of St Mary was a personal matter. For example, the first music director I knew was working for a career as a computer scientist, the next one was a nun. This is very different from the other two churches, where being a musician was part of the public identity of their respective music director. St Patrick's has hired a professionally trained musician as their music director; and the music director of Salem has become more and more involved in musical events in the community through his position in Salem.

The choir was disbanded a few years after I began my research and was replaced by a group of musicians. Initially the group started with two cantors, one playing the piano, and another leading the congregation in the singing. In the last two years or so, this arrangement has become more elaborate; there are now some four musicians playing by the left side of the altar.

¹² As with the other two churches, the left-right distinction is made from the perspective of the altar.

¹³ With a gleam of amusement, a member of St Mary told me of the occasion when the pastor of St Patrick's came to substitute for the pastor of St Mary. Before the communion rite, he turned to the server with his hands outstretched for the ritual cleansing of hands. The young server, not knowing what to do, rolled her eyes. The pastor from St Patrick's continued the service smoothly without a to do.

To my untrained ears, there seems to be some variation in the quality of musicianship among the four; here too, one could say that diversity has been the order of day.

Prior consultation between the pastor and the music director had been very rare; when it happened, it was more in the nature of the pastor telling the music director just before mass. The choir itself did not set aside a special time to practice; they would practice forty minutes or so before mass began on Sunday morning. The manner in which hymns were selected was somewhat similar to that in Salem. The criteria were: 1) possible preference of the congregation, 2) the preference of the choir, and 3) the perceived mood of the assembly (especially in choosing the concluding hymn). However, the singing of the choir was not based on an interactive relation with the assembly. Just as a member who read newspaper during singing interludes was left alone, so too, the assembly would leave the choir alone to their task.

This simple informality is extended to the ushers; there usually are two. The ushers at St Mary do the least. They gather the collections and take the communion hosts and wine with the collections up to the altar. Nothing marks them as ushers (no badges, no special clothing); seated in their pew like any member of the congregation, they are indistinguishable. In fact, some of the ushers may not know that they are going to usher that day till collection time. I sometimes saw an usher stand up and look around for a fellow usher; not seeing anybody else standing, he would tap the shoulder of somebody still seated with a nudging gesture.

When the collection is finished, the ushers hold the collection basket, a plate of communion hosts, and a flagon of wine, and without much ceremony walk up the central aisle to hand them to the priest; they do this without genuflecting as is the case in St Patrick's. The priest himself would come toward them to receive these items; he would interrupt the preparations he has been making with the servers at the altar table when the two ushers are at the bottom of the steps. This is in contrast to St Patrick's, for example, where the process is marked with greater ceremony; the priest waits quietly at the bottom of the step with his servers as some members of the congregation gather at the rear of the nave and walk up the aisle toward him.

The lectors and cantors walk up to the altar only when it is their turn to perform. Like the ushers, they are dressed according to their personal taste rather than fairly formally as is the case both in St Patrick's and Salem. Thus, men may be in sober jackets as much as in colourful short sleeved shirts; and women may be dressed casually in trousers and shirt as much as in hats and dresses. Though none, to my knowledge, has walked up to the altar wearing shorts. They walk

up to the ambo without much ado and start reading or singing as the case might be. When they have finished, they simply walk back to their pews¹⁴.

At communion time, the Eucharistic Ministers (lay members) join the priest on the altar. Before, they each took communion as the priest gave them the host; they helped themselves to the wine left on the altar table. Now (1998 – 99), the Eucharistic Ministers take communion after the congregation has finished receiving communion.

The communion is given at the front of the nave (as opposed to the front and rear at St Patrick's). The priest and the Eucharistic Minister or another priest give the host in the central aisle, while an Eucharistic Minister holds the goblet of wine to hand out at each of the two corners in front. When there was a choir, they were the first to receive communion. This is no more. Now, as before, the congregation rises from their pews and join the communion procession almost spontaneously; the existing boundaries of the different pews disappear in the process. Apart from the fact that the communion procession moves up the central aisle in two lines, there is very little organisation. It is just as likely as not that somebody at the rear of the nave receives communion before those in the front; many would join the faster moving line. People seated in the side pews will join the line by going across the central pews or will go to the rear of the nave down the side aisle to join the central aisle. Some older people who move slowly will join the procession by and by; and parent/s with young children tend to join the procession at a later stage when there is less waiting and distraction from other people. All these are done with good humour and many are seen greeting each other as they join the line.

As a priest once pointed out to me, the communion procession becomes a spontaneous expression of the faith community that St Mary is. It is one of the few times there is interaction among people who are gathered together. It is one that encompasses every one present.

There is a more localised interaction during the sign of peace. After the Lord's Prayer, the congregation is encouraged to exchange the sign of peace. Reflecting the more multi-ethnic composition of St Mary, greeting takes several forms. The Koreans bow to each other but shake hands with others. The convenience of bowing allows them to extend their greetings to a larger space; some are seen bowing to other Koreans several pews apart. Others generally shake hands with people around them. Some embrace those who are close to them (e.g. children, spouse etc).

¹⁴ Both at St Patrick's and Salem, most of the officers involved in the religious celebration of the service are distinguished from other members of the assembly by being in the altar area from the beginning of the service.

The members of St Mary have a more flexible attitude toward space. Most members who come to church stay in the same social unit that they were in upon entering (e.g. nuclear family, husband and wife etc.). Some, however, join others in church and move away from the original social unit. A Korean woman with children, for example, might leave her husband with his friends and join other women.

Church members seem to prefer greater spacing than is the case with either Salem or St Patrick's. On one occasion, the church was packed. A family that usually took a whole pew to themselves were sandwiched by other worshippers. They seemed discomfited, and left in the middle of the service; they usually stayed till the end of the service even if it took longer than the expected hour.

The space between different social units or among the members of a unit vary considerably from one to another unit. It is not unusual for a family with small children to occupy a whole pew to itself. Another might share it. Some couples may sit further apart than others, some putting the handbag between them rather than on her side outside of the unit. Further since children are allowed to move about a lot more than in the other two churches, they frequently end up in another place from where they started. However, if the ambulant children have become rowdy, the parents usually intervene by scooping them up.

The relation between parent and child was one that has been most vigorously and conspicuously asserted at St Mary. This is the case both with the Koreans and the rest of the congregation. Parents conspicuously cuddle their babies and toddlers with very obvious arm movements (the arm movements in St Patrick's are more muted). Very frequently, the parents tried to induce their youngsters to follow the service by carrying them facing the altar. In the process, toddlers sometimes rested their shod feet on the back top of the bench; touching that area of furniture with one's shoes, even if they were children's, would be difficult to contemplate in either Salem or St Patrick's. During the years that I have been visiting St Mary, I noticed that one of the more active members at St Patrick's had moved to St Mary. She attended church with her family; and her child was frequently seen running up and down the aisle none too quietly - a behaviour that would be less tolerated in St Patrick's.

The parents at St Mary are also the most prepared in meeting the needs of the children. They bring colouring books with crayons and other drawing kits, books to read, activity kits, toys and snacks and drink to give. Some brought a small Tupperware full of nuts and raisins; another

a large packet of Graham crackers that stuck out of her handbag etc. And the children were sometimes sprawled in the pew to draw in the colouring book or read a book, for example. The diversity in the child-parent interaction also reflected in different use of space underlined the discreteness of social units.

This discreteness has also extended to the different segments of the liturgy. Intervals between different ritual portions were marked by silence; by contrast in both St Patrick's and in Salem, they have been woven together by music. In the silence one might hear the priest preparing for the next part, or the children running around, or, in summer, the large fans. There has been no discomfort in the silence.

These moments of silence during the ritual are perhaps the equivalent to the simplicity of decor of the church building. Just as an ornately decorated church might offer a collective presentation of faith, so too the singing of hymns or playing of religious music can be a collective expression of faith, a point that I shall explore in the context of Salem. Silence allows room for individual expression of faith. If one has one's own prayer to say, and would like to say so in one's own language, then one might do so better in silence. The petition illustrates this. It has two characteristics that distinguish it from that of St Patrick's. Firstly, there is the use of silence. After several specific issues have been mentioned, the priest asks for silence so that each member of the assembly could make their own petition in private. This silence lasts for five to ten seconds or more; as a deliberately held moment of silence, it is the longest in the three churches. After this moment of silence individual petitions that have been written in a note prior to mass is read out.

Secondly, the petition tends to avoid reference to ready-made categories. Generally, the petition is a time of prayer where the assembly pleads for divine favour on specific issues. This is somewhat analogous to the 'call to altar' or 'call to prayer' at Salem. The issues raised could be anything from world peace to somebody recovering from illness. Most of the issues that are raised in the petition at St Mary refer to categories that are not commonly established (e.g. 'those suffering in the war', 'those with personal problems' etc. as opposed to the 'sick', 'infirm', 'homeless'). It seldom refers to established institutions be it the Church, the bishopric/diocese of Peoria, the state, the cities of Champaign-Urbana, or the parish of St Mary. Generally, the emphasis is on some section of humanity regardless of nationality. Individuals who are mentioned are famous for reasons other than just the office they hold; thus Archbishop Romero

is mentioned as a martyr, so too some Jesuits killed in El Salvador). A good portion of the petition seeks empowerment for one's self in one context or another (e.g. 'that we can express the love of God by caring for others', 'that we become a holy family', 'that we are like Mary' etc.) The God that emerges most frequently in these petitions is a friendly model that one should and could follow.

As we have seen, St Mary has been a church that puts considerable emphasis on individualism. And the importance many members of the congregation conspicuously attach to their respective family reflect the importance of individual agency. It is part of constructing their lives as they personally think fit. These are families that have been raised with great deliberation, very frequently consciously differently from most families. For example, one of the interviewees told me that she had been making multi-ethnic dolls as an effort to combat racism. And she intended them to be distributed among other children as well. Parents may generally disapprove of racism, but not many take deliberate measure like this parent had done.

Given this emphasis, communalistic expressions tend to be temporary. Nevertheless, Sunday service at St Mary is an expression of community. Ultimately, the community is given shape by the liturgical structure that is universal. Within this framework, community is asserted by the blurred distinction between the ordinary congregation and those who take a more active part in the service. The image becomes one of a community that together runs the service; its members apparently volunteer to take part more actively and with little ceremony where there is a need. In theatrical terms, the service at St Mary is more experimental and modern where the actors issue forth from among the audience only to return among them when their performance is over.

The question then concerns the kind of collective time-keeping that might be found in such a church. In the following section I shall refer to it briefly.

5. Time-Keeping at St Mary:

If Bolt's Thomas More had to choose among the three churches, he probably would choose to attend St Mary. It is the church that most clearly puts emphasis on individualism and on differences, ethnic, personal and otherwise. Because of this, the pattern of time-reckoning is markedly different from the other two churches.

I believe that the time St Mary seems to keep collectively can be discussed in the context of Fabian's ideas on 'co-evalness'. His ideas are useful in explaining some of my observations at St Mary. At the same time, what has taken place at St Mary may shed light on his ideas which are not always easy to understand.

St Mary differs from the other two churches on at least two related points. Firstly, there is little discernible pattern of collective time-reckoning. Secondly, there is little discernible ordering of different institutions, geo-political or religious units; these tend to be ranked in order in the other two churches. For example, religious institutions were arranged in a hierarchical order at St Patrick's (the Church, then the diocese of Peoria, and thence the parish of St Patrick's). In Salem some of these categories are in metonymic relation to each other; the Afro-American community of Salem is presented as a microcosm of Afro-Americans at large.

Individual members may have patterns of individual time-reckoning that are fairly clear. They probably have fairly clear ideas about how different categories should be arranged; many of them have markedly strongly held individual opinions about the world. These make it difficult to produce either a sustainable pattern of collective-time reckoning or collective presentation of a classificatory scheme.

As Fabian defines it, co-evalness implies the sharing of time among different societies and individuals (the following four paragraphs are based on Fabian 1983: 31 – 35, 151 – 160). His thesis is difficult to understand firstly because it is based on 'time' itself; and secondly, because his use of 'Time' relies on the reader's intuitive grasp, rather than on the author's clear-cut definition. At the same time, there is considerable ambiguity about the way co-evalness is marked by co-evals, people actually involved in it. As I understand it, Fabian's 'time' and 'co-evalness' have two main elements; in real life, of course, these two are not always clearly distinguishable.

One element is related to temporal location: one is co-eval, not contemporary or synchronous, because both or several parties are situated in the same temporal locale but are each engaged in at times unrelated activities, like people living in a big city travelling in different trains heading for different destinations. This stresses the importance of accepting that others are neither like one nor are following the same developmental trajectory as one.

The other is related both to the sharing of temporal locations and, to some extent, of actions: co-evalness is achieved through interaction where one may influence each other.

Underlying this is Fabian's thesis that co-evalness is created; it becomes a product of communicative interaction among people. Even in terms of analogies, let alone real life situations, there are considerable variations in what might be applicable here. On one hand, it would be as if passengers for different trains heading for different directions were to be together, albeit briefly, on the same platform and interact in such a way that they might form a temporary community. On the other hand, such may be the interaction among (and circumstances of) the passengers that they may temporarily share a common destination and, for example, walk together to the next station.

One of the problems in Fabian's writing is that what seems to be two kinds of co-evalness are not only not clearly distinguished, but the relation between them has not been spelt out. For example, it is not actually clear that the second kind of co-evalness is temporary or one that is sustained continuously for a long period. If we follow his first definition of co-evalness, sharing time, then the overall pattern of time might include the fluctuation between the first and the second type of co-evalness. That is, people or societies may share the same temporal location with little interaction among them for most of the time; occasionally, the interaction among them may become closer.

We see this kind of alteration during the service at St Mary. The members of the congregation retain their differences for a good part of time. Because of this, moments when they interact as a community become more conspicuous; communion, the exchange of the sign of peace or when they burst into spontaneous applause are such instances.

Bearing in mind that this alternation happens in the context of leisure, religious service at St Mary also presents two different facets of the ideology of leisure as propounded by Pieper, and implied by Bolt. This is also an alternation between the more personal or individual on one hand and the more collective on the other.

Two factors have contributed to this alternation at St Mary among the congregation. Firstly, there is a well established framework in the form of liturgy. Secondly, many of the church members at St Mary seem to share similar outlooks, which may predispose them to this kind of alternation. It is not clear that such an alteration is possible without either. Certainly, Fabian's ideas do not explain how co-evalness might be created from scratch. In this sense, his ideas have the same problems as Bolt's and Pieper's ideals of people recommitting themselves to society; they too do not explain how.

Another kind of co-evalness is also found at St Mary.

As I have mentioned earlier in this section, different categories are not arranged in any specific or clear-cut order; in fact, many of the categories that emerge in St Mary are not easily arranged. There are two things that are frequently presented, American society, and, more implicitly, the unity of Christendom or humanity, which constitutes the social universe in which the former is found. As the sister community in El Salvador attests, there is an assumption that within this universe different societies are co-eval. And in relation to other societies, the American identity of St Mary's church and, therefore, of its members are confirmed.

The interactions between the two communities are based on communication between them (i.e. exchange of letters, visiting each other -St Mary's members have done so more frequently) and through gift exchange. The gift exchange consisted of St Mary sending supplies to her sister community; the sister community 'reciprocated' by providing information about her living conditions. Since some degree of differences and, hence implicitly, a lack of equality are assumed in Fabian's ideas, an exchange of different kinds of 'gifts' could be part of co-evalness. It does, however, mean that even in communication similar level of mutual understanding may not be necessary. Thus, St Mary's sister community need not understand the living conditions of her American counterpart to the same degree as does St Mary.

In many ways, the temporal rhythm in the interaction between St Mary and her Salvadoran sister community on one hand, and among her church members on the other are very similar. In both instances, time-reckoning has a binary pattern where one of its two members is fairly clearly defined. In both instances, moments of interaction are clearly marked. There are considerable variation in the time of 'non-interaction'.

Thus, if we take the time of collective interaction as B, we have the following:

$$\text{not-}B_1 \text{ ---> } B_1, \text{ ---> not-}B_2 \text{ ---> } B_2, \text{ ---> not-}B_3 \text{ ---> } B_3$$

In the case of St Mary, we see that even if we can discern a temporal rhythm, and it is of the simpler model, we cannot necessarily gauge its direction. The time where there is not collective interaction is also a time when individual members and groups return to their diverse ways of time-reckoning. This raises the question of how one can inject directionality in time-reckoning.

Chapter IV

Salem Baptist Church: Having a Good Time

1. Introduction:

Salem Baptist Church is an Afro-American¹ church that belongs to the National Baptist denomination, which is an Afro-American denomination (as opposed to Southern Baptist, which is Euro-American). Afro-Americans probably have undergone most changes in their lives in the past few decades. The variety of nomenclature chosen for self-reference among Afro-Americans of different generations² is but one illustration. Not surprisingly perhaps, Salem is the church that has seen the most drastic change over the years I visited it. Its new church building more than anything else represents this.

Salem is one of the two oldest Afro-American churches in Champaign-Urbana; many claim it to be the oldest. It may be difficult to determine which is oldest. This is because 'church' means its members, both pastor and 'parishioners' alike. Salem, for example, started in the private home of one of its members, and had moved sites several times before settling down in its present position

In approaching Salem, I knew that I was, in fact, quite ignorant both of Afro-Americans and of their churches, let alone Salem specifically. It was only much later that I understood how little I knew.

Salem is a self-contained and self-sustained community. Its members are more involved with each other. Different facets of every day living such as jobs and education have been more explicitly woven in its fabric. Secondly, it is a community that openly shares feelings among themselves. Finally, underlying these is the fact that Salem is an Afro-American church geared primarily for Afro-Americans. Of the above three points, I was only conscious of the last when I

¹ Following the lead of Orlando Patterson, I shall be using the nomenclatures, 'Afro-American', 'Euro-American', etc. to refer to ethnic groups that are frequently referred to as 'black' and 'white'(1997: xi). I too think that Afro-Americans are some of the most American of Americans. To put equal emphasis both on their African origin and on their Americanness as 'African-American' seems to do would contradict one of the assumptions of anthropology: that we are shaped by culture that we in turn shape.

² Even in my interviews, I found that Afro-Americans of an older generation (those who would be in their eighties or late seventies in 1998) referred to themselves as 'negros' or 'black'; by contrast, younger generations more frequently than not referred to themselves as 'black'. Those who were younger and/or had higher education tended to refer to themselves as 'African-American'. For the last group, the term 'negro' would be unacceptable; by contrast, I was told by an elderly woman that, for her, 'African-' or 'Afro-' anything were 'fighting words' that she would not take to kindly.

first approached the church. I was not aware of the centrality of Afro-American churches as an institution among Afro-Americans. As Lincoln and Mamiya have pointed out, there are now other more secular organisations that are associated with Afro-Americans; but none matches Afro-American churches in their cultural wealth or historical depth (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990: 7 – 10).

As with the other two churches, I approached its pastor before starting my research in Salem. After a few questions about the manner of my approach, he granted permission. And I started visiting Salem.

As a matter of fact, after clearing my project with the pastor, I should have introduced myself to the church the first time I attended their Sunday service. The church members are seen as the church and one addresses the congregation as ‘Salem’. Thus, I should have sent a letter addressing Salem or asked to address the church during a Sunday service as many actually do; I could have explained my project and asked for their co-operation. But I did not.

Despite my *faux pas*, I was warmly received from the beginning. Aside from the pastor of the church, I owe much of this warm reception to the elderly retired pastor, a much loved and respected figure. As a self-contained community, leadership figures are identified as such throughout, and gaining their approval as I unwittingly did smoothed the way.

The services celebrated on Sundays are an expression of the community that is Salem. It is not that the other two churches are each not a community themselves; they are. However, the latter two are moral communities that more closely resemble classical European theatre audiences where the demarcation between the audience and the actors are more clearly distinguished. By contrast, Salem as a moral community resembles Scott’s *Sedaka* somewhat more (Part I, Chapter VII, section 4). The extent of participation of the audience or, more accurately, of the ordinary congregation in the services is so important that Sunday service is inconceivable without looking at the church in toto.

In this chapter, particular emphasis will be placed on three points: the interaction among the assembly, the overt expressions of emotions such as ‘feeling happy’ or being ‘moved by the spirit’, and the manner in which they keep time as a community qua community. But first a discussion of the physical setting of the church. The discussion will centre on the old church building which was been used for services till August 1993. Some of the practices found in the old building have been carried over in the new building.

I have focused on what I had observed in the old building for two reasons. Firstly, the amount of data I had gathered during that time on the other two churches best parallels my data on Salem. Secondly, and more importantly, both space and time were more clearly organised on binary principles in the services of the old church. Thus I can more clearly state my case concerning the patterns of time-reckoning, among other things, in the context of the old church building.

Following this, the fourth section will deal with the Sunday services. For the sake of comparative clarity, some of the points that I have mentioned in the context of both St Patrick's and St Mary with regards to the congregation will be raised. I shall focus on the improvisatory character of the service. This, combined with the emphasis on 'fellowship', has made each service depend on the interaction among the church members both those in the pews and others assuming more defined roles in the service.

In the fifth section, I shall deal briefly with the patterns of time-reckoning observed in the services held in the old building. Particular emphasis will be placed on the binary principles underlying their organisation. I shall discuss this in the context of temporal rhythms. I shall focus on the improvisatory character of the service. This, combined with the emphasis on 'fellowship', has made each service depend on the interaction among the church members both those in the pews and others assuming more defined roles in the service.

Finally, in the sixth section, I shall briefly go over the differences between the practices observed in the old church building and in the new building .

2. A Self-Contained Community:

'Come on, we're going to have a good time. Let's praise the Lord!'
(from a hymn)

Like all National Baptist churches, and unlike Catholic churches³, Salem is financially self-supporting. The salary of its staff (e.g. the pastor and the music director) comes from Sunday collections and other fund raising activities. Its new church building has also been made possible in this manner. Unlike the two Catholic churches, Salem does not have any substantial legacy to fall back on. Consequently, although the pastor wields considerable authority within the church,

it tends to be curbed by church members. Salem, after all, is their church in a way that Catholics may not claim their particular church to be.

Raising money during the Sunday services and special occasions is a daunting task. Not all of the approximately 450 members regularly attend service. Reflecting the rapid socio-economic changes affecting Afro-Americans in the last few decades, there is a rising number of young and middle-aged professional and middle-class members. However, many members are of more modest means. Per capita contribution of those attending service may be more than at St Patrick's. However, what Salem can raise is no match to what the latter with a much larger number of members can raise (i.e. close to \$10'000 per week on average). The pressure to contribute financially is quite considerable; and quite a few do indeed tithe (i.e. contribute 10% of their weekly income) during Sunday service.

Reflecting this pressure perhaps, there has been some strain over finances for some while. These issues, like many others affecting the church, are dealt with through a system of collective decision-making. Partly because of the strain, some of these decisions have been moved from a smaller decision-making body (e.g. a group of trustees) to the church at large. As is wont with conflict in general, even if the original conflict dealt primarily with financial matters, it grew and touched upon other issues.

Salem has been remarkably resilient, not to mention tolerant, of conflict. Among the reasons for this resilience is the general prevalence of conflict in churches, the self-sufficient and self-contained character of Salem, its emphasis placed on 'fellowship', and its acceptance of overt emotionality. Also, the long-standing members had experienced conflicts in the church before. Thus, even if conflict lingers, it seems not to get out of hand. At the same time, because of the close-knit character of the community, conflict seems to be painful for many involved.

Conflicts are prevalent in many churches³. These conflicts have at times led to a faction splitting away from the original church and starting their own church; Salem itself has experienced such a fissure a few decades ago –though members are reluctant to talk about it.

³ Finances for Catholic churches are more centrally organised. Collections from different parishes are sent to their respective diocesan office which re-distributes them to its parishes.

⁴ Quite a few churches in Champaign-Urbana have experienced conflicts during this period. Where the churches were centrally organised, the conflict seemed to be resolved more promptly through intervention from a higher ecclesiastical authority. The pastor was replaced by another. Since central intervention more likely means the removal of the current pastor, the onus of managing conflict more heavily falls on the pastor. As a corollary, it may be worthwhile for disgruntled church members to bring the conflict to a boil quickly thus bringing on central intervention and, hence the removal of the pastor.

There is considerable mobility of members among the different churches which has affected Salem as well.

The church has tended to resolve many issues on their own. They recruited their pastor; very frequently, they also ordained ministers. The ordination of a minister is usually based on the approval of the pastor and the church. A man who feels that he has had the call to ministry would approach the pastor for approval, and give his first sermon in that church. Eventually, when he is thought ready for the ministry, he is ordained in that church by the acclamation of its assembly after a service conducted specifically for this purpose. Once ordained, he may seek his own church to pastor.

A minister seeking pastoral position will be invited to the church to give a sermon. The present pastor was hired several years before I started visiting Salem. On that occasion church members attended services where the pastoral candidates preached. They judged the candidates in terms of their ability to preach⁵ as well as other intangibles (such as the acceptability of their respective wives); the search committee members also visited the candidates' churches. The support of respected leaders of the church such as the retiring pastor can tilt the balance. Ultimately, though, it is the whole church that hires their pastor.

Perhaps because of this self-sufficiency, many church members tend to rally together (thus re-enforcing this self-sufficiency). This relatively close bond among many church members is also reflected in the warmth I sensed in my first visit to Salem.

Many members have made me feel very welcome at Salem. However, even if I converted, I doubt that I could really fit in as a full member; although this would be easier now. Being a Christian is a necessary but, at the moment, not sufficient condition. Salem is a church for Christians who are for Afro-Americans. It is shared history that strengthens the bond of its members. Most of my interviewees were very conscious of the Afro-American character of the church. For some, joining an Afro-American church had been an option among many others; and, fleetingly or for some time, some of them had previously joined non-Afro-American churches. The reason for their joining an Afro-American church was the result of a conscious political act⁶, and/or socio-cultural affinity. Quite a few others seem not to have ever seriously thought of joining any other church than an Afro-American one. There is no clear cut pattern

⁵ Even those who were critical of the pastor would admit that he could 'preach'

⁶ One man stressed the need for Afro-Americans to help each other given the difficulties many faced in the society at large.

that would divide these two groups; education and socio-economic status may have some bearing on whether one had considered and, in some cases, taken other options; but it is not conclusive. The only variable that might have had some influence is having been in the military; some of those who had been worshipped in a multi-ethnic context. Whatever route the interviewees had taken to join Salem most expressed a sense of belonging. They pointed out the importance of the interaction among church members. One succinctly said that people came to church 'to fellowship' together.

The term 'fellowship' is not unique to Afro-American Christians. It implies equality and a degree of intimacy. Further, as its use as a verb, 'to fellowship', indicates, fellowship is created through the active involvement of the members. In theory, anybody who 'fellowships' is a 'fellow' and is a member of that collective. I have seen 'fellowship' extended to other groups and people, myself included. At the same time, 'fellowship' is very specific to a particular group. Although it can be fostered on the spot, it is more usually the result of familiarity and commonality that has been nurtured over a long period. In order to foster this sense of commonality, certain kind of differences, such as personal conflicts, in the church may be skirted. Further, 'fellowship' is related to the self-contained character of the church; and there is an implication that 'fellowship' at Salem is specific to Salem. There are several factors that contribute to their 'fellowship' that makes it distinct firstly from Euro-American churches and secondly, and somewhat less so, from other Afro-American churches.

Salem, as I have mentioned earlier, is distinct from the other two churches in their more explicitly emotional expressions. These expressions mostly take two forms during the service: what is commonly known as 'feeling happy' or 'feeling the spirit', and by testifying. An informant in his late thirties told me at the beginning of my research that these occurred less frequently nowadays. Certainly, even during the period that I have been visiting the church, I have noticed a decline. Not all members are visibly 'feeling happy' in the course of any one service; some never are. Nevertheless, underlying these explicit expressions of feelings is the general atmosphere of acceptance of or, for many members, receptiveness to it.

Both 'feeling happy' and testifying are acts of faith and both types of behaviour are accepted at one level as being just that; as with preaching or singing a hymn, 'feeling happy' and testifying are considered the results of 'being moved by the spirit'. Underlying this is an assumption shared by many different religions that faith is not a matter of intellectual exercise

alone. Many would say that faith is matter of belief, which in European and American cultures is generally understood to be an individual issue. Others would also add that faith is a matter of feeling, 'feeling God'; that 'feeling God' is to be close to the divine; that feelings can be shared; that such a sharing of feelings and, therefore, faith constitutes 'fellowship'. Such feelings can be shared among members of a moral community; and sharing such feelings further heightens the sense of moral community.

In the case of an Afro-American church like Salem there is another dimension to 'fellowship'. Generally, a church community is a moral community with a history, the history of Christianity and, more specifically, of its particular denomination and of its particular organisation. An Afro-American church is also a moral community that is specifically associated with Afro-American history both local and national. There is a common assumption of sharing similar experiences in the world at large and, very frequently, of sharing the strong feelings associated with them. Part of their history is based on living in a 'racial' climate that has been harsh to them. And, from time to time, there will be flashes of anger that are reminders of these experiences. Even with the mild and gentle retired pastor (whose birth year was close to that of this century), one occasionally got glimpses of this. In one of his sermons he talked about his brother being 'whopped' (beaten) when the pastor was a young man. He spoke with the smouldering heat of indignation. In practice, there are considerable generational differences in the parishioners' inter-ethnic experiences; the racial climate, though still uncomfortable, might have become less scorching over the years. However, experiences and the resulting feelings related to race issues are expressed quite openly.

By contrast, feelings based on more strictly personal and adverse experiences are not so openly expressed. The pain of a dysfunctional family, a bad marriage, or financial hardship, for example, are not expressed as such. Since many of the church members are related to each other, airing these issues can actually undermine 'fellowship'. By contrast, happy experiences such as the birth of a long-awaited child are more openly expressed. Whether happy or not, feelings related to these experiences seem to have been sublimated into 'feeling happy'. However, as the term indicates, 'feeling happy' is an expression of happiness and/or praise of the divine. In some cases, these expressions are also a cry for divine help.

I have been told that the more forceful expressions of 'feeling happy' are based on personal experiences. They would take the form of continuous shouting of praise, screaming,

flailing of arms, stomping and dancing as if driven to it, and/or hyperventilating. A few decades ago, some of this behaviour such as dancing was not seen in Salem; they were not considered a part of the Baptist tradition. Even now, these more vigorous expressions of 'feeling happy' are quite rare and are highly individuated. The norm is one person doing so; I have never seen more than three people behaving in this fashion on any one occasion. Usually, that person is supported by others around him/her and/or by an usher who very frequently will be busy fanning him/her. Whenever I asked, people replied that they supported the person thus so that s/he did not accidentally hurt her/himself.

The milder expressions of feeling happy consist of raising outstretched arm/s whilst being seated, shouting a word of praise (e.g. 'Amen!', 'Thank you Jesus!', 'Hallelujah!' etc.), standing up and swaying to rhythm and clapping or with arm/s raised. After one or two people start behaving thus, very frequently quite a few people follow suite. There have been times when a quarter of the church has stood up to sway rhythmically with clapping hands or with waving arm/s raised.

A demonstration of 'feeling happy' tends to galvanise the church even if it is only a handful who are actively showing signs of it. The choir will sing more vigorously and longer, and so too does the minister preach. This very frequently results in more people 'feeling happy'; in fact, an interactive multiplier effect can frequently be seen among the assembly. When twenty or so members of the choir stand up and sway and clap together in rhythm, and a few in the nave echoes this, there is, as Canetti has pointed out in another context, a throbbing atmosphere where one suddenly feels the density of the gathering⁷. There is an 'increase'. One feels the assembly as a collective, rather than a gathering of individuals. So too, the choir in their flowing robes that undulate rhythmically are no longer a sum of its members, but a body that looks larger and more powerful.

⁷ '... a specific state of communal excitement which I shall call the rhythmic or throbbing crowd.

...How do they compensate for the increase in numbers which they cannot have? First, it is important they should all do the same thing. They all stamp the ground and they all do it in the same way; they all swing their arms to and fro and shake their heads. The equivalence of dancers becomes, and ramifies as, the equivalence of their limbs. Every part of a man which can move gains a life of its own and acts as if independent, but the movements are all parallel, the limbs appearing superimposed on each other. They are close together, one often resting on another, and thus density is added to their state of equivalence. Density and equality become one and the same. In the end, there appears to be a single creature dancing, a creature with fifty heads and a hundred legs and arms, all performing in exactly the same way and with the same purpose. When their excitement is at its height, these people really feel as one, and nothing but physical exhaustion can stop them.' (Canetti 1973: 31 – 32)

Very frequently though, the church is galvanised around somebody or some group, such as the preacher of the day, the solo singer, or the choir. From a pragmatic point of view, acts of 'feeling happy' bolster the position of the person thus involved. Thus, when a choir member sings solo, for example, some of his/her friends and family tend to stand and clap while swaying rhythmically. The supportive character of this behaviour is most obvious when children perform in church (usually by singing in the choir). These gestures are accompanied by an amused yet protective smile. When a pastor of another church comes to preach most of those who show that they are 'feeling happy' initially are members from his own church; and he is usually accompanied by some members of his church. Not infrequently, others join in eventually; but the sense of fellowship has been created by a core group of supporters.

Testifying is another way of expressing faith emotionally. These are narration of personal experiences, usually hardship –but not involving relationship problems. Very frequently, the core narrative adapted is one of divine sustenance with an appeal, implicitly or explicitly, toward fellowship among the members.

A young woman who was going to sing solo in the choir mentioned that she had been fighting a degenerative disease for a long time; that her illness afflicted many Afro-Americans, especially women. She concluded by asserting her faith; her singing became part of her testimony. In another case, an elderly woman testified with her voice quavering that her long and serious illness had taken a turn for the worse; that through the help of the Lord and the prayers of Salem she was able to come back to church after being absent for a while. Sometimes, she would end her testimony by asking for Salem to continue to pray for her; other times, she may break into singing a hymn. The two cases I have cited concern illness. However, there are other topics that are the subject of a testimony. For example, quite a few men have testified that they have been put on trial, sometimes harsh, to perform some task – domestic and/or job related; they attributed their success to the watchful presence of God.

Many of the members were aware that this overt expression of emotions was more specific to Afro-Americans. Quite a few expressed satisfaction with it, saying that 'church is not church' without it. Some have told me, very frequently with an amused voice, the discomfort many Euro-Americans seem to experience when exposed to it. One told me that the Euro-Americans she had invited would leave in a matter of half an hour after their arrival. With the first shout of 'Thank you Jesus!' or

'Amen!' she laughingly told me, they would be out of the church⁸. Certainly, when I started my research more Euro-Americans than not failed to stay the full course of the service. Nine years hence, though, I notice that those who come tend to stay through.

I suspect that this general receptiveness for overtly emotional expression and 'fellowship' implied in it go in tandem with a certain degree of tolerance for conflict. I have been told of some members not mincing words at a general meeting of the congregation. I somehow doubt that either of the two Catholic churches would tolerate a similar level of overtly vocal strife for such an extended period and still maintain some semblance of being a faith community.

There is a sense in which Salem operates almost like an extended family, which may stick together even if there is tension within. This extended family-like community creates and in turn is fostered by 'fellowship' and by emotional expressiveness of, for example, 'feeling happy'. The boundary of different social units that came into church is changed upon entry. For example, children and their respective parents sit separately in the nave. Over the years, however, the boundaries of these social units are increasingly retained even within the church. Nowadays, a family that came together would also sit together

Actually, many of the members are indeed related to each other; almost half of those who regularly attend church are probably related to each other. These ties have considerable depth across as well as within generations. It is not at all unusual for three generations of the same family to be worshipping together; and the number of members who claim to be siblings, let alone cousins, is copious. Many members have been attending Salem since their childhood with older adult family members, mostly parents; some of my interviewees have referred to themselves as a 'church baby'. Superimposed on them is an increasingly large number of people who have more recently moved into town. These newcomers tend to be professional and middle class; and quite a few of them have achieved leadership positions within the church in comparatively short time. Although I suspect that their presence has had an impact on the pattern of interaction among church members (e.g. the retention of pre-existing social boundaries within the church), I lack the concrete evidence. It is also difficult to gauge the effect on the church of recent socio-economic changes that have led to a large number of highly mobile and professional Afro-Americans.

⁸ Of course, her guests would be more directly and closely exposed to expressions of 'feeling happy'. Their hostess was vigorously vocal; it was not uncommon for her to exhort the church during service.

Quite a few members grew up with each other; and now intermingle with newcomers. They have a bond that seems to transcend likes and dislikes among themselves. They would have attended Sunday classes together, sung in a children's choir, and participated in quite a few church events, some geared especially for children. And, in some cases, they are now singing together in the main choir. All these activities bring them together on a regular basis every week.

From what I understand, there had been a time a few decades ago when church had been equated with Sunday almost in its entirety. It would start at 9:30 a.m. with Sunday school, which is more like Bible study groups. The service would start at 11:00 a.m. Another meeting would be held at 6:30 p.m.; this would be followed by the evening service at 7:30 p.m. Unlike the Catholics where attendance of one mass per weekend is considered enough, Baptist churches encourage multiple attendance in one day. Thus quite a few people attended both services. When there was a special function, there would also be the afternoon service at 3:30 p.m. followed by dinner; even now, considerable effort is made to encourage people to attend special functions. The evening service catered to those who had to work on Sundays. Reflecting perhaps the socio-economic changes that have taken place in the lives of many Afro-Americans, evening gathering and subsequent service have been discontinued at Salem. There are, however, some Afro-American churches in town that still hold evening services. The long hours that members spent with each other strengthened the bond among them. Though somewhat attenuated, this seems to be the case even now. In the case of children this bond is frequently re-enforced during the weekdays because many of them attend the same school.

Apart from various joint activities that Salem children engage in, there generally is a tendency for children qua children to act as an identifiable group. Children very frequently sit together at service; especially children whose parent/s are up in the altar area as ministers or choir members. These children are frequently supervised by other adults (usually ushers or somebody sitting next to them) who may not be related to any of them. If children seem to be misbehaving, these adults will chide them; other times, the children might receive some boiled sweets from them. There have been times when an usher will hold the child/ren down to contain him/her. And it is not rare for an usher to come up to a child and tell her to put her feet down from the back of the bench, for example.

This tendency for adults other than the parents to supervise, encourage, and/or discipline children has declined over the years of my visit. When I started, I noticed that parents did not put up any form of opposition. On the contrary: a year or so after I started visiting Salem, I saw an old woman giving a tongue lashing to a young boy who was probably aged six or seven then. She had been a long-time

resident whereas the boy and his mother were relative newcomers. The boy stood awkwardly there in the small office behind the sanctuary with his head bent. His mother soon joined them and, somewhat to my surprise, said rather harshly:

“What are you going to say to this lady, boy!?!”

Pressured by both adults, he mumbled an apology.

One Sunday, I was seated in a pew behind a young skinny girl no more than sixteen or seventeen, gawkily taking care of a baby. Like a boomerang trying to stand up, her upper body was leaning markedly to the left as she held the baby astride her right hip; it was clear that she was having difficulty pacifying him. An older member, a mother of two children, gently but impatiently picked him up from the girl and started dandling him. As she made friendly faces to the baby while folding him in her arms and pacified him, she was also showing the girl how to handle him. The girl was watching without any apprehension.

Later, I learned that the girl was the baby’s aunt; his mother, as far as I knew, was not in church. The older member was not related to the two at all; nor was she friends with the mother. When I asked, she told me that she was a busybody who liked children and dismissed the incident completely.

Actual parent-child interaction, by contrast, tends to be muted. It was more muted in the earlier years of my visit. Even now, parents might give a bottle to their baby who more frequently than not is carried in detachable baby seats. I have not seen parents come prepared with colouring/reading books, obvious snack food such as raisins, cookies or vegetable tidbits (as was the case at St Mary); this, in spite of the fact that the service has been the longest among the three churches. If parents want to take care of their children (such as a crying baby), they tend to leave the sanctuary to do so. However, if the children are older than five or so they are encouraged to take care of themselves; and they tend to leave the sanctuary on their own. Early in my research, the relation between grandparent and grandchild was more conspicuous than a parent-child relation. I have occasionally seen grandparents hugging and playing with their grandchildren (if they are toddlers or younger) with great affection.

There may be changes now. I notice that more children are seated with their parents nowadays. Nine years ago, there was an elderly woman who would insist on having one of the younger daughters of a minister sit by her in the same pew. As his large family moved toward their pews, she would reach out for the little girl to be seated next to her. She would comb the girl’s hair and would act like a doting grandmother. In fact, the two were not related at all.

It is not only the children who are taken care of. Every Sunday, the church bulletin prints the names of those who are ill or too infirm to attend church and are either staying at home or are at one of the hospitals or nursing homes in town. I have the impression that in earlier days, the mention of their names in the church bulletin was enough for church members to visit them. Nowadays, it is more organised: a member of a group of church women is each assigned to one of the sick and infirm and take it upon herself to visit the latter. Members also visit these people voluntarily as individuals. Presumably the degree to which those named are popular or influential in the church respectively might make some difference in the frequency with which s/he is visited. However, since their name and location are indicated in the church bulletin, visiting one may induce a member to visit others in the same location. Occasionally, an elderly member who has long been absent from church will come to service aided by some of the younger or less old members.

There are several things that strengthen the bond of church members. One such is the choir, another is the different church anniversaries.

On most Sundays, choir members attending service number around twenty. This number has more or less held steady over the years; by contrast, church attendance on ordinary Sundays after moving to the new church has declined somewhat (although it has grown a little lately)⁹. The choir has constituted 10% of the assembly in the old church building (up to 1993) and 15% or more in the new church building (1993 onwards).

The majority of choir members are women¹⁰. Compared to the other two churches, they spend quite a lot of time with each other¹¹ and are on friendly terms with each other. Their supportive interaction is obvious during service. They are seen chatting to each other during singing intervals; and if any of their members is 'feeling happy' they respond supportively both by adding their voice to reinvigorate the singing and by comforting the member in question.

Because the choir has an interactive relation with the assembly at large, there is more obvious bonding between them. The flowing robe that they wear as a uniform¹² marks their

⁹ On regular Sundays when there was no afternoon service, the assembly in the old church numbered around 200 on average (the range was between 160 to 250); in the new church building, it has been around 130 (the range being between 110 to 180)

¹⁰ Women are the majority in the assembly. However, their ratio to men is more heavily skewed in the choir.

¹¹ They spend two hours or so practising every week, singing together during the two-hour plus service, and singing in other churches when invited –not to mention travelling together if the church is out of town.

¹² Choirs in many churches put on special robes as a uniform. This practice is not observed in the two Catholic churches I have been studying

importance as an integral part of Baptist ministry¹³ and sets them apart from the assembly. This clear delineation of the choir as a distinct group both by their uniform as well as their place in the altar area intensifies the fellowship among the members when the assembly is galvanised by 'feeling happy'. This close bond is reflected in some of the tasks they undertake voluntarily. For example, quite a few choir members make a point of singing for funeral services held at church; since these usually take place on weekdays, doing so could be inconvenient for quite a few who work.

To carry out tasks in the church such as singing in the choir, or acting as ministers or ushers means breaking apart from the social unit one is usually a part of—such as a family or a married couple. Thirty or so people are regularly involved this way. They thus contribute to a major re-alignment of groups in the pews which in turn makes the church a community in its own right rather than the sum of different social groups that have come to attend service.

During a year, there usually are several celebrations such as the Church anniversary, the anniversary of the pastor's appointment, women's day, men's day, ushers' day, etc. These celebrations actively involve church members in church affairs on a temporary basis and lead to different alignment of groups. They are organised partly for the purpose of fund-raising; and all church members are approached for donation. Different church members assume responsibility for the organisation of different functions. For example, women's day is organised exclusively by women, men's day by men. The celebrations are marked in terms of the history of Salem itself and seemingly independently of other things that may be going on in the society at large. Further, some are of longer history than others (e.g. women's day has a history which is longer by a decade and a half than men's day) and they frequently follow somewhat different format

These celebrations are quite elaborate¹⁴. There usually is an additional afternoon service on these celebratory Sundays. Special programs are printed covering both the regular morning and special afternoon services. Food is prepared and offered either as lunch during the interval between services or as supper after the afternoon service. In the case of both women's and men's day, the regular choir is replaced by a choir consisting of most of the women for the

¹³ The pastor of the church and visiting pastors who are going to deliver the main sermon are the only ones who put on a special robe. When he is neither preaching nor in the altar area, the pastor of the church would dress in ordinary suits.

¹⁴ In some cases, the celebration continues with various events for one to two weeks. For example, one might have a special breakfast on the preceding Saturday; another church might be invited, therefore, its pastor to come and preach the preceding Sunday. Sometimes, there are special weekday events as well.

former and most of the men for the latter celebration; they usually spend considerable time practising together. Unlike the regular choir who sat on the left side of the altar in the old church, both the women's and men's choirs sat in the centre. Special speakers give a talk during the time allotted for the sermon during the service. These speakers are recruited either from among the ranks of church members or from outside (usually through the social network of a church member). On women's day, the speakers are also women; usually the speaker for one of the services is the pastor's wife; the women all wear a white suit or dress with accessories (e.g. blouse, scarf etc.) of a particular colour that has been designated for that year (e.g. yellow for one year, lavender for another).

More so than the other two churches, Salem highlights individual achievement starting with the pastor¹⁵. On these special celebrations, many of the organising officers are identified beforehand in several preceding services, and they are honoured during the celebratory service. This is an extension of what happens regularly. Members are singled out during the service for their achievement in and out of church; this can be anything from graduating from high school or college, completing a Ph. D. Program, holding a special position in the Champaign-Urbana community (such as being the chief of police, or running for office), to rendering special services to the church. A member's life event such as birthday, death in the family, marriage, birth etc., is also noted. Very frequently at the beginning of the month those who have birthdays in that month are asked to stand up while the assembly sings 'happy birthday!'

These communal celebrations highlight the twin processes of individuation of the members and the affirmation of the church as community. There is a perception that what we in anthropology would call the 'principle of the unity of the sibling group' applies to Afro-Americans. That is, it is perceived that Afro-Americans are interchangeable with each other; hence, for example, most members are aware of the general perception that any Afro-American male is a potential or unknown criminal¹⁶. At the same time, many members are aware of the special bonds that hold them together.

¹⁵ A special function had been organised to honour the music director. An evening of dinner and entertainment was held at a hotel.

¹⁶ The pastor once referred to how Euro-American women would firmly clutch their purse and switch it to the other side from Afro-American male they see walking toward them. As he continued narrating different expressions of Euro-American assumption of Afro-American male criminality, the assembly shook with nods of agreement and laughter.

Acknowledging members individually in church is both a resistance and remedy against the perceived invisibility of Afro-Americans as individuals in the society at large. This acknowledgement takes place within the context of an identifiable community, the church. There is thus an interrelated process of validation that takes place; a member's individuality is validated at the same time as is the community s/he belongs to. Especially when a member is acknowledged for his/her achievement in the society at large, there is also a palpable feeling of fraternity with him/her. Individual success, whatever the field, is accommodated as a success of a church member, a 'fellow'.

Most of these celebrations mark Salem as a self-contained community. However, over the years, the strength of Salem as a community that could enforce its values has declined. There was a time when the church acted as a moral community that not only awarded good behaviour, but also penalised what they considered sinful behaviour. I have been told that unwed mothers would have been obliged to apologise to the church for having a child out of wedlock. And divorce was frowned upon. Generally, this practice of apologising to the church has been discontinued. This not only reflects a weakening of the church as a moral community but also its adaptation to the more general acceptance of greater complexity of life. Not only have attitudes toward divorce and single motherhood changed, but so too toward gender relations. As a few women have pointed out to me, it was only the unwed mothers who had to apologise to the church; the men who fathered the child were left scot free.

Though attenuated, the church still exercises authority as a moral community nowadays. The power to penalise is not exerted on church members in general; instead it is directed toward those who are more actively involved in the ministry. There has been considerable pressure to exclude some from sitting in the altar area. Thus two women had to leave the choir after becoming single mothers. Another was obliged to explain his conduct to the church¹⁷; he too has refrained from sitting in the altar area since then

Though in many ways self-contained, Salem is not an isolated church community. It is contextualised in the larger Afro-American community in Champaign-Urbana and in Illinois, and, implicitly, in American society at large. Very frequently, Salem invites another Afro-

¹⁷ He had been in trouble with the police on a few occasions. And his conduct was the subject of talk among many members.

American church to participate in its celebrations or, more commonly, in its services. It is not uncommon to find a pastor of another church delivering a sermon on Sunday.

At the beginning of my research, there were two associations of ministers in Champaign-Urbana. They were divided along ethnic lines, one Euro-American and another Afro-American. Since then, a third association has emerged; its membership overlaps the first two associations. The third association is concerned primarily with socio-economic issues and aims to transcend the racial divide; the pastor of Salem is a member. Some of its members have come to Salem as a part of 'pulpit exchange'. Over the years, however, I can only recall two Euro-American ministers coming to Salem to preach (Part III, Chapter VII, section 5). In practice, the association of Afro-American ministers is more important for Salem. The majority of ministers who come to preach are Afro-Americans from other Afro-American churches in Champaign-Urbana, or from other National Baptist churches in Illinois. As I have mentioned earlier in the context of 'feeling happy', the boundaries between the two churches –visiting and host- are delineated only to foster 'fellowship' between them.

The assertion of a larger Afro-American community is perhaps best epitomised by the joint Thanksgiving celebration organised by Afro-American churches in town. A brief service (lasting an hour and a half, usually) is celebrated in one of the Afro-American churches'; ministers from many other churches participate.

Except for a few occasions like Thanksgiving, all the services both regular and special have taken place in the church. And the spatial organisation of the church seems to have affected the way the service was conducted. In the following section, I shall briefly examine the church building.

3. Salem: the Building

A block west of St Mary, the old church of Salem looked somewhat isolated because of the bare ground immediately adjacent to it; that was where the new church was built. The construction that lasted for a year or so was completed in the summer of 1993. And Salem moved into the new building in August of that year.

The old church building was marked by two kinds of binaries. One set was based on the high-low contrast, and the other on the left-right contrast. The left-right contrast is defined in terms of the view from the altar as one faces the nave. Compared to the lower, the higher denoted the more sacred; so too the left as opposed to the right; the right represented the secular. Both the lower and the right

represent the outside world. By implication, the left also signified superiority and, to some extent, what more properly belonged to Salem.

In keeping with many Protestant churches in the area, the church offices, social gathering place, and the sanctuary –the place of worship- were all in the same building. The parsonage has always been some distance away; it is now several miles away on the other side of town. Compared to the two Catholic churches, there was less functional differentiation of space. Time dictated the use of space. For example, the sanctuary was used for prayer meetings during weekdays, for Sunday worship, for the gathering of different groups including the general church meeting.

Just as the church constituted the most self-contained community among the three churches, so too the building was the most isolated from the outside world. The sanctuary at Salem was the least accessible of the three churches. The church building could be approached from two directions, but one had to deal with a set of stairs to reach the sanctuary. Coming from the front, one entered the sanctuary by climbing a set of twelve steep but covered steps to reach a small porch area at the top¹⁸; then one went through a pair of clouded glass doors into a small vestibule of which the part closer to the sanctuary was a step higher. The overall pattern of moving from the lower to the higher held when one entered the sanctuary from the front.

At the front, the sanctuary could only be entered through a pair of swinging doors. It was very simply furnished, and brightened by light that came through windows with coloured panes. Its ceiling was quite low.

The altar, an enclosed area on a gradient was at the other side of the sanctuary. It is divided into four different levels each marked by a semi-enclosure. Just outside of the enclosure were the Christian flag on the left, and the American flag on the right (as viewed from the altar area looking to the nave). This left-right contrast could be observed within each level in this enclosure.

The first was at floor level and had the piano on the right and the organ and percussion instruments on the left. The music director sat by the organ on the left and directed the choir. Diagonally in front of the piano on the right side of the altar was the lectern table. Information dealing with issues outside of the church (such as jobs, family events concerning church members, public events taking place in the township etc.) were provided from this lectern table.

¹⁸ The building had even more difficult access earlier. Two sets of steep and uncovered steps went up to the sides of the front of the building. Unlike the remodelled steps attached to the old building, the old steps did not have banisters to hold onto. The church in an old picture looks like a fortress-castle.

A few steps up at the second level the high chairs for the ministers were placed on both sides of the enclosure. The pastor of the church and the preacher of the day sat on the left with their back turned to the music director; the other ministers were seated on the right. The choir occupied the third level. The Salem choir sat on the left; the visiting choir usually sat on the right independent of whether the Salem choir were also present. Finally, the baptismal pool was a couple of feet higher and outside of the enclosure proper. The candidate for baptism approached the pool by coming up the steps on the right of the altar enclosure and entered the pool from the right; the pastor entered the pool from the left. The newly baptised retraced his/her steps back into the sanctuary.

The baptismal pool was in the centre. So too were the pulpit at the second level (i.e. where the ministers sat), and, lower still, the altar table. Each represented different kinds of mediation that took place between the sacred and the secular. The higher one moved in the altar area, the closer to the realm of the sacred.

The altar table was at the floor level and was used for communion when it held platters of communion hosts and 'wine'. It mediated not only between the sacred and the secular, but also among the church members present; it was thus a concrete expression of 'fellowship'; this was underlined by the ministers coming down and lining themselves with the deacons at the bottom of the altar by the table. The pulpit represented mediation between divine words embodied in the Gospel and the words of everyday living. It was where the preacher interpreted divine time or timelessness into time or the everyday life of the church members. The baptismal pool represented mediation between the divine and the human by bringing the latter literally higher up and closer to the divine. It also represented salvation, a prerequisite for any Baptist.

Although it was not as marked as in the altar area, the left-right binary held to some extent in the nave. And to the extent that it was noticeable, gender distinction was more clear-cut¹⁹ here. On the right of the nave (i.e. the side of the American flag), the deaconesses²⁰ sat in the front pew. If they were seated in the nave, the deacons sat on the left side (i.e. the side of the Christian flag). Similarly, when ministers sat in the nave, they tend to sit on the left side.

As we shall see in the following section, it was not only the old church building that confirmed the self-contained character of the church community; nor are binary contrasts only

¹⁹ There was some gender distinction in the altar area: both the lectern table and the piano behind it were occupied primarily by women. And they were both on the right side of the altar area.

²⁰ A deaconess is either the wife or widow of a deacon.

confined to the use of space. These features were and are even now still to some extent seen in the way Sunday services are conducted.

4. Sunday Services:

A casual observer will note several points that make Sunday services at Salem different from the two Catholic churches (apart from doctrinal differences), especially St Patrick's. Firstly, services are supposed to and do last twice as long; they are supposed to run for two hours but frequently exceed that. Secondly, they have more flexibility built into them so that they are interactive constructs of the assembly. Thirdly, many more people were officially involved²¹; they assumed roles that fitted each other in a rather complex pattern. Finally, as I have mentioned earlier, the services tend to have a more explicitly emotional tenor.

One might also note that Salem, more explicitly than either of the two Catholic churches, actively mediates the world outside with the church community. The world outside or the secular world is seen as a world that is not the making of Afro-Americans; by default, it is perceived as one largely shaped by Euro-Americans and generally as a rather hostile environment. The church is both a shield from and conduit into this world. Some of this can be observed in the general format of Sunday services. Others may be clearer in the pattern of interaction among the assembly.

For this purpose, this section will be divided into two parts. The first will briefly describe a typical Sunday service that took place in the old church building. Sunday service in the new building has mostly followed a similar pattern. Where relevant, I shall be pointing out the difference. The second part will deal with some of the recurrent patterns in the interaction among the assembly.

4-a. Sunday Service at Salem:

As with most Afro-American churches, Sunday service starts at 11:00 a.m. There are several stages in a Sunday service that are somewhat akin to a slow build-up of church (as a faith community). This build-up denotes a gradual transition from the secular to the sacred. One

²¹ On a typical Sunday, there would be at least two or three deacons, two assistant ministers, the pastor, seven ushers the church clerk, and the music director, not to mention the choir.

moved from a service dominated by the presence of the deacons, to that of the choir, then the minister, thence of the pastor.

The first thirty minutes or so of the service are in the hands of the deacons, the assistant minister and the choir. The pastor and/or the minister who was to preach that day comes in later.

Going to church meant more than attending service for many people. Many, both adults and children, attend their respective Sunday school. Unlike Catholic Sunday schools, which are geared toward children and tend to focus on catechism, Sunday schools in a Baptist church are more like Bible study group and tend to be divided into gender and age based groups. Those who have attended are seated in the pews at the beginning of the service.

Standing at the foot of the altar, the deacons run the service at the beginning. They direct the choir in the singing of a hymn that they chose.

This was followed by an assistant minister asking the congregation to stand while the choir came in a procession from the vestibule, down the central aisle and up the altar by ascending the steps on the left. The women members dressed in a flowing robe and would progress rather slowly and deliberately, swaying rhythmically as they moved in their special steps. In their own way, their entry is as dramatic as a Kabuki actor making his entry. This practice continued for some while after moving to the new church building; lately, however, it seems to have been discontinued. Instead, choir members come in from the side door behind the altar.

With the entry of the choir, the assembly is galvanised as a collective. This is further emphasised by the fact that an assistant minister takes over from the deacons and leads the assembly from the pulpit. With the assembly still standing, a passage from the Gospel is read alternately between the assistant minister and the rest of the assembly. As the assembly sits down, a deacon kneeling against a deacon's chair will say his prayer aloud. This is followed by the first outburst of singing by the choir. The choir generally sings five times during service each time marking a different phase of the service (soon after entering the sanctuary, after the announcement, the interlude between two collections, during the second collection, and, finally, after the call to prayer and just before the sermon). Their singing marks transition points in the service. Then, directed by the assistant minister, the assembly stands up again and sings a hymn selected for the day and printed in the church bulletin.

At St Mary, the interval between the different phases of the service have been marked by silence; the members of the congregation could retreat into the privacy of their individual selves. By contrast, at Salem, the intervals have been a time to reaffirm the assembly as a collective, an expression of 'fellowship'; very frequently, the further in the service, the assembly is more galvanised as a collective. And the choir usually took the lead in this.

Thirty minutes or so after the service is the 'announcement'. This is the most obvious form of mediation throughout the service and deals with relations: a) between the church members and the outside world, b) among church members, c) among different churches (usually Afro-American ones), and d) between a group in the church and church members in general (e.g. a group organising a special function and church members in general). It takes the form of letters and messages that are announced or read out. These included public events to be held in the twin cities and, more importantly perhaps, information about the availability of jobs in organisations such as the university, local government, factories and other businesses. As mediation among members, messages from individual members to the church are passed on then (e.g. announcement of a forthcoming marriage, thank you notes after a funeral or death). Special celebrations or occasions in other churches are also announced here. And finally, upcoming events at Salem (and what might be expected from church members in general) are also announced.

Both the person and the location involved in the announcement mark it as a primarily secular event. As I mentioned earlier, it was made from the lectern table on the right of the altar and by the church clerk who has invariably been a woman. Unlike women in the choir, she does not put on special clothing that would mark her apart from other members of the congregation.

The church clerk also assumes the role of welcoming newcomers and visitors. At the end of the announcement she would ask the visitors to stand up and introduce themselves; she would then greet them with words of welcome. At the end of the service, if anyone wanted to join the church, she would be the one to take notes and give out information concerning him/her to the congregation. In both instances, information is given about the church to which the newcomer had been affiliated.

In the old building the treasurer came to the lectern table between the announcement and the introduction of visitors. He informed the assembly about the latest on the church building fund. Generally, anybody, member or otherwise (e.g. a politician canvassing for support) who

wants to address the church can come to the lectern table after the announcement and has done so.

The transition from this rather secular phase to a more sacred phase of the service is marked by the pastor and the preacher of the day walking in sometime during the announcement, and by the singing of the choir at the end of the announcement. In the old church, the children would be dismissed from the sanctuary to attend their own service elsewhere²²

Two collections have followed one another. The two have been separated by the choir singing in between the two and during the second collection. And the second collection, tithing, where people have been asked to give 10% of their weekly income has been the more important of the two; the singing of the choir stressed this point. Usually 5 to 10% of the assembly have come to the altar and form a line as tithers; others put their less than 10% donation into the collections plate.

Five ushers, two in pairs and one following, march down the central aisle with their left arm behind them and take the collections plates from the deacon who have been waiting for them. Except for the one who has gone to the altar area to collect from the choir, the ushers have worked in pairs walking away from the altar, the members of each pair walking on each end of the rows of pews. Synchronisation is aimed for not only within the pair but also between the two pairs.

Tithing is followed by a 'call to prayer'. A minister, usually other than the pastor, would come to the pulpit while many in the assembly (i.e. most of the choir, all the deacons, most of the deaconesses, the pastor's family, and a large portion of the congregation) would form a line as they reached the bottom of the altar and link arms. This is a communal time. Unlike the collection, which is very ordered²³, the gathering around the altar is spontaneous with people sallying forth from their seats at the same time. In the old church the ushers linked arms and formed a line just in front of the swinging doors leading to the vestibule.

The sermon starts soon after the choir sang for the last time. Since their singing tends to gather steam each time they sing, their final singing very frequently becomes the most rousing. Though not always, the assembly has tended to 'feel happy' more on this occasion.

²² When I started visiting Salem, the children's service was held in the sanctuary in full view of adults; and the children gathered around a minister who stood by the lectern table. After the children's service was set aside from the main Sunday service, its frequency declined somewhat.

Consequently, the preacher has frequently approached the pulpit with the assembly in a heightened state of 'fellowship'.

By the time the preacher comes to the pulpit, even the last of the late arrivals would have been seated in the pews. The sermon, usually delivered by the pastor, is expected to take thirty minutes but usually lasts for forty-five minutes. Although the pastor usually addresses the assembly earlier on in the service (e.g. after the announcement, before tithing and the collection that followed etc.), this is the first time that he is actually scheduled to address the assembly.

At the conclusion of the sermon, the pastor will call out for anyone to come up to the altar to declare his/her intention to be baptised or join the church ('call to discipleship'). If there is anybody wanting to join the church, s/he would be introduced by the church clerk; and a deacon would pass a motion subsequently accepted by the assembly that s/he should be accepted. If anyone wants to be baptised, the clerk would announce his/her intention; and the pastor will briefly quiz him/her on her willingness.

The service comes to an end when the preacher walks down the aisle accompanied by the usher and gives his benediction from the swinging doors which are held open.

On the first Sundays of the month, there is a variation in the service to accommodate communion.

The communion service follows the sermon. It starts with the choir singing. The deacons and the ministers gathered around both sides of the altar table at the bottom of the altar; all the deacons put on white gloves. Two of the more senior deacons ceremoniously remove a white linen cloth spread over the table to uncover platters of communion hosts and wine (actually grape juice).

The manner in which the communion hosts and wine are distributed reflects the organisational hierarchy of the church. Like the ushers, the deacons would go down the aisle toward the exit in pairs, synchronising the passing of platters in the pews. Then, deaconesses are served by the pastor and a senior deacon, thence the deacons; the ministers who come last, help themselves to the hosts and 'wine'. The pastor comes last.

²³ No matter what form the collection took (e.g. passing the plate along the pews or calling the assembly to the altar) a pew-by-pew order is observed. This is also the case in funerals.

After a brief prayer by the pastor, the assembly partook of the host and wine at the same time. While the deacons tidied up the altar table and collected empty glasses, the assembly sang a hymn.

The 'call to discipleship' and benediction followed communion.

4-b. Taking Part in the Service:

Quite a few members seem to be conscious of the time as determined by the twenty-four hour clock and regulate their activities accordingly. Some of them arrive considerably later than the official starting time. Even at the beginning of my visit in 1989, I noticed that the church was only two-thirds to three-quarters full in the first fifteen minutes of the service. Now, in 1998, the church barely has a handful of people at the beginning. There is a slow trickle of people during the service, a few arriving as late as an hour and a half after it officially began, and just before the sermon; the majority of the assembly are gathered after the first thirty to forty-five minutes.

As with the late arrivals, there have been some trends that were observed in the old church building that not only have continued but, in some cases, have become more pronounced after Salem moved to the new church building. In other instances, change seemed to come decisively after the move. This is partly because the service in the old building had evolved in such a way that the organisation of space itself had been an integral part.

To the extent that there are differences in the way Sunday services have been celebrated in the two buildings, I shall, as before, put primary focus on the practice in the old church building. The discussion on some of the changes will follow in the last section (6).

Compared to the two Catholic churches, a larger number of people were actively involved in the celebration of Sunday service at Salem. And where there were people who fulfilled similar roles to those found in the other two churches such as being the music director, their roles tend to be more expanded. In spite of or because of the large number of people involved, there is little pre-arranged co-ordination among these people; instead, many carry out their tasks semi-autonomously from others. Flexibility and interactive improvisation were the order of the day.

The choir has been accorded greater importance than in the Catholic churches; and many members take pride in 'their' choir. Collectively, they are seen as an essential part of ministry. Individually, they are not; this is especially the case with women who are excluded from ministry in the

Baptist faith. Their flowing robe accentuates the collective character by suppressing gender²⁴. At the same time, because of the friendly interaction among some of them during singing pauses, their individuality remains visible. Although they practice long hours, the choir does not prepare for a specific set of hymns for a specific Sunday. As I have mentioned earlier in the context of 'feeling happy' the manner and content of their singing have very frequently been based on the interaction between the choir and members of the assembly.

What has been happening to individual church members (especially choir members), if there has been any request for a specific hymn by a member of the assembly on that day (or earlier), the flow of the service (e.g. if a minister or another church member has said something that has caught the attention of the assembly), whether any of the hymn sung has left the assembly 'feeling happy', all these and more have been taken into consideration in the choice of hymns and the manner in which they were sung. Generally, the music director has been responsible for the selection and, to a lesser extent, the manner of singing. There are, however, times when the choir spontaneously takes the initiative on both counts. For example, if somebody made a moving testimony, or if a minister recites words echoing a hymn or actually starts singing, a few members of the choir might take the initiative and start singing and the rest follows. There are times, however, when one cannot even tell who among the choir members (including the music director) have taken the initiative. This is more likely to happen when the assembly has been galvanised by 'feeling happy'.

It is not only the choir that is conscious of the changing mood of the assembly. Aside from other considerations, merely the relative lack of pre-arranged co-ordination in the execution of the different phases of the service would make this necessary. As with 'feeling happy', one has acted because one has felt 'moved by the spirit' which is essentially an individual experience. Yet, if one were 'moved by the spirit', and it is the same spirit –the Holy Spirit-, then there would presumably be some coherence between one's act and others' who have equally been 'moved by the spirit'. Since the 'spirit' or the divine is perceived as timeless, one can 'feel the spirit' well before as well as during church. And it is believed that one would indeed be moved by the spirit during the service, 'fellowship' being one of its works. This means reflexive improvisation among the many actors that has led to a fairly seamless service. The pastor or the preacher prepared his sermon independently from the choir and other officers of the church. He ensured a smooth transition from the singing of the choir to his sermon by frequently

²⁴ In the old church building, only female choir members put on their choir uniform. Men would be variously dressed –from sober suits to shirt and trousers. Now, however, with the exception of ministers, the men –and there always have been more women than men in the choir- don the same flowing robe.

picking up a theme or a phrase from the hymn just sung. Similarly, the music director would accompany the end of the sermon by playing the organ quietly, with or without a signal from the preacher.

This kind of reflexive improvisation had been visible on many different occasions and could very frequently bring a radical change in the mood of the assembly. A children's service in the winter of 1990 was a case in point.

At that time, the service was incorporated in the main Sunday service. An assistant minister gave a brief sermon from the lectern table with the children gathered around. He talked about avarice and the love of filthy lucre with seemingly inordinately insistent vehemence; so much so that a knowing wry smile was on many a face of the congregation; some were actually tittering. This minister was widely known to be honest but poor with more than ten children to raise. He was losing the attention of the assembly as he neared the end of the sermon.

At the end of the service five volunteers were recruited among the children for the first collection. At that time, the children, not the ushers, were responsible for the first collection.

That day too, the minister asked for five volunteers as usual; there were quite a few takers. This time, instead of just touching the hand of the selected volunteers, he took out his wallet and handed them each what looked like a five dollar bill. He told them that they should use this money to buy a scarf or a pair of gloves for a classmate who looks cold and in need; that they should do so saying: "Take this for the love of Christ!"

There was a sudden stillness among the assembly which was followed by a reconsidered respectful gaze. These impromptu improvisations fit in in the more loosely but nevertheless structured service.

Some actors have more clearly provided this structure than others. The ushers have been one such. They have fairly inconspicuously worked for the smooth running of the service. Their interaction with the members of the assembly made the atmosphere more personal and friendly. When winter coats seemed to restrict further the relatively confined space, the ushers offered to take the coats away to hang in the vestibule. They also supervise the children and support those who are 'feeling happy'.

Some features of 'ushering' reflected and re-enforced two different kinds of classification. One was related to the definition of Salem in relation to the outside world, and another concerned gender.

More than any other, the ushers acted as gatekeepers between the church and the outside world. They have a distinct attire²⁵ that marks them apart from the rest of the assembly. They controlled the flow of people after the service started at 11:00 a.m. Latecomers were let in at what they judged to be appropriate intervals during the service²⁶; very frequently, one might wait for several minutes outside the swinging door. I have the impression that they made people wait longer in the old building; certainly, there seemed to have been a larger build-up of late comers standing outside of the doors leading to the sanctuary. During the 'call to prayer' or 'call to the altar' the ushers linked arms among themselves just inside the swinging doors while many in the assembly went to the altar area to link arms there. By forming such an obvious barrier symbolically, they demonstrated that they were the guardians of the church and re-enforced its self-contained character when the church was at its most personal and vulnerable²⁷. This was further stressed at the end of the service when they flung open the doors in anticipation of people leaving the sanctuary; and an usher would ceremoniously accompany the preacher down the aisle to the threshold of the doors from whence he would give his benediction.

Among the many changes found in the new building are the five sets of swinging doors, instead of only one in the old building. Instead of concentrating around the one set of doors and in the sanctuary, the ushers are now dispersed guarding these doors. During the 'call to prayer' the ushers mingle with the rest of the assembly and link hands with those standing by the altar.

Gender relation is another area where there have been quite a few changes over the years. However, even now, compared to the other two churches, Salem puts the greatest emphasis on gender distinction, very frequently expressed in terms of a dress code. Women wear dresses or skirts, but not trousers²⁸; and men generally put on conservative suits. The ushers are no exceptions. They are even more conservatively dressed than other church members.

In the old church building, the dress code of the ushers highlighted this gender distinction even more. Although their style remained fairly constant (i.e. suits), their colour scheme

²⁵ Unlike the two Catholic churches, but in common with many Afro-American churches, the ushers wore a personalised badge announcing their status in the church, usher, and their name.

²⁶ They would not let people in in the middle of a ritual segment. For example, the choir was allowed to complete its hymn, the church clerk her announcement, the deacon his prayer, etc. before the ushers let the late comers in. Although the sermon would typically take at least thirty minutes, people were not allowed in; only children were allowed greater freedom of movement.

²⁷ The 'call to prayer' is somewhat akin to the 'petition' in Catholic churches; church members are expected to gather together to pray for issues that concern them personally.

²⁸ When I asked about the dress code early on, not only was I told that this gender distinction was expected but, in the case of other National Baptist churches, more vigorously enforced. The pastor went on to tell me that in some churches, the ushers provided wraps for women who came in trousers.

changed during the year. The manner in which this changed was gender dependent. Each colour scheme was based on a binary pattern.

The men changed from black to white suits marking the annual cycle. During the colder months (i.e. from the first Sunday in October to one in May) they dressed in black suits, black bow tie, and white shirt. On the first Sunday in May, they changed into a white jacket. When the church celebrated men's day, the male ushers would put aside their uniform and dress in ordinary suits.

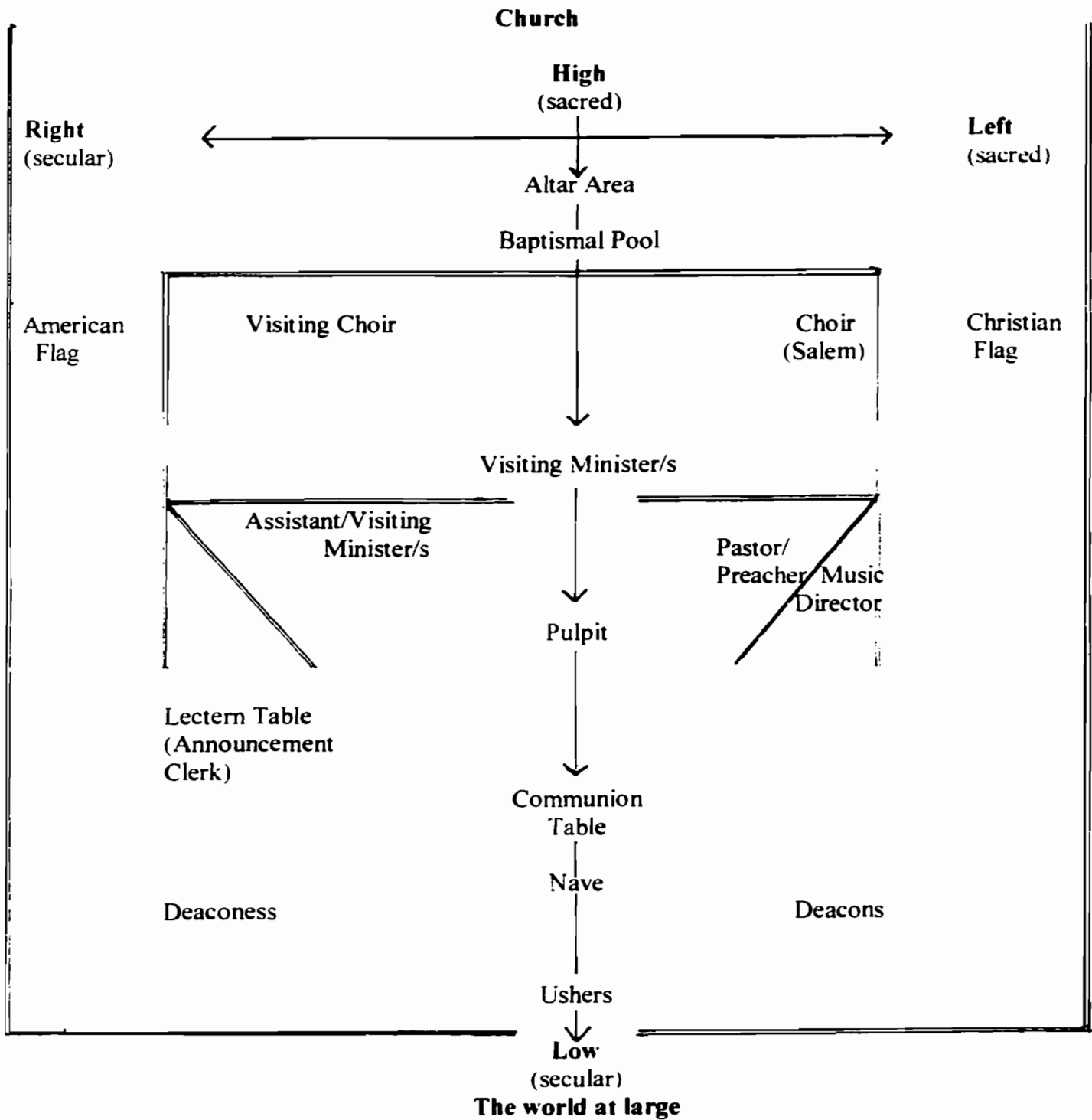
The women, by contrast, marked the monthly cycle. They put on a white suit with a red blouse every first Sunday of the month; for the other Sundays, they put on a black suit and white blouse. Like their male counterparts on men's day, they put aside their uniform on Women's Day and dressed like the other women involved in the celebration.

Even in the old building, there was some loosening of the women ushers' dress code in terms of the colour scheme. When I first started visiting the church, they wore a red suit not a white one on first Sundays. This stressed the gender distinction even more than the colour scheme that was adopted shortly afterwards. The black and white binary echoed that of the men. It also blurred the male-female boundary with regards to the ushers qua ushers. White is a colour that is generally associated with women in Salem; the deaconesses habitually dress completely in white, and most of the women dress in white on Women's Day. Once women ushers were no longer so distinct a group in terms of the colour scheme of dress, the white worn by male ushers would become of dubious gender status.

Some time after women ushers started wearing white on first Sundays, they also started putting on a yellow blouse on third Sundays. By then, the third Sunday had been put aside most months for the children's choir, known as the Sunshine Choir, whose uniform was yellowish ochre. Some of them had children in this choir and were actively involved in helping them. Matching their blouse to the uniform of the children's choir in this context underlined their nurturing role as mothers, and, therefore, their womanhood. However, their gender status became more independent from the male-female binary among the ushers. This practice was discontinued shortly.

There have been many changes regarding the ushers' dress code over the years. At the moment (1998 – 99), both men and women put on a red shirt/blouse on first Sundays; the

Diagram 2: The Two Binaries



¹ As observed in the old church building (1989 – 1993).

women also put on white suits. For the rest of the month, they put on black suits. By contrast, the men still observe the changeover from black to white suits and thence from white to black.

5. Time-keeping of a Self-contained Community:

At an earlier point of my research, Salem had the most complex but also identifiable patterns of time-reckoning that might be called its own. This was probably a reflection of the church as a more self-contained community than either of the two Catholic churches. The differences between Salem and the two, however, are primarily ethnic. Denominational differences have magnified them, but do not constitute the decisive explanation. There are too many differences between the two Catholic churches for that.

There was a strong element of cyclicity in the pattern of time-reckoning. However, it was one which incorporated unilinear directionality.

Compared to St Patrick's, for example, the twenty-four hour clock as such did not carry as much weight in the way Sunday service was celebrated. However, it was not completely ignored either. Salem kept its own time, but with a wary eye on the clock. To my recollection, no service has lasted longer than two and three-quarters hour,²⁹ and none has been shorter than one and three quarter hour. Usually, the length of the service was determined by the manner in which any particular ritual segment was performed. And the completion of any one ritual segment frequently depended on the interaction among church members.

At St Patrick's generational differences were acknowledged primarily in the context of the family. At Salem, they were conspicuous in the context of a church community. Children, for example, are a distinct group in the church. This group is in turn divided into subgroups based on age differences. Children below the age of ten, but no longer toddlers sit together with an adult who informally assumes the role of a supervisor; teenagers sit together on their own etc. Whether it is because they grew up together in church or not, adults of similar age also tend to sit together if they are not sitting with their family or spouse.

As we have seen in the preceding subsection, the cyclical patterns of time-reckoning were presented by the ushers whose dress code could be explained in terms of binary principle. There is first the gender-based binary. Within each member of this binary set, there is a subset. The women mark the passage of the month and, to some extent, that of weeks. The men, by contrast, stress the changes in the season; one cycle of black to white jackets marks a year. The latest

changes in their dress code do not alter the time that is reckoned, only the manner in which it is reckoned. Instead of each binary member having a subset, we now have one, the men, having two subsets; the more established one marking the year, and the new one marking the month.

Linear time is marked by the different church celebrations such as Women's Day and the church anniversary; these celebrations took place throughout the year. If we understand unidirectional linear time to mean one nomothetic event leading to another more or less *ad infinitum*, then the pattern in Salem is not linear time. The pattern of time-reckoning that we see in Salem is cyclical time with a variation. In many cases, these are celebrations that are repeated from one year to the next. Each one is a celebration of the passage of time for a church community. And similar celebratory occasions are differentiated from one to another year. This is effected in many ways: from the simple expediency of calling that year's celebration as the nth. celebration of whatever occasion from the first year of its inception to putting on clothing that are different from those at previous years.

These different types of time-reckoning may have been unique to Salem. However, it is worth noting that many of the time units such as the week and months that have been presented are those that have been used in American society at large. What we see here is the ability of a community to generate its own meaning even from a more general template. In the process, the self-contained character of the church community has been affirmed.

The specific manner in which time has been reckoned in Salem is unique to the church. However, there is a similarity in the overall pattern of its time-reckoning and that of Yoko (Part II) on two counts: the direction of time, and the manner in which meaning is forged. I shall come back to these points in my overall conclusion.

In the context of Part III, I shall be exploring binary patterns of time-reckoning further. This will be one of my primary focus in the chapter dealing with a sermon delivered by the pastor of Salem. It will be one of the three chapters that will follow, each dealing with sermons delivered in each of the three churches.

Before proceeding to these chapters, however, I shall conclude this chapter by returning to the discussion on some of the changes that have taken place in Salem over the years that I have been visiting it.

²⁹ It is known that some churches have Sunday services that sometimes stretch to three or four hours.

6. 'Old Wine in a New Bottle'?

As reference points, I will talk about the changes that have been taking place in Salem in terms of the differences between the old and new church buildings. However, the construction of a new building to house Salem (and the actual organisation of space in the new building) was itself the result of changes that have been taking place for quite a while. The new building embodies many of these changes, but has, in turn, brought on other changes.

One of the most salient changes has been the decreased visibility of binary contrasts. This is most conspicuous in the use of space.

The left-right contrast is less marked. This attenuation is most obvious in the altar area. It is not that the secular (right, facing the naves from the altar) has blended with the sacred (left). What might constitute the secular is still found on the right starting with the American flag. The lectern table is still at the bottom right of the altar, and the announcement about jobs and other community events are still made from there. The change lies in the shift of the sacred toward the centre. In the process, the twin gaps between the secular and the sacred, between the outside world and Salem, seem to have narrowed. The Christian flag is still on the left. However, the choir stall is placed conspicuously in the centre; so too the pastor/preacher: he sits in the centre behind the pulpit with other ministers.

There are still a few things that remind one of the importance of the left side of the altar. Firstly, the music director sits by the organ which is placed on the left; and he conducts the choir from that position. Consequently, the gaze of the choir is directed to the left. Secondly, when the choir leave their place to join the assembly in the nave for communion, they sit together on the extreme left set of pews. Finally, at the level where the ministers are seated, the space on the left remains empty even when there are too many ministers up on the altar. When there are too many ministers to be accommodated in the centre, extra chairs are placed on the right or they sit behind the partition between the two levels of the pulpit and of the choir respectively; they cluster around the centre.

The left-right binary contrast as an expression of gender differences had always been less marked. To the extent that they can be discerned, they still remain the same in the new church. The deaconesses sit on the right, and the deacons on the left; the church clerk, still a woman, makes her announcement from the right.

Overall gender differences have been maintained; this is one of the areas that have had considerable changes over the years. This is seen in some of the changes in gender-based dress codes. For example, both the ushers and the choir put less emphasis on gender differences in their clothing.

Certainly, the skirt-trousers distinction is still there among the ushers. However, as I have pointed out, there seems to be more sharing in terms, for example, of colour scheme. Likewise, all choir members put on their flowing robes regardless of gender now. This would indicate an increasing importance of role alone rather than the previous combination of gender and role as markers of status in the church. In fact, I have lately seen a woman address the church from the lectern table about church finances. Till then, only men gave such reports.

There has generally been a relaxation of dress codes in Salem. This is largely a generational difference; the younger generation seems to dress more like their contemporaries in general regardless of ethnicity. Compared to the two Catholic churches, its church members still make a point of dressing formally. However, the overall tone is more casual than when I first came to the church. Then, the church was sometimes covered in a sea of elaborate hats. Now, hats are a minority and simpler in design, and they tend to be on older heads. Men almost invariably were dressed in sober-looking suits. Now, there are as many men who are dressed casually as formally. I have yet to see an Afro-American come to church in jeans; however, among the younger men, a sweater or a shirt without a tie is quite usual now. Even among deacons who tend to preserve the traditional way of dressing formally, one can occasionally spot a sporty tweed jacket.

Perhaps the most conspicuous change is the high-low binary.

The new building no longer projects the image of elevated isolation of a self-contained community. Having everything at the ground level, the new building is very easily accessible. In fact, from being the least accessible church of the three, Salem has now become the most accessible. There is a driveway on a gentle ramp that comes right in front of the front entrance; the area is covered, so one might alight from the car regardless of the weather. All the entry points to the new building are level so that one could wheel oneself in. This change is not unique to Salem. Not only do many of the Afro-American churches that have been recently rebuilt or built share similar features, but so do most Protestant churches that have been recently built, regardless of ethnicity.

What is rather special in Salem is the alteration in the high-low contrast. The nave has been built at a slant. The front of the nave, the point nearest to the altar is the lowest point in the sanctuary. Both the rear of the nave and the altar area are higher. In the process, the overlapping binaries of high-low and sacred-profane are no longer so clearly delineated.

What does this blurring of binaries mean?

Many of the features Salem has retained still leave Salem the most self-contained community among the three churches. However, it would seem that some of these changes reflect a changing perception of the world among Afro-Americans. If they have not dropped their guard completely, they may no longer view it as being as full of malevolent hostility as it had been once. Perhaps, there no longer is the need to have the church as a refuge in splendid isolation

Though still self-contained, there have been considerable changes within this church community, perhaps with a hint of more to come. For example, there is an indication that gender relations may be changing. With this, perhaps, there might be more emphasis on roles. Secondly, the increasing visibility of nuclear families as units within the church seem to indicate that the community is increasingly becoming an aggregation of social units that pre-exist in the outside world. As a corollary, it is less of a community where the boundaries of these pre-existing social units were downplayed and where church members fused together more or less as equals in a tight knit community; the only boundary that was conspicuous was that of the church community. Thirdly, given these changes, how would a church community like Salem deal with the rapid class differentiation taking place among Afro-Americans? There now is a sizeable middle to upper-middle class (not to mention upper class) Afro-Americans who have made their mark in society at large. Quite a few church members are of that class.

A church like Salem faces this question: what does it mean to be an Afro-American church nowadays? This is a question with several ramifications. Firstly, how will Salem deal with the increasing diversity among Afro-Americans which is reflected in its own community? Secondly, what kind of relation will it maintain with the society at large? That is, how will it deal with diversity in the society at large or with a society that is more conscious of, if not necessarily fully ready for, the diversity in itself? Does the blurring of binaries in Salem indicate a shift from an ethnically black-and-white world view to a multi-ethnic one? Thirdly, and relatedly, how can Salem meet the needs of Afro-Americans in town? Given the earlier questions, what does this mean? And if the Afro-Americans whose needs are pressing are not the same Afro-Americans who are attending church (e.g. the former may be of lower income and perhaps on welfare), should the church nevertheless try to meet them?

Different Afro-American churches are addressing these and many other issues differently. In the process, they have adopted different directions and different paces. Thus, even among churches that have sought an activist role in the twin cities, there are considerable differences. Salem, for example, has been running a soup kitchen. Another church had started

initially by offering remedial education to children; it has now started its own school. I suspect that the decreasing participation of Afro-American churches in such events as the Thanksgiving service is another indication of this divergence.

CHAPTER V

‘PREACHING’ IN SALEM:

1. Introduction:

"We especially want to be on fire for Jesus; we don't want to be like a lukewarm church."
(a sermon given at Woman's day, 25 March 1990, by the wife of the retired pastor)

In Salem, sermons are delivered as a part of an interactive process between the preacher and the assembly. Many of the more successful sermons are marked by a greater interaction between the two. As a result, there is a good deal of improvisation in the delivery of a sermon. In addition, there is an expectation cum understanding that one preaches as one is moved by the Spirit. A preacher may be inspired by the Spirit while he is meditating on his sermon prior to the service; he is also expected to be inspired when he is actually preaching. Consequently, a sermon that sounds well prepared and polished and which, incidentally, reads well is shunned. Passion is sought instead and is part of the message in a sermon. A seemingly reckless display of emotions is valued; as a corollary, many linguistic devices that ensure a smooth delivery are eschewed. Being grammatically correct, maintaining an even pitch and pace in delivery, for example, are ignored. More so than in either St Mary or St Patrick's, a sermon is an oral performance. It is what church members call ‘preaching’; some utter this word with their voice dropped from their normal pitch and deeper as if it has boomed out of their stomach rather than rang from the usual twang of their vocal chords. Behind the dropped voice is a distinction between two kinds of ‘preaching’ that Zora Neale Hurston has explained thus:

The real singing Negro derides the negro who adopts the white man's religious ways ... They say of that type of preacher, ‘Why he don't preach at all. He just lectures.’ And the way they say the word ‘lecture’ make it sound like horse-stealing (Hurston 1981: 106 – 107).

It is a sentiment that has been expressed by, among other Afro-Americans, Booker T. Washington a decidedly secular leader who had earlier trained to become a minister:

'When one feels from the bottom of his feet to the top of his head, that he has something to say that is going to help some individual or some cause, then let him say it; and in delivering his message I do not believe that many of the artificial rules of elocution, can under the circumstances, help him very much. Although there are certain things, such as pauses, breathing, and pitch of voice, that are very important, none of these can take the place of soul (emphasis in the original) in an address. When I have an address to deliver, I like to forget all about the rules for the proper use of the English language, and all about rhetoric and that sort of thing, and I like to make the audience forget all about these things too (Washington 1986: 244).

I based the choice of sermon for analysis on its reception among the assembly. More conspicuously than other sermons during this period, this sermon had elicited diversely enthusiastic response from many in the Sunday assembly. It was delivered in February, which has been officially designated as 'Black History Month'. The pastor customarily talks about issues related to Afro-Americans during this month. As Afro-Americans, they share many deeply felt experiences among themselves which often touch on race relations. However, here too there are differences, based both on personality and personal experiences. Although they were a minority, I understand that some members felt rather uncomfortable by the way some issues were handled in this sermon. However, differences of opinion are not expressed during the service –only approval; complaints may occasionally be taken up at a later date with the preacher.

Quite a few issues have been raised in this sermon. The following are some of them: the presentation of slavery, relations between Afro-Americans and Euro-Americans, the question of other minorities, especially gays, the parallel between Biblical topics and current issues. Issues concerning race relations and other minorities will be dealt with in the section dealing with the use of different persons; because the two issues are differently presented, I shall tackle them in two sections. Issues related to slavery and the parallel between Biblical topics and current issues will be dealt with together. Another section will deal with the binary structure of this sermon.

Before starting on issues specifically raised by the sermon, I shall deal with the context in which a sermon is delivered in Salem. In the process, I shall also touch upon some of the ways a sermon is delivered.

2 'Preaching' in Salem:

The main purpose of a sermon regardless of denomination is to deliver a message that serves as food for thought and, hopefully, enhance the spirituality of the listener. Among Christians, this largely means interpreting life as it is lived now in the light of the Scripture. It is one part of the service where the preacher seeks to reach out directly to the assembly in church. Within this overall commonality, there are considerable differences between the character of the sermon delivered by a Catholic priest and a Baptist minister.

In comparison to Catholic priests, a Baptist minister enjoys greater interpretative autonomy; the Baptists refer to the ministry as a 'calling'. This reflects the greater individual authority he enjoys as a minister, especially as a pastor. By contrast, a good deal of authority that a Catholic priest enjoys is institutional in character, it is through his membership in a collective, the clergy; he reflects the collective authority of the Church. Thus, his authority is also more stable than that of an individual Baptist minister. Preaching in Salem is implicitly but more markedly an assertion of authority by the pastor. This implicit negotiation over pastoral authority is premised on the general expectation that the pastor **preaches** the message. Consequently, there can be a 'Catch-22' situation. This situation is not unknown in Catholic churches, but it is less marked. On one hand, a minister who **preaches** successfully can better assert his authority in church. On the other hand, a minister who enjoys great authority in church is seen as having **preached** or as going to **preach** well. This inherent tension can at times be exacerbating; but it can also render the delivery of the sermon a dynamic process.

There are two inter-twined processes that take place. One relies on a rather formulaic procedure. Another is based on on-the-spot interaction between the preacher and the assembly.

Like the Catholics, a sermon in Salem starts with the reading of a passage from the Bible. However, the manner in which this is conducted clearly asserts the primacy of the preacher; he alone has chosen the reading. The preacher announces his selection at the beginning of the sermon. Then the assembly spends some time locating the passage in their Bible. One hears his

voice repeatedly identifying the location of the passage above the rustling sound of turning pages. Then led by the preacher whose voice rings above the muffled reading voices of the rest, the assembly reads the passage together. Unlike the other two readings during service, the assembly remains seated when reading at the beginning of the sermon; thus our voice is projected downward instead of toward the altar area. Further, instead of reading from the bulletin where the passages have been printed in easily legible size, we all read from our own or from Bibles found in the pews; in either case, the printing is much smaller than in the bulletin. All these make the reading an individual effort rather than a collective one where all our voices are raised in unison. After the reading, the preacher frequently repeats a particular phrase several times; this phrase becomes the main 'theme' of the sermon.

Salem still uses the King James Version of the Bible. This is not a universal practice even among other National Baptist churches. To the extent that the divine is identified with the words of the Bible, the rather archaic English of the King James Version puts a distance between the divine and the human. The acceptance of such a distance is consonant with the image of the divine that is projected in Salem. God is presented as a powerful protective figure. It is also the case that such a distance implicitly asserts the interpretative authority of the preacher. The very act of preaching means straddling this distance.

Sermons delivered in Salem have the widest range of variation in registers; by contrast, the sermons delivered in the two Catholic churches tended to maintain the same register or only have two (when the preacher inserted a conversation spoken as it was in the middle of the sermon). It is the only oral act during Sunday service that encompasses such a wide range of different registers; prayers, though extemporised, tend to be delivered in one register. The sermon I have analysed in this chapter is particularly rich in its variety of different registers. On one hand, we have this almost archaic English of the King James Version; aside from quoting from the Bible as he does here, the preacher sometimes uses this form in simple phrases (e.g. 'thou hath', 'thou believeth', 'He knoweth' etc.). On the other hand, he also uses very colloquial terms (e.g. 'I ain't come here to put all the jokes!' -appendix i, line 137). At one point the sermon is delivered in a didactic tone where the erudition of the preacher is displayed¹

¹ 'And as we look today in the Book of Proverbs –the Proverbs is divine wisdom applied to earthly conditions of the people of God. The Hebrew term for proverb means a comparison. And it came to be used in an age, in any age as moralistic pronouncement.' (appendix i, lines 41 – 43)

At another point he adopts a more conversational tone and addresses the assembly directly². In fact, there are so many different registers that are mixed together that it is difficult to keep track of them.

The mixed registers give a rich texture to the sermon. It also demonstrates the role of the preacher and therefore of the pastor as the primary mediator. Apart from mediating between the sacred and the secular, he also mediates both among the assembly who come from diverse walks of life as well as among the different facets of life that one might lead.

The contrast between the contemporarily colloquial and the more archaically literary can be traced by reading the transcript of the sermon. Unfortunately, this is not the case with the pace and pitch of the sermon. This sermon, like other sermons delivered by Baptist preachers both at Salem and in other churches, was not delivered at a uniform pace or pitch. Some phrases were carefully enunciated with deliberate slowness, while others were hurled from the pulpit at a fever pitch (so much so that repeated listening of the taped sermon notwithstanding, there are still a few portions that are unintelligible). A whisper or a soothing voice could become a booming incantation, a shout or even break into a song (there is no singing in this particular sermon). This variation in pace and pitch could occur in the same register.

All these stylistic features not to mention the sermon itself are shaped within the context of the interaction between the preacher and the assembly. If a sermon is successful, it elicits more responses from the assembly. The sermon I have analysed was one such. The pastor had captured the attention of the assembly. Not only were there copious repetition of the usual 'Amen!' but also the less frequently heard 'That's right!', 'Yes!'. These increased in frequency as the preacher carried on with his sermon; so much so that by its last quarter every few words he uttered were accompanied with shouts of praise and muffled but audible assents. There were much merriment and laughter and, at times, some members commenting happily on what the pastor had just said or done. He would sometimes match the jokes he cracked with gestures. For example, when he jokingly indicated that quoting St Paul might be displeasing to women, he

² 'Paul said –(aside to the women in the assembly) women, don't get mad at me! Go on with Paul!-: "wives submit themselves unto your own husband as unto the Lord. The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church. He is the saviour of the body therefore as the Church is subject to Christ, so let wives be unto their own husband in everything."

Is that the word? I didn't write it!' (appendix i, lines 248 – 252)

would duck lower than the pulpit ostentatiously furtively several times as if he was avoiding sling shots.

There are times when the assembly has already become warmly receptive to the sermon before the preacher comes to the pulpit. If there has been a raised level of 'feeling happy' resulting from the singing of the choir and/or somebody testifying, a preacher might be greeted by shouts of 'Amen!' and 'Hallelujah!' from the beginning. This was the case with this sermon. A woman had testified ardently during the sermon, and people 'felt happy' while the choir sang. It then becomes the preacher's task to sustain if not necessarily increase the momentum.

Sometimes, the assembly may be predisposed to being receptive to a particular preacher. Regardless of whether or not the assembly had been 'feeling happy' before, some preachers are greeted by shouts of praise the moment they come to the pulpit. Similar to behaviours related to 'feeling happy' when a particular choir member starts singing, for example, this is partly a gesture of support for the preacher. This happened on the rare occasion when the retired pastor preached. No doubt, there was an element of openly expressed support for him; since the current pastor and he were known to get along well, it was easy to be supportive. He had been a much loved and respected figure in the community; I suspect, there was an expectation that he would deliver a worthy sermon on one hand, and, on the other, a feeling that his frailty necessitated more support.

Whatever its reason, the conspicuously warm reception of the preacher from the very beginning boosts his interpretative authority and, to some extent, his more general authority. Conversely if there is any dispute over the exercise of his authority in other domains, the dispute might be expressed during service. Generally, it is very rare that someone in the assembly will express discontent in any form during the service. A church member who was known to have some differences with the pastor would sit through the service but would be seen leaving the church just before the pastor began his sermon; this continued for some while.

There clearly is some link between the degree to which interpretative authority is accorded to a preacher in the interaction between him and the assembly on one hand and the extent to which he enjoys authority more generally as a pastor. However, the link is not a straightforward one. Firstly, although attenuated somewhat by their prior opinion of the preacher, the assembly seeks to appreciate a sermon for its intrinsic merit. Secondly,

demonstrating one's ability as a preacher and therefore establishing one's interpretative authority does not automatically nor entirely translate into a more general authority. There seems to be twin tendencies to differentiate and to integrate roles; of the two, the former is perhaps more emphasised on a regular basis.

Bearing these points in mind, I shall be examining this interaction between the preacher and the assembly in the context of certain stylistic features that are found in Afro-American sermons.

3. 'Liquefied Words' and Density:

Apart from the wide range of different registers, pitch and pace, there are other stylistic features that are found in Afro-American sermons. These can foster what I have referred to as 'density' in Chapter IV, section 2. That is, the density of the collective that results from 'feeling happy' is replicated stylistically.

There are four stylistic features found in many sermons I heard delivered by Afro-American preachers. These were: 1) repetition, 2) what Zora Neale Hurston has referred to as a 'sort of liquefying of words' (1981: 81 – 83), 3) an enumeration of nouns, and 4) an enumeration of facts.

There are quite a few different types of repetition. The simplest one consists of repeating the same word continuously³. Another is what Hurston has described as the double descriptive (1981: 51 – 53). This consists of a set of synonyms, of same phrases, or of paraphrases⁴. A third form consists of a repetition of similar themes⁵. There is an affinity between this kind of repetition and enumeration of nouns and facts⁶. These stylistic features are also very different from the classic pattern of intellectual argument in the European tradition; in the latter, the

³ 'white male, white male, white male.... black, black, black, black, black, black, black, black male' lines 173 - 74

⁴ 'they would pass the information along saying: "There will be a meeting tonight, a meeting tonight, a meeting on the old camp ground." This would serve notice on them that a meeting was going to be held on that night.' (appendix i, lines 115 – 17)

'and the house staff were picked from the lighter skinned slaves called mulattos; and these were slaves fathered by white men.' (appendix i, lines 102 – 103)

⁵ 'They were sold from the slave markets like animals from auction blocks. Men were sold away from wives and children, women were separated from their husbands and from their children, sisters and brothers were separated never to see each other again.' (appendix i, lines 97 – 99)

⁶ 'And though the theme running throughout the Book of Proverbs is wisdom for living, the specific teachings include instructions on folly, on sin, on goodness, on wealth, poverty, on the use of the tongue, pride, humility, justice, vengeance, strife, gluttony, love, lust laziness, friends, the family, life and death.' (appendix i, lines 47 – 50)

presentation of a case depends on an orderly logical argument where A leads to B, thence to C, for example, and redundancy is frowned upon. Discourse in the European tradition relies on the exposition of an argument based on the pointing out of facts only to the extent that they are necessary; it is a style that might be more closely associated with written texts. By contrast, Afro-American sermons are rooted in the oral tradition. It is also related to the creation of density among the audience; that is, they depend on and foster certain kind of interaction among the assembly.

The creation of density is perhaps best seen in what Hurston has referred to as a 'sort of liquefying of words' which she describes thus:

'The well known 'ha!' of the Negro preacher is a breathing device. It is the tail end of the expulsion just before inhalation. Instead of permitting the breath to drain out, when the wind gets too low for words, the remnant is expelled violently. Example: (inhalation) 'And, oh!'; (full breath) 'my Father and my wonder-working God'; (explosive exhalation) 'ha!' (Hurston 1981: 82)

In the sermon that I have analysed, this occurs at its end from about lines 264 to 282. With faster pace and raised pitch, the preacher marks his pauses with a thumping of the pulpit and/or with what I have transcribed as 'uh-hunhh!'⁷ This may be a breathing device as Hurston has pointed out; if it is, it is very rhythmic. More remarkably, each thumping 'uhhunh!' is marked by shouts of 'Amen!' from the assembly.

Listening to this section of the sermon in the quiet of my study room, I was strongly reminded of traditional mochi-tsuki in Japan (pounding rice to make 'cake' in a large mortar bowl), a similar process to the making of fu-fu (West African dish: pounded yam, cassava or plantain). In mochi-tsuki, one person pounds a mass of steamed rice with a large pestle; after the rice coheres somewhat into one mass another person turns it over in the mortar bowl from time to time. Turning over this mass is done with an almost darting motion so that it does not disturb the rhythmic pounding. The taste (i.e. texture) of the rice cake depends on how well the two can pace each other, or, as we say in Japanese, on how well they can match their breathing/spirit.

A similar relation seems to be implied in the call-and-response interaction between the preacher and the assembly/audience. A 'successful' sermon is made through a well matched

spacing of both the preacher and the assembly; this interaction becomes increasingly intense as the minister continued in his sermon. Shouts of praise bolster the preacher. This is somewhat similar to what Hurston referred to as 'bearing him up' (1981:103 – 104). Likewise these shouts of praise during the sermon especially when words start to 'liquefy' and become chant like are part of the sermon and add texture to it. It would also seem that their timing is important. Something akin to this happens in Kabuki: I understand that a definition of a good Kabuki audience is that they know when to shout words of support during the performance.

The most adept practitioners of this call-and-response interaction during the sermon are the ministers themselves. When one of their peers is preaching, other ministers would stand nearby and shout praise, or a brief word (e.g. 'Yes sir!', 'Yeah!') with accompanying gestures; they raise their arms, tap the shoulder of the preacher, or stomp their feet. Another adept practitioner is the music director; he would punch a few keys of the organ like a crescendo regularly. In both instances, their 'response' is so dovetailed to the 'call' that there is no pause. Both the ministers and especially the musician tend to do this as the preacher approaches the end of his sermon. Whether or not the call-and-response is executed as expertly, something more powerful takes place than the word 'liquefy' would imply. Afro-American services may have the fluid quality of liquid. However, the quality of this 'liquid' is not limpid and stream like; even if it starts off in a trickle, it quickly becomes fierce and torrential. For example, when the retired pastor of Salem came to the pulpit, his voice sounded frail and old as indeed he was, being close to ninety and not in robust health. As his preaching picked pace, his bent back straightened up and his voice became a roar that continued to the end. Had Hurston been writing in the post-nuclear age, she might have used the word 'melt down' rather than 'liquefy'.

Many Afro-American preachers are well aware of the need for the assembly to participate in the sermon. I have heard a preacher turn to the assembly and ask in a rather thunderous voice: 'And who is with me!', 'Are you with me?!?!', 'Do you hear me!' The pastor at Salem sometimes has nudged a quiet assembly by saying: 'Amen walls!', 'Amen windows!' etc. In fact, even in this sermon, he is heard nudging the assembly:

⁷ 'The moment that we fail to acknowledge the Lord we'll never get anywhere, uh-hunh! But I'm always recognising God, uh-hunh! When things don't go well with me, uh-hunh, I stagger into God's words, uh-hunh!' lines 273 - 235

Our religious heritage is not to sit up and just be quiet. Our religious heritage is to say; 'Amen!' To say: 'Thank you Jesus!' Say: 'Praise God!' And I don't believe that we just conjured this kind of thing up; because it is in the words of God that we make this joyful noise unto the Lord all you live! Hallelujah! There is enough colour in you all, we all ought to be willing to make a joyful noise.

Sometimes, you know, we've gotten so modernistic, that we can hardly say Amen in church anymore. The preacher gets up preaching and seems you want to leave him to do it all. But if you believe in anything that he's saying, if it's true, the Bible says you ought to say 'Amen!'(appendix i, lines 127 – 134)

The shouts of praise are more than echoes to the sermon, but become part of the sermon itself. Because the 'breathing/spirit' of the preacher and the assembly seem to match, there is a sense of 'density'. The preacher is no longer merely a single man up at the pulpit nor is the assembly a voiceless collective acting as a passive audience; achieving some degree of unity, the preacher and the assembly are fused into a larger and more vocal collective performing together.

When this happens, the church seems somewhat smaller and the assembly larger. Some may call this 'church'.

The diverse and manifold repetitions and enumeration should be looked at in this light. Physically, there is only one preacher who is standing by the pulpit. However, as we have seen, an effort is made to negate the discreteness of his individuality. A similar process takes place by adopting these stylistic features. Repetition and enumeration help negate the discreteness of individual words, phrases, themes. In the process, the message conveyed acquires an intensity that can easily overwhelm counter arguments.

As we have seen, the style in which a sermon is delivered is also its message and, therefore, the sermon itself. In the following sections, I shall delve into some of the themes that have been dealt with in this sermon. Before them, however, is another section on 'style'; some may quibble about the subject matter in the following section as merely a question of 'style'. It deals with the use of different persons in verb conjugations.

4. Them and Us:

Compared to the sermons delivered in the two Catholic churches, there are very complex and interrelated negotiations of the distances between the preacher and different groups on one hand and among these different groups on the other. These negotiations are shaped not only by the semantic content of the sermon, but also by some stylistic features that have not been

common in the other two churches. There are two kinds of stylised negotiation. One is based on the selection of different persons or type of pronouns ('them' as opposed to 'us'). The other is based on the interactive character of the sermon. Thus, one might be addressed **through** or **in** a sermon; or again, one might be recruited to preach along with the minister at the pulpit.

There are several groups of people represented and/or presented in the sermon. Among others, they are: 1) Afro-American heterosexual male, 2) Afro-American women, 3) Afro-American slaves, 4) contemporary Afro-Americans in general, 5) Euro-Americans of the past, 6) contemporary Euro-Americans, 7) America as a nation, and 8) gays. Other dimensions of the relation between Afro-American slaves and contemporary Afro-Americans will be probed further in another section.

There are two constants in the use of different persons. Firstly, the Afro-American 'us' differs from time to time; however, where older Afro-American heterosexual males were concerned, the overlap between the first persons singular and plural remained constant. And the sermon has been constructed unwaveringly from this perspective. When the preacher has succeeded in carrying the rest of the assembly with him in his sermon, the distinction between the first person singular and plural becomes even more blurred. Other categories such as Afro-American women would waver between the second and first persons plural. The first person is used through a reference to a mediatory third category (e.g. Afro-Americans in general). More frequently than not, the second person plural is used in this more inclusive sense.

Another group of Afro-Americans whose reference wavers between the first, second and third person plural is that of youth, specifically young men. The use of the second person, however, in reference to them is different from its applications to other groups⁸. The preacher is not addressing them **in** the sermon as he has done with the women. Rather, he is addressing them **through** the sermon. Given the interactive character of Afro-American sermons, this means that the voice of the assembly is directed toward them as well.

This difference between being addressed **in** the sermon as opposed to **through** it is quite marked because the members of the assembly are encouraged to participate in the preaching. The preacher would often urge the assembly to address each other briefly with a particular

⁸ 'And I'd like to say to the children of this generation: "You've got to be willing to listen to wisdom. You've got to be willing to listen to those who have gone before you in order that you will be able to profit from their experiences."' (appendix i, lines 30 – 32)

phrase such as: ‘neighbour, have you heard the good news?’, or ‘we have to praise God.’⁹ There is friendliness as well as mild embarrassment when they do so, but repeat the phrase they do. In so doing, the interactive character of the sermon where the members are both ‘preaching’ to each other as well as preached **at** is underlined.

There is ambivalence about the relation between older Afro-Americans and youth. An admonition to youth is immediately followed by an address to older Afro-Americans **in** the sermon; and it is a discussion of youth among intimates where one might eschew the use of more latinate words¹⁰. As one of the middle-aged Afro-American men, he presents his age group as a bridge between the much older (presumably, those who might be in their eighties and over) and the younger (late teens to early twenties) generations.

The distance between the preacher and these different groups as well as the distance among these groups change during the sermon depending on which person is used to refer to a group of people, whether one is being addressed **through** the sermon or **in** it, or whether one has been recruited to preach the word oneself. One can imagine the effect of a sermon in which a particular person or group within the church are addressed **through** it. Its impact would be more forceful than a sermon delivered in either of the Catholic churches.

In this sermon, there is one group where the distance remains constant throughout. This is the group of pre-Civil War Euro-Americans. They are invariably referred to in the third person plural. This is very different from the use of the third person singular in reference to Moynihan (lines 237 – 240). Contemporary Euro-Americans are sometimes individuated. By contrast, Euro-Americans of the past are referred to as an indistinguishable mass, ‘them’. Semantically, they are presented as an undifferentiated and unfeelingly oppressive presence. Never being included in a larger group that might be referred to in the first person plural, they remain the ultimate other.

⁹ ‘... and I submit to you that we can live above the ordinary by restoring the black family.

‘All of us say: “We need to restore the black family.”

‘We need to restore the black family.’ (this time, the assembly repeats this phrase with the preacher)

(appendix i, lines 161 – 164)

¹⁰ ‘So many times, many of our young people feel that they know it all. You know some of them might have gone further in school than some old folk. However, this does not give you all that you need. Some of the old folk that could not even read their names as they say in ????? have far more mother wit, far more wisdom than many of our younger generation.’ (appendix i, lines 33 – 36)

The relation between contemporary Euro-Americans and Afro-Americans that emerge in this sermon is an uncomfortably ambivalent one. There is some individuation. However, the sermon most frequently resorts to the third person plural and the semantic content indicates a persistent unbridgeable distance¹¹; Euro-Americans are not addressed in the second person. Unlike the Euro-American slave owners of yore, however, contemporary Euro-Americans are referred to in the first person plural that includes Afro-Americans. There is an acknowledgement that they all belong to the same society/nation. Nevertheless, it is a painful 'we' of a house divided.¹²

To recapitulate so far, the distances between the preacher and the different groups of Afro-Americans on one hand and among these groups vary from time to time. Ultimately, they are united under the 'we' of the church and of Christianity. The last point will be elaborated further in Section 6. Most clearly the moral authority of Salem as a faith community is directed toward Afro-American youth. And, ultimately, middle-aged Afro-American males constitute the core of this faith community. By contrast, Euro-Americans of the past are the ultimate other whereas the contemporary ones shift between being the other and a member of the same collective, society.

5. Talking 'History':

Quite a good portion of this sermon concerns the presentation of Afro-American slaves. Slavery is not a regular subject in sermons given by most Afro-American preachers; most of his sermons do not deal with this. At the same time, this is not an uncommon topic; it is one of the major markers in the Afro-American, not to mention many Euro-American, landscape of the mind. And indeed, quite a few of my interviewees volunteered with no prompting whatsoever the information that their forbears –very frequently, three to four generations (if not more)

¹¹ 'How can he (President Bush) for a new world order and don't want you to have your rights?!? They discriminated against us for hundreds of years. And now, they want us to be able to play from the level playing fields. "Give everybody" they say "whatever" they say. It boils down to the lowest common denominator, we'll still be in the bottom.' (appendix i, lines 210 – 213)

¹² 'We know the kind of society we live in. We know that our justice system is unjust' (appendix i, line 178) 'Then President Bush all over the country talking about building a new world order. What we need is not a new world order, what we need is a new United States of America order where men are judged not by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.

'We need a new order here in Champaign-Urbana!' (appendix i, lines 203 – 206)

removed- were slaves; and some had quite detailed information¹³. At the same time what happened since emancipation till the recent past is not mentioned at all; again, this is not uncommon.

Many of the images presented here are those that are commonly associated with American slavery (e.g. big plantations, house slave vs. field slave). From these, the preacher has created a world of idealised Afro-American Christians. Many of the themes that emerge here constitute basic tropes in modern Afro-American Christianity. Thus, this is primarily a definition of modern Afro-American Christian identity. As a matter of fact and differently from the preacher's presentation, there have been a considerable number of free Afro-Americans and several different kinds of slavery; their variations were both regionally and historically based (Berlin 1998). Slaves worked the large plantations in the South as a slave society developed there in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries. Likewise, Afro-American embrace of Christianity on a large scale dates from a similar period.

There are three main themes that emerge; of the three, two are related images of Afro-Americans in the past, and another concerns the kind of God that is worshipped. In the process, we have an idealised version of Afro-American slaves. These images in turn serve as a model for contemporary Afro-Americans. Firstly, Afro-American slaves were united among themselves regardless of their status (e.g. house as opposed to field slaves). Secondly, they were the true Christians; by contrast, the slave owning Euro-Americans were not. American history that is presented is that of the North or of the Union in the form of the Stars and Stripes. However, the historical continuity that is alluded to when referring to continuing racism is one from slave society that has no symbolic representation in the church. By contrast, the continuity between Afro-American past and present referred to in the sermon is represented in church by the Christian flag. Christianity represents good in opposition to the evil of slavery. Thus continuing the Afro-American tradition of worship is not only an identity marker as an Afro-American, but also as a true Christian. Modernity which negates Afro-American Christian worship belongs to society proper and denies one's dual identity as an Afro-American and a Christian.

¹³ One told me that her ancestors were slaves in the North-East, another told me that he was related to a slave who became a foreman.

This ambivalence toward society is a frequently found theme in Sunday services at Salem, especially in its sermons. This is partly a reflection of current 'race' relations. This ambivalence raises questions concerning the extent to which Afro-American Christians feel comfortable relying on other institutions than the religious one in order to live in society.

This ambivalence is also both a result and reflection of the kind of God who is worshipped in Salem. As with many Afro-American Christians, Salem worships a God who is, among other things, the source of their liberation and salvation. In common with other Christian denominations, ultimate salvation only comes after death or 'home-going'. However, more clearly than in Catholicism, for example, God is also seen as a source of salvation on earth¹⁴. For Afro-Americans, the concrete proof of this is their liberation from slavery. And they were liberated because they were true Christians. Implicit in this emphasis on divine intervention is the rejection of traditional Euro-American interpretation of history where emancipation resulted primarily from the efforts of Euro-Americans in the North. The image of God as the deliverer from harsh oppression has frequently been couched in Biblical terms¹⁵; that God is indeed the liberator is attested by the freeing of Jews from bondage in Egypt. Similar phrases are used to describe the end of slavery.

For them, it is their relation with God that has been the source of their salvation; governments and other socio-economic institutions of society are not really relevant. God is presented as their shield, mediator, and patron in their relation to society. He is more demanding of the faithful. A society where true believers have been liberated from slavery by God is not a totally bad society; but it is not a totally Christian society either. It is a society where the good/Christian is fighting evil/racism. Socio-economic success is not bad, but a positive blessing; at the least, it is seen as a token of greater justice¹⁶. At the same time, not being socio-economically successful is not taken as a lack of blessing because society is not seen to be benign. However, relying on being directly connected to the different socio-economic

¹⁴ 'So, my friends, I want to remind you today as I go to my seat: all of the government programs will not save our race. All the welfare that you can ever receive will not save you. All the social and political action programs will not suffice. We need to turn to the Lord to get us out of the dilemma that we find ourselves in. And only those who truly love God and find Jesus can find help in the times of need.' (appendix i, lines 261 – 266)

¹⁵ 'We believed in God, and lo! God delivered us, the Lord brought us out!' (appendix i, lines 185 – 186)

¹⁶ I have heard speakers in many Afro-American gatherings, both religious and secular, point out the socio-economic strides Afro-American have made over the years since the Civil Rights movement. For example, a

institutions as such is considered wrong. Thus the youth who rely on their better education alone are frowned upon; so too are those who have moved too close to society and, as a result, away from their faith by becoming 'modernistic'.

To recapitulate, if these groups are placed in the symbolic space of the old church, one might find the following distribution. The Afro-American slaves will be closest to the Christian flag in the altar area. Contemporary Afro-Americans to some extent overlap with the former and are found on the left side of the altar area. There is also an overlap between them and contemporary Euro-Americans who will be placed on the right next to the American flag. As to slave-owning Euro-Americans, they are beyond the pale.

In this context, it is worth remembering that the theme of the sermon is 'living above the ordinary'. The theme has a double meaning. The 'ordinary' refers to Euro-Americans. And the theme is partly an echo of an oft stated sentiment among Afro-Americans that for an Afro-American to succeed in American society, s/he has to work twice as hard as an Euro-American. Here, it also means a higher level of Christian practice. If we apply the high-low spatial contrast, the Afro-American slaves would occupy the highest position as those who kept their faith in great adversity. Contemporary Afro-Americans are urged to aim for a higher ground and be true to their heritage. Contemporary Euro-Americans would occupy the lower floor. As to Euro-American slave owners, they would be placed outside of the steep stairs leading into the church.

In the following section I shall discuss where other minority groups might be placed. And in the process, I shall elaborate on the symbolic spatial location of different groups when the left-right and high-low binaries are combined.

6. 'Them' and 'Us', continued:

As a member of a minority myself, I have been interested in the presentation of minorities. Generally, neither of the two Catholic churches mentioned minorities, including Afro-Americans, in their sermons. It is not surprising that Salem, a church for a particular minority group, would touch upon minority issues nor that these issues dealt mostly with Afro-Americans. Two other minority groups were occasionally mentioned; lately, though, I have not

preacher at a Baptist conference that was held in a large hotel had pointed out that there were times when the only way Afro-Americans could be in that kind of hotel was as a member of the service staff.

heard either of them being mentioned. They were Jews and gays. Jews were mentioned even less frequently than gays; and they have not been mentioned in this sermon. Gays have been.

Some sections of American Christendom have been vocally critical of gays and lesbians. In this sense, the Afro-American ministers I heard criticising gays were not exceptional. Within the context of my research, however, it was only Afro-American ministers as opposed to Catholic priests who loudly voiced critical views. The only priest who did so, preached against it by enumerating homosexuality among a concatenation of sins. By contrast, Afro-American ministers preached specifically against homosexuality. As a minority member criticising another minority group, however, the sermon given by this preacher (like those given by other Afro-American ministers) represent one kind of Afro-American perspective to minority issues. More specifically, this sermon sheds some light on the different bases for discrimination in American society.

In this sermon there are twin and contradictory processes of identification with and dissociation from gays. The preacher is seen actively assuming their voice, as if he is repeating what some gays were saying verbatim¹⁷. His reference to gays was accompanied by gestures stereotypically associated with gays (e.g. relaxed rounded shoulders, slightly raised lower arms with dangling limp hands). This is different, for example, from the manner in which he refers to Euro-Americans. There are more references to Euro-Americans, both contemporary and of the past. Nevertheless, he never assumes their voice as such; their voice is echoed in paraphrases and summaries, but not as spoken words. Actually, the only other group where the preacher has tried to recreate what might be their spoken voice is that of Afro-American slaves. In the latter case, there is complete identification; the preacher continues in their voice for a while. By contrast, with gays, there is an abrupt dissociation; he suddenly breaks away from assuming their voice to inject recognisably his own voice¹⁸.

Greenberg, for example, has sought to explain homophobia among Christian fundamentalists as a class-related phenomenon; it is explained as a part of their quest for respectability (1988: 467 – 468). The preacher's contradictory pairing of identification with and

¹⁷ 'Even gays want gay rights: "We want to be able to do everything, you know, file our income tax, marry a male wife"... (appendix i, lines 232 - 234)

¹⁸ "...marry a male wife" get some of these so-called preachers to marry them.' (appendix i, lines 234 – 235)

dissociation from gays on one hand and the presentation of Euro-Americans on the other indicate that Greenberg's explanation may not be adequate when applied to Afro-Americans.

The manner in which the preacher treats gays reflect the two different ways in which, according to Orlando Patterson, people can be marginalised or, worse, visited with social death. And the following analyses have been developed from his ideas that I have discussed in Chapter IV of Part I (Amba –Section 3-2b). Patterson identifies two types of social death based on the differently perceived causalities: 'intrusiveness' and 'extrusiveness' (Patterson 1982: 38 –45). The intrusive kind of social death results from the perception that the very circumstances of one's birth (e.g. one's parents, cultural affiliation, different place of habitat from the majority, innate quality or, more correctly, deficiency) makes one an alien in that society. By contrast, social death through extrusion is visited on otherwise full members of society who are perceived to have, for one reason or another, alienated themselves permanently from it (e.g. like fallen angels, committing a crime, breaching a socio-religious taboo, being afflicted with normatively unacceptable illness etc.).

The preacher may acknowledge that gays are discriminated against as much as Afro-Americans. If their experiences of discrimination are similar, the reasons for this are very different. To the extent that Afro-Americans still suffer some degree of social death (and it has been much attenuated from the days of slavery so that 'marginalisation' may be a more appropriate term), it is the result of their perceived intrusiveness; by contrast, genetic arguments notwithstanding, gays tend to be classified as extrusive. This extrusiveness is defined in terms of the truly Christian 'us' and the not-so-Christian 'them'. Extrusiveness is perceived to imply volition. Thus gays are also perceived to have the opportunity for social resurrection; that gays could 'straighten' up what had 'gotten wrong' if only they turned to God (appendix i, lines 229-231).

In the preceding two sections we have examined left-right and high-low binaries as two separate sets. In the following diagram, I have combined them to see what kind of overall symbolic spatial arrangement might emerge. If the high-low and left-right contrasts can each be presented as a straight line, one vertical and the other horizontal, combining the two produces something akin to a diametrical line. Closest to the left side of the altar (i.e. near the Christian flag) and at its highest point are placed the Afro-American slaves. Still primarily based in the

CHAPTER V

'PREACHING' IN SALEM

1. Introduction:

"We especially want to be on fire for Jesus; we don't want to be like a lukewarm church."
(a sermon given at Woman's day, 25 March 1990, by the wife of the retired pastor)

In Salem, sermons are delivered as a part of an interactive process between the preacher and the assembly. Many of the more successful sermons are marked by a greater interaction between the two. As a result, there is a good deal of improvisation in the delivery of a sermon. In addition, there is an expectation cum understanding that one preaches as one is moved by the Spirit. A preacher may be inspired by the Spirit while he is meditating on his sermon prior to the service; he is also expected to be inspired when he is actually preaching. Consequently, a sermon that sounds well prepared and polished and which, incidentally, reads well is shunned. Passion is sought instead and is part of the message in a sermon. A seemingly reckless display of emotions is valued; as a corollary, many linguistic devices that ensure a smooth delivery are eschewed. Being grammatically correct, maintaining an even pitch and pace in delivery, for example, are ignored. More so than in either St Mary or St Patrick's, a sermon is an oral performance. It is what church members call '**preaching**'; some utter this word with their voice dropped from their normal pitch and deeper as if it has boomed out of their stomach rather than rang from the usual twang of their vocal chords. Behind the dropped voice is a distinction between two kinds of 'preaching' that Zora Neale Hurston has explained thus:

The real singing Negro derides the negro who adopts the white man's religious ways ... They say of that type of preacher, 'Why he don't preach at all. He just lectures.' And the way they say the word 'lecture' make it sound like horse-stealing (Hurston 1981: 106 – 107).

It is a sentiment that has been expressed by, among other Afro-Americans, Booker T. Washington a decidedly secular leader who had earlier trained to become a minister:

'When one feels from the bottom of his feet to the top of his head, that he has something to say that is going to help some individual or some cause, then let him say it; and in delivering his message I do not believe that many of the artificial rules of elocution can under the circumstances, help him very much. Although there are certain things, such as pauses, breathing, and pitch of voice, that are very important, none of these can take the place of **soul** (emphasis in the original) in an address. When I have an address to deliver, I like to forget all about the rules for the proper use of the English language, and all about rhetoric and that sort of thing, and I like to make the audience forget all about these things too (Washington 1986: 244).

I based the choice of sermon for analysis on its reception among the assembly. More conspicuously than other sermons during this period, this sermon had elicited diversely enthusiastic response from many in the Sunday assembly. It was delivered in February, which has been officially designated as 'Black History Month'. The pastor customarily talks about issues related to Afro-Americans during this month. As Afro-Americans, they share many deeply felt experiences among themselves which often touch on race relations. However, here too there are differences, based both on personality and personal experiences. Although they were a minority, I understand that some members felt rather uncomfortable by the way some issues were handled in this sermon. However, differences of opinion are not expressed during the service –only approval; complaints may occasionally be taken up at a later date with the preacher.

Quite a few issues have been raised in this sermon. The following are some of them: the presentation of slavery, relations between Afro-Americans and Euro-Americans, the question of other minorities, especially gays, the parallel between Biblical topics and current issues. Issues concerning race relations and other minorities will be dealt with in the section dealing with the use of different persons; because the two issues are differently presented, I shall tackle them in two sections. Issues related to slavery and the parallel between Biblical topics and current issues will be dealt with together. Another section will deal with the binary structure of this sermon.

Before starting on issues specifically raised by the sermon, I shall deal with the context in which a sermon is delivered in Salem. In the process, I shall also touch upon some of the ways a sermon is delivered.

2 'Preaching' in Salem:

The main purpose of a sermon regardless of denomination is to deliver a message that serves as food for thought and, hopefully, enhance the spirituality of the listener. Among Christians, this largely means interpreting life as it is lived now in the light of the Scripture. It is one part of the service where the preacher seeks to reach out directly to the assembly in church. Within this overall commonality, there are considerable differences between the character of the sermon delivered by a Catholic priest and a Baptist minister.

In comparison to Catholic priests, a Baptist minister enjoys greater interpretative autonomy; the Baptists refer to the ministry as a 'calling'. This reflects the greater individual authority he enjoys as a minister, especially as a pastor. By contrast, a good deal of authority that a Catholic priest enjoys is institutional in character, it is through his membership in a collective, the clergy; he reflects the collective authority of the Church. Thus, his authority is also more stable than that of an individual Baptist minister. Preaching in Salem is implicitly but more markedly an assertion of authority by the pastor. This implicit negotiation over pastoral authority is premised on the general expectation that the pastor **preaches** the message. Consequently, there can be a 'Catch-22' situation. This situation is not unknown in Catholic churches, but it is less marked. On one hand, a minister who **preaches** successfully can better assert his authority in church. On the other hand, a minister who enjoys great authority in church is seen as having **preached** or as going to **preach** well. This inherent tension can at times be exacerbating; but it can also render the delivery of the sermon a dynamic process.

There are two inter-twined processes that take place. One relies on a rather formulaic procedure. Another is based on on-the-spot interaction between the preacher and the assembly.

Like the Catholics, a sermon in Salem starts with the reading of a passage from the Bible. However, the manner in which this is conducted clearly asserts the primacy of the preacher: he alone has chosen the reading. The preacher announces his selection at the beginning of the sermon. Then the assembly spends some time locating the passage in their Bible. One hears his voice repeatedly identifying the location of the passage above the rustling sound of turning pages. Then led by the preacher whose voice rings above the muffled reading voices of the rest, the assembly reads the passage together. Unlike the other two readings during service, the assembly remains seated when reading at the beginning of the sermon: thus our voice is

projected downward instead of toward the altar area. Further, instead of reading from the bulletin where the passages have been printed in easily legible size, we all read from our own or from Bibles found in the pews; in either case, the printing is much smaller than in the bulletin. All these make the reading an individual effort rather than a collective one where all our voices are raised in unison. After the reading, the preacher frequently repeats a particular phrase several times; this phrase becomes the main 'theme' of the sermon.

Salem still uses the King James Version of the Bible. This is not a universal practice even among other National Baptist churches. To the extent that the divine is identified with the words of the Bible, the rather archaic English of the King James Version puts a distance between the divine and the human. The acceptance of such a distance is consonant with the image of the divine that is projected in Salem. God is presented as a powerful protective figure. It is also the case that such a distance implicitly asserts the interpretative authority of the preacher. The very act of preaching means straddling this distance.

Sermons delivered in Salem have the widest range of variation in registers; by contrast, the sermons delivered in the two Catholic churches tended to maintain the same register or only have two (when the preacher inserted a conversation spoken as it was in the middle of the sermon). It is the only oral act during Sunday service that encompasses such a wide range of different registers; prayers, though extemporised, tend to be delivered in one register. The sermon I have analysed in this chapter is particularly rich in its variety of different registers. On one hand, we have this almost archaic English of the King James Version; aside from quoting from the Bible as he does here, the preacher sometimes uses this form in simple phrases (e.g. 'thou hath', 'thou believeth', 'He knoweth' etc.). On the other hand, he also uses very colloquial terms (e.g. 'I ain't come here to put all the jokes!' -appendix i, line 137). At one point the sermon is delivered in a didactic tone where the erudition of the preacher is displayed¹ At another point he adopts a more conversational tone and addresses the assembly directly². In

¹ 'And as we look today in the Book of Proverbs –the Proverbs is divine wisdom applied to earthly conditions of the people of God. The Hebrew term for proverb means a comparison. And it came to be used in an age, in any age as moralistic pronouncement.' (appendix i, lines 41 – 43)

² 'Paul said –(aside to the women in the assembly) women, don't get mad at me! Go on with Paul!-: "wives submit themselves unto your own husband as unto the Lord. The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church. He is the saviour of the body therefore as the Church is subject to Christ, so let wives be unto their own husband in everything."

Is that the word? I didn't write it!' (appendix i, lines 248 – 252)

fact, there are so many different registers that are mixed together that it is difficult to keep track of them. --

The mixed registers give a rich texture to the sermon. It also demonstrates the role of the preacher and therefore of the pastor as the primary mediator. Apart from mediating between the sacred and the secular, he also mediates both among the assembly who come from diverse walks of life as well as among the different facets of life that one might lead.

The contrast between the contemporarily colloquial and the more archaically literary can be traced by reading the transcript of the sermon. Unfortunately, this is not the case with the pace and pitch of the sermon. This sermon, like other sermons delivered by Baptist preachers both at Salem and in other churches, was not delivered at a uniform pace or pitch. Some phrases were carefully enunciated with deliberate slowness, while others were hurled from the pulpit at a fever pitch (so much so that repeated listening of the taped sermon notwithstanding, there are still a few portions that are unintelligible). A whisper or a soothing voice could become a booming incantation, a shout or even break into a song (there is no singing in this particular sermon). This variation in pace and pitch could occur in the same register.

All these stylistic features not to mention the sermon itself are shaped within the context of the interaction between the preacher and the assembly. If a sermon is successful, it elicits more responses from the assembly. The sermon I have analysed was one such. The pastor had captured the attention of the assembly. Not only were there copious repetition of the usual 'Amen!' but also the less frequently heard 'That's right!', 'Yes!'. These increased in frequency as the preacher carried on with his sermon; so much so that by its last quarter every few words he uttered were accompanied with shouts of praise and muffled but audible assents. There were much merriment and laughter and, at times, some members commenting happily on what the pastor had just said or done. He would sometimes match the jokes he cracked with gestures. For example, when he jokingly indicated that quoting St Paul might be displeasing to women, he would duck lower than the pulpit ostentatiously furtively several times as if he was avoiding sling shots.

There are times when the assembly has already become warmly receptive to the sermon before the preacher comes to the pulpit. If there has been a raised level of 'feeling happy' resulting from the singing of the choir and/or somebody testifying, a preacher might be greeted

by shouts of 'Amen!' and 'Hallelujah!' from the beginning. This was the case with this sermon. A woman had testified ardently during the sermon, and people 'felt happy' while the choir sang. It then becomes the preacher's task to sustain if not necessarily increase the momentum.

Sometimes, the assembly may be predisposed to being receptive to a particular preacher. Regardless of whether or not the assembly had been 'feeling happy' before, some preachers are greeted by shouts of praise the moment they come to the pulpit. Similar to behaviours related to 'feeling happy' when a particular choir member starts singing, for example, this is partly a gesture of support for the preacher. This happened on the rare occasion when the retired pastor preached. No doubt, there was an element of openly expressed support for him; since the current pastor and he were known to get along well, it was easy to be supportive. He had been a much loved and respected figure in the community; I suspect, there was an expectation that he would deliver a worthy sermon on one hand, and, on the other, a feeling that his frailty necessitated more support.

Whatever its reason, the conspicuously warm reception of the preacher from the very beginning boosts his interpretative authority and, to some extent, his more general authority. Conversely if there is any dispute over the exercise of his authority in other domains, the dispute might be expressed during service. Generally, it is very rare that someone in the assembly will express discontent in any form during the service. A church member who was known to have some differences with the pastor would sit through the service but would be seen leaving the church just before the pastor began his sermon; this continued for some while.

There clearly is some link between the degree to which interpretative authority is accorded to a preacher in the interaction between him and the assembly on one hand and the extent to which he enjoys authority more generally as a pastor. However, the link is not a straightforward one. Firstly, although attenuated somewhat by their prior opinion of the preacher, the assembly seeks to appreciate a sermon for its intrinsic merit. Secondly, demonstrating one's ability as a preacher and therefore establishing one's interpretative authority does not automatically nor entirely translate into a more general authority. There seems to be twin tendencies to differentiate and to integrate roles; of the two, the former is perhaps more emphasised on a regular basis.

Bearing these points in mind, I shall be examining this interaction between the preacher and the assembly in the context of certain stylistic features that are found in Afro-American sermons.

3. 'Liquefied Words' and Density:

Apart from the wide range of different registers, pitch and pace, there are other stylistic features that are found in Afro-American sermons. These can foster what I have referred to as 'density' in Chapter IV, section 2. That is, the density of the collective that results from 'feeling happy' is replicated stylistically.

There are four stylistic features found in many sermons I heard delivered by Afro-American preachers. These were: 1) repetition, 2) what Zora Neale Hurston has referred to as a 'sort of liquefying of words' (1981: 81 – 83), 3) an enumeration of nouns, and 4) an enumeration of facts.

There are quite a few different types of repetition. The simplest one consists of repeating the same word continuously³. Another is what Hurston has described as the double descriptive (1981: 51 – 53). This consists of a set of synonyms⁴, of same phrases, or of paraphrases⁴. A third form consists of a repetition of similar themes⁵. There is an affinity between this kind of repetition and enumeration of nouns and facts⁶. These stylistic features are also very different from the classic pattern of intellectual argument in the European tradition; in the latter, the presentation of a case depends on an orderly logical argument where A leads to B, thence to C, for example, and redundancy is frowned upon. Discourse in the European tradition relies on the exposition of an argument based on the pointing out of facts only to the extent that they are necessary; it is a style that might be more closely associated with written texts. By contrast,

³ 'white male, white male, white male.... black, black, black, black, black, black, black male' lines 173 - 74

⁴ 'they would pass the information along saying: "There will be a meeting tonight, a meeting tonight, a meeting on the old camp ground." This would serve notice on them that a meeting was going to be held on that night.' (appendix i, lines 115 – 17)

'and the house staff were picked from the lighter skinned slaves called mulattos; and these were slaves fathered by white men.' (appendix i, lines 102 – 103)

⁵ 'They were sold from the slave markets like animals from auction blocks. Men were sold away from wives and children, women were separated from their husbands and from their children, sisters and brothers were separated never to see each other again.' (appendix i, lines 97 – 99)

⁶ 'And though the theme running throughout the Book of Proverbs is wisdom for living, the specific teachings include instructions on folly, on sin, on goodness, on wealth, poverty, on the use of the tongue, pride, humility, justice, vengeance, strife, gluttony, love, lust laziness, friends, the family, life and death.' (appendix i, lines 47 – 50)

Afro-American sermons are rooted in the oral tradition. It is also related to the creation of density among the audience; that is, they depend on and foster certain kind of interaction among the assembly.

The creation of density is perhaps best seen in what Hurston has referred to as a 'sort of liquefying of words' which she describes thus:

'The well known 'ha!' of the Negro preacher is a breathing device. It is the tail end of the expulsion just before inhalation. Instead of permitting the breath to drain out, when the wind gets too low for words, the remnant is expelled violently. Example: (inhalation) 'And, oh!'; (full breath) 'my Father and my wonder-working God'; (explosive exhalation) 'ha!' (Hurston 1981: 82)

In the sermon that I have analysed, this occurs at its end from about lines 264 to 282. With faster pace and raised pitch, the preacher marks his pauses with a thumping of the pulpit and/or with what I have transcribed as 'uh-hunhh!'⁷ This may be a breathing device as Hurston has pointed out; if it is, it is very rhythmic. More remarkably, each thumping 'uhhunh!' is marked by shouts of 'Amen!' from the assembly.

Listening to this section of the sermon in the quiet of my study room, I was strongly reminded of traditional mochi-tsuki in Japan (pounding rice to make 'cake' in a large mortar bowl), a similar process to the making of fu-fu (West African dish: pounded yam, cassava or plantain). In mochi-tsuki, one person pounds a mass of steamed rice with a large pestle; after the rice coheres somewhat into one mass another person turns it over in the mortar bowl from time to time. Turning over this mass is done with an almost darting motion so that it does not disturb the rhythmic pounding. The taste (i.e. texture) of the rice cake depends on how well the two can pace each other, or, as we say in Japanese, on how well they can match their breathing/spirit.

A similar relation seems to be implied in the call-and-response interaction between the preacher and the assembly/audience. A 'successful' sermon is made through a well matched pacing of both the preacher and the assembly; this interaction becomes increasingly intense as the minister continued in his sermon. Shouts of praise bolster the preacher. This is somewhat similar to what Hurston referred to as 'bearing him up' (1981:103 – 104). Likewise these shouts of praise during the sermon especially when words start to 'liquefy' and become chant like are

part of the sermon and add texture to it. It would also seem that their timing is important. Something akin to this happens in Kabuki: I understand that a definition of a good Kabuki audience is that they know when to shout words of support during the performance.

The most adept practitioners of this call-and-response interaction during the sermon are the ministers themselves. When one of their peers is preaching, other ministers would stand nearby and shout praise, or a brief word (e.g. 'Yes sir!', 'Yeah!') with accompanying gestures; they raise their arms, tap the shoulder of the preacher, or stomp their feet. Another adept practitioner is the music director; he would punch a few keys of the organ like a crescendo regularly. In both instances, their 'response' is so dovetailed to the 'call' that there is no pause. Both the ministers and especially the musician tend to do this as the preacher approaches the end of his sermon. Whether or not the call-and-response is executed as expertly, something more powerful takes place than the word 'liquefy' would imply. Afro-American services may have the fluid quality of liquid. However, the quality of this 'liquid' is not limpid and stream like; even if it starts off in a trickle, it quickly becomes fierce and torrential. For example, when the retired pastor of Salem came to the pulpit, his voice sounded frail and old as indeed he was, being close to ninety and not in robust health. As his preaching picked pace, his bent back straightened up and his voice became a roar that continued to the end. Had Hurston been writing in the post-nuclear age, she might have used the word 'melt down' rather than 'liquefy'.

Many Afro-American preachers are well aware of the need for the assembly to participate in the sermon. I have heard a preacher turn to the assembly and ask in a rather thunderous voice: 'And who is with me!', 'Are you with me?!?!'. 'Do you hear me!' The pastor at Salem sometimes has nudged a quiet assembly by saying: 'Amen walls!', 'Amen windows!' etc. In fact, even in this sermon, he is heard nudging the assembly:

Our religious heritage is not to sit up and just be quiet. Our religious heritage is to say; 'Amen!' To say: 'Thank you Jesus!' Say: 'Praise God!' And I don't believe that we just conjured this kind of thing up; because it is in the words of God that we make this joyful noise unto the Lord all you live! Hallelujah! There is enough colour in you all, we all ought to be willing to make a joyful noise.

⁷ 'The moment that we fail to acknowledge the Lord we'll never get anywhere, uh-hunh! But I'm always recognising God, uh-hunh! When things don't go well with me, uh-hunh. I stagger into God's words, uh-hunh!' lines 273 - 235

Sometimes, you know, we've gotten so modernistic, that we can hardly say Amen in church anymore. The preacher gets up preaching and seems you want to leave him to do it all. But if you believe in anything that he's saying, if it's true, the Bible says you ought to say 'Amen!' (appendix i, lines 127 – 134)

The shouts of praise are more than echoes to the sermon, but become part of the sermon itself. Because the 'breathing/spirit' of the preacher and the assembly seem to match, there is a sense of 'density'. The preacher is no longer merely a single man up at the pulpit nor is the assembly a voiceless collective acting as a passive audience; achieving some degree of unity, the preacher and the assembly are fused into a larger and more vocal collective performing together. When this happens, the church seems somewhat smaller and the assembly larger. Some may call this 'church'.

The diverse and manifold repetitions and enumeration should be looked at in this light. Physically, there is only one preacher who is standing by the pulpit. However, as we have seen, an effort is made to negate the discreteness of his individuality. A similar process takes place by adopting these stylistic features. Repetition and enumeration help negate the discreteness of individual words, phrases, themes. In the process, the message conveyed acquires an intensity that can easily overwhelm counter arguments.

As we have seen, the style in which a sermon is delivered is also its message and, therefore, the sermon itself. In the following sections, I shall delve into some of the themes that have been dealt with in this sermon. Before them, however, is another section on 'style': some may quibble about the subject matter in the following section as merely a question of 'style'. It deals with the use of different persons in verb conjugations.

4. Them and Us:

Compared to the sermons delivered in the two Catholic churches, there are very complex and interrelated negotiations of the distances between the preacher and different groups on one hand and among these different groups on the other. These negotiations are shaped not only by the semantic content of the sermon, but also by some stylistic features that have not been common in the other two churches. There are two kinds of stylised negotiation. One is based on the selection of different persons or type of pronouns ('them' as opposed to 'us'). The other is

based on the interactive character of the sermon. Thus, one might be addressed **through** or **in** a sermon; or ~~again~~, one might be recruited to preach along with the minister at the pulpit.

There are several groups of people represented and/or presented in the sermon. Among others, they are: 1) Afro-American heterosexual male, 2) Afro-American women, 3) Afro-American slaves, 4) contemporary Afro-Americans in general, 5) Euro-Americans of the past, 6) contemporary Euro-Americans, 7) America as a nation, and 8) gays. Other dimensions of the relation between Afro-American slaves and contemporary Afro-Americans will be probed further in another section.

There are two constants in the use of different persons. Firstly, the Afro-American 'us' differs from time to time; however, where older Afro-American heterosexual males were concerned, the overlap between the first persons singular and plural remained constant. And the sermon has been constructed unwaveringly from this perspective. When the preacher has succeeded in carrying the rest of the assembly with him in his sermon, the distinction between the first person singular and plural becomes even more blurred. Other categories such as Afro-American women would waver between the second and first persons plural. The first person is used through a reference to a mediatory third category (e.g. Afro-Americans in general). More frequently than not, the second person plural is used in this more inclusive sense.

Another group of Afro-Americans whose reference wavers between the first, second and third person plural is that of youth, specifically young men. The use of the second person, however, in reference to them is different from its applications to other groups⁸. The preacher is not addressing them **in** the sermon as he has done with the women. Rather, he is addressing them **through** the sermon. Given the interactive character of Afro-American sermons, this means that the voice of the assembly is directed toward them as well.

This difference between being addressed **in** the sermon as opposed to **through** it is quite marked because the members of the assembly are encouraged to participate in the preaching. The preacher would often urge the assembly to address each other briefly with a particular phrase such as: 'neighbour, have you heard the good news?', or 'we have to praise God.'⁹ There

⁸ 'And I'd like to say to the children of this generation: "You've got to be willing to listen to wisdom. You've got to be willing to listen to those who have gone before you in order that you will be able to profit from their experiences."' (appendix i, lines 30 – 32)

⁹ '... and I submit to you that we can live above the ordinary by restoring the black family.
'All of us say: "We need to restore the black family."

is friendliness as well as mild embarrassment when they do so. but repeat the phrase they do. In so doing, the interactive character of the sermon where the members are both 'preaching' to each other as well as preached at is underlined.

There is ambivalence about the relation between older Afro-Americans and youth. An admonition to youth is immediately followed by an address to older Afro-Americans in the sermon; and it is a discussion of youth among intimates where one might eschew the use of more latinate words¹⁰. As one of the middle-aged Afro-American men, he presents his age group as a bridge between the much older (presumably, those who might be in their eighties and over) and the younger (late teens to early twenties) generations.

The distance between the preacher and these different groups as well as the distance among these groups change during the sermon depending on which person is used to refer to a group of people, whether one is being addressed **through** the sermon or **in** it, or whether one has been recruited to preach the word oneself. One can imagine the effect of a sermon in which a particular person or group within the church are addressed **through** it. Its impact would be more forceful than a sermon delivered in either of the Catholic churches.

In this sermon, there is one group where the distance remains constant throughout. This is the group of pre-Civil War Euro-Americans. They are invariably referred to in the third person plural. This is very different from the use of the third person singular in reference to Moynihan (lines 237 – 240). Contemporary Euro-Americans are sometimes individuated. By contrast, Euro-Americans of the past are referred to as an indistinguishable mass, 'them'. Semantically, they are presented as an undifferentiated and unfeelingly oppressive presence. Never being included in a larger group that might be referred to in the first person plural, they remain the ultimate other.

The relation between contemporary Euro-Americans and Afro-Americans that emerge in this sermon is an uncomfortably ambivalent one. There is some individuation. However, the sermon most frequently resorts to the third person plural and the semantic content indicates a

'We need to restore the black family.' (this time, the assembly repeats this phrase with the preacher) (appendix i, lines 161 –164)

¹⁰ 'So many times, many of our young people feel that they know it all. You know some of them might have gone further in school than some old folk. However, this does not give you all that you need. Some of the old folk that could not even read their names as they say in ??? have far more mother wit, far more wisdom than many of our younger generation.' (appendix i, lines 33 – 36)

persistent unbridgeable distance¹¹: Euro-Americans are not addressed in the second person. Unlike the Euro-American slave owners of yore, however, contemporary Euro-Americans are referred to in the first person plural that includes Afro-Americans. There is an acknowledgement that they all belong to the same society/nation. Nevertheless, it is a painful 'we' of a house divided.¹²

To recapitulate so far, the distances between the preacher and the different groups of Afro-Americans on one hand and among these groups vary from time to time. Ultimately, they are united under the 'we' of the church and of Christianity. The last point will be elaborated further in Section 6. Most clearly the moral authority of Salem as a faith community is directed toward Afro-American youth. And, ultimately, middle-aged Afro-American males constitute the core of this faith community. By contrast, Euro-Americans of the past are the ultimate other whereas the contemporary ones shift between being the other and a member of the same collective, society.

5. Talking 'History':

Quite a good portion of this sermon concerns the presentation of Afro-American slaves. Slavery is not a regular subject in sermons given by most Afro-American preachers; most of his sermons do not deal with this. At the same time, this is not an uncommon topic; it is one of the major markers in the Afro-American, not to mention many Euro-American, landscape of the mind. And indeed, quite a few of my interviewees volunteered with no prompting whatsoever the information that their forbears –very frequently, three to four generations (if not more) removed- were slaves; and some had quite detailed information¹³. At the same time what

¹¹ 'How can he (President Bush) for a new world order and don't want you to have your rights?!? They discriminated against us for hundreds of years. And now, they want us to be able to play from the level playing fields. "Give everybody" they say "whatever" they say. It boils down to the lowest common denominator. we'll still be in the bottom.' (appendix i, lines 210 – 213)

¹² 'We know the kind of society we live in. We know that our justice system is unjust' (appendix i, line 178) 'Then President Bush all over the country talking about building a new world order. What we need is not a new world order. what we need is a new United States of America order where men are judged not by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.

'We need a new order here in Champaign-Urbana!' (appendix i, lines 203 – 206)

¹³ One told me that her ancestors were slaves in the North-East, another told me that he was related to a slave who became a foreman.

happened since emancipation till the recent past is not mentioned at all; again, this is not uncommon.

Many of the images presented here are those that are commonly associated with American slavery (e.g. big plantations, house slave vs. field slave). From these, the preacher has created a world of idealised Afro-American Christians. Many of the themes that emerge here constitute basic tropes in modern Afro-American Christianity. Thus, this is primarily a definition of modern Afro-American Christian identity. As a matter of fact and differently from the preacher's presentation, there have been a considerable number of free Afro-Americans and several different kinds of slavery; their variations were both regionally and historically based (Berlin 1998). Slaves worked the large plantations in the South as a slave society developed there in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries. Likewise, Afro-American embrace of Christianity on a large scale dates from a similar period.

There are three main themes that emerge; of the three, two are related images of Afro-Americans in the past, and another concerns the kind of God that is worshipped. In the process, we have an idealised version of Afro-American slaves. These images in turn serve as a model for contemporary Afro-Americans. Firstly, Afro-American slaves were united among themselves regardless of their status (e.g. house as opposed to field slaves). Secondly, they were the true Christians; by contrast, the slave owning Euro-Americans were not. American history that is presented is that of the North or of the Union in the form of the Stars and Stripes. However, the historical continuity that is alluded to when referring to continuing racism is one from slave society that has no symbolic representation in the church. By contrast, the continuity between Afro-American past and present referred to in the sermon is represented in church by the Christian flag. Christianity represents good in opposition to the evil of slavery. Thus continuing the Afro-American tradition of worship is not only an identity marker as an Afro-American, but also as a true Christian. Modernity which negates Afro-American Christian worship belongs to society proper and denies one's dual identity as an Afro-American and a Christian.

This ambivalence toward society is a frequently found theme in Sunday services at Salem, especially in its sermons. This is partly a reflection of current 'race' relations. This

ambivalence raises questions concerning the extent to which Afro-American Christians feel comfortable relying on other institutions than the religious one in order to live in society.

This ambivalence is also both a result and reflection of the kind of God who is worshipped in Salem. As with many Afro-American Christians, Salem worships a God who is, among other things, the source of their liberation and salvation. In common with other Christian denominations, ultimate salvation only comes after death or 'home-going'. However, more clearly than in Catholicism, for example, God is also seen as a source of salvation on earth¹⁴. For Afro-Americans, the concrete proof of this is their liberation from slavery. And they were liberated because they were true Christians. Implicit in this emphasis on divine intervention is the rejection of traditional Euro-American interpretation of history where emancipation resulted primarily from the efforts of Euro-Americans in the North. The image of God as the deliverer from harsh oppression has frequently been couched in Biblical terms¹⁵; that God is indeed the liberator is attested by the freeing of Jews from bondage in Egypt. Similar phrases are used to describe the end of slavery.

For them, it is their relation with God that has been the source of their salvation; governments and other socio-economic institutions of society are not really relevant. God is presented as their shield, mediator, and patron in their relation to society. He is more demanding of the faithful. A society where true believers have been liberated from slavery by God is not a totally bad society; but it is not a totally Christian society either. It is a society where the good/Christian is fighting evil/racism. Socio-economic success is not bad, but a positive blessing; at the least, it is seen as a token of greater justice¹⁶. At the same time, not being socio-economically successful is not taken as a lack of blessing because society is not seen to be benign. However, relying on being directly connected to the different socio-economic institutions as such is considered wrong. Thus the youth who rely on their better education

¹⁴ 'So, my friends, I want to remind you today as I go to my seat: all of the government programs will not save our race. All the welfare that you can ever receive will not save you. All the social and political action programs will not suffice. We need to turn to the Lord to get us out of the dilemma that we find ourselves in. And only those who truly love God and find Jesus can find help in the times of need.' (appendix i, lines 261 – 266)

¹⁵ 'We believed in God, and lo! God delivered us, the Lord brought us out!' (appendix i, lines 185 – 186)

¹⁶ I have heard speakers in many Afro-American gatherings, both religious and secular, point out the socio-economic strides Afro-American have made over the years since the Civil Rights movement. For example, a preacher at a Baptist conference that was held in a large hotel had pointed out that there were times when the only way Afro-Americans could be in that kind of hotel was as a member of the service staff.

alone are frowned upon; so too are those who have moved too close to society and, as a result, away from their faith by becoming 'modernistic'.

To recapitulate, if these groups are placed in the symbolic space of the old church, one might find the following distribution. The Afro-American slaves will be closest to the Christian flag in the altar area. Contemporary Afro-Americans to some extent overlap with the former and are found on the left side of the altar area. There is also an overlap between them and contemporary Euro-Americans who will be placed on the right next to the American flag. As to slave-owning Euro-Americans, they are beyond the pale.

In this context, it is worth remembering that the theme of the sermon is 'living above the ordinary'. The theme has a double meaning. The 'ordinary' refers to Euro-Americans. And the theme is partly an echo of an oft stated sentiment among Afro-Americans that for an Afro-American to succeed in American society, s/he has to work twice as hard as an Euro-American. Here, it also means a higher level of Christian practice. If we apply the high-low spatial contrast, the Afro-American slaves would occupy the highest position as those who kept their faith in great adversity. Contemporary Afro-Americans are urged to aim for a higher ground and be true to their heritage. Contemporary Euro-Americans would occupy the lower floor. As to Euro-American slave owners, they would be placed outside of the steep stairs leading into the church.

In the following section I shall discuss where other minority groups might be placed. And in the process, I shall elaborate on the symbolic spatial location of different groups when the left-right and high-low binaries are combined.

6. 'Them' and 'Us', continued:

As a member of a minority myself, I have been interested in the presentation of minorities. Generally, neither of the two Catholic churches mentioned minorities, including Afro-Americans, in their sermons. It is not surprising that Salem, a church for a particular minority group, would touch upon minority issues nor that these issues dealt mostly with Afro-Americans. Two other minority groups were occasionally mentioned; lately, though, I have not heard either of them being mentioned. They were Jews and gays. Jews were mentioned even less frequently than gays; and they have not been mentioned in this sermon. Gays have been.

Some sections of American Christendom have been vocally critical of gays and lesbians. In this sense, the Afro-American ministers I heard criticising gays were not exceptional. Within the context of my research, however, it was only Afro-American ministers as opposed to Catholic priests who loudly voiced critical views. The only priest who did so, preached against it by enumerating homosexuality among a concatenation of sins. By contrast, Afro-American ministers preached specifically against homosexuality. As a minority member criticising another minority group, however, the sermon given by this preacher (like those given by other Afro-American ministers) represent one kind of Afro-American perspective to minority issues. More specifically, this sermon sheds some light on the different bases for discrimination in American society.

In this sermon there are twin and contradictory processes of identification with and dissociation from gays. The preacher is seen actively assuming their voice, as if he is repeating what some gays were saying verbatim¹⁷. His reference to gays was accompanied by gestures stereotypically associated with gays (e.g. relaxed rounded shoulders, slightly raised lower arms with dangling limp hands). This is different, for example, from the manner in which he refers to Euro-Americans. There are more references to Euro-Americans, both contemporary and of the past. Nevertheless, he never assumes their voice as such; their voice is echoed in paraphrases and summaries, but not as spoken words. Actually, the only other group where the preacher has tried to recreate what might be their spoken voice is that of Afro-American slaves. In the latter case, there is complete identification; the preacher continues in their voice for a while. By contrast, with gays, there is an abrupt dissociation; he suddenly breaks away from assuming their voice to inject recognisably his own voice¹⁸.

Greenberg, for example, has sought to explain homophobia among Christian fundamentalists as a class-related phenomenon; it is explained as a part of their quest for respectability (1988: 467 – 468). The preacher's contradictory pairing of identification with and dissociation from gays on one hand and the presentation of Euro-Americans on the other indicate that Greenberg's explanation may not be adequate when applied to Afro-Americans.

¹⁷ 'Even gays want gay rights: "We want to be able to do everything, you know, file our income tax, marry a male wife"... (appendix i, lines 232 - 234)

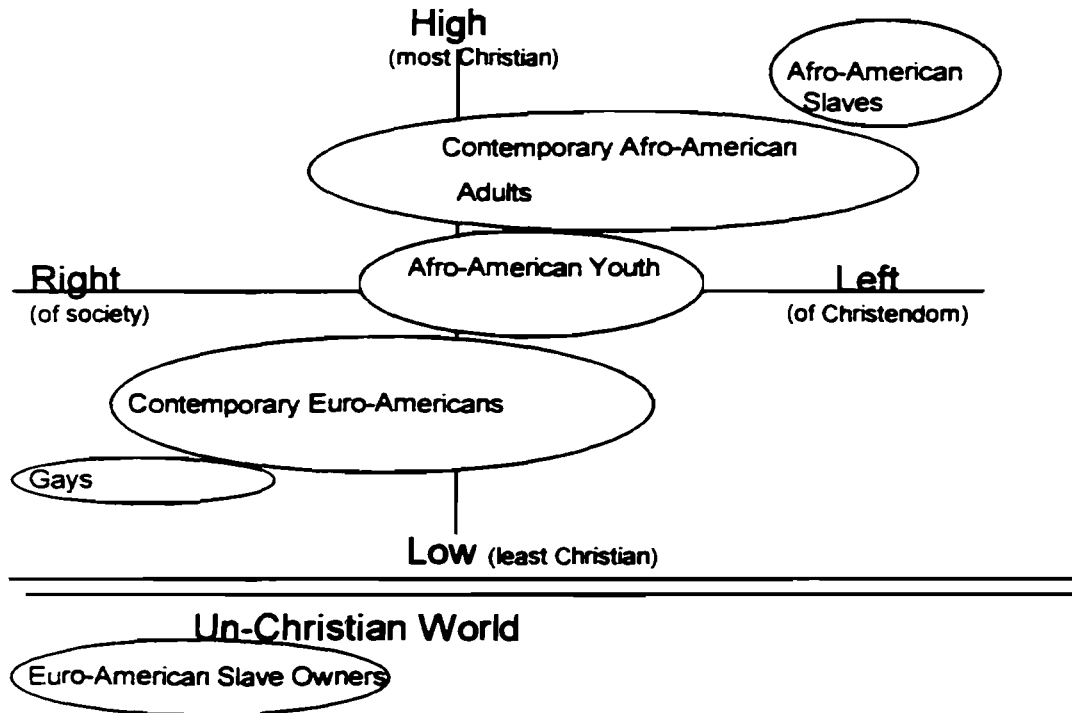
¹⁸ "...marry a male wife" get some of these so-called preachers to marry them.' (appendix i, lines 234 – 235)

The manner in which the preacher treats gays reflect the two different ways in which, according to Orlando Patterson, people can be marginalised or, worse, visited with social death. And the following analyses have been developed from his ideas that I have discussed in Chapter IV of Part I (Amba –Section 3-2b). Patterson identifies two types of social death based on the differently perceived causalities: ‘intrusiveness’ and ‘extrusiveness’ (Patterson 1982: 38 –45). The intrusive kind of social death results from the perception that the very circumstances of one’s birth (e.g. one’s parents, cultural affiliation, different place of habitat from the majority, innate quality or, more correctly, deficiency) makes one an alien in that society. By contrast, social death through extrusion is visited on otherwise full members of society who are perceived to have, for one reason or another, alienated themselves permanently from it (e.g. like fallen angels, committing a crime, breaching a socio-religious taboo, being afflicted with normatively unacceptable illness etc.).

The preacher may acknowledge that gays are discriminated against as much as Afro-Americans. If their experiences of discrimination are similar, the reasons for this are very different. To the extent that Afro-Americans still suffer some degree of social death (and it has been much attenuated from the days of slavery so that ‘marginalisation’ may be a more appropriate term), it is the result of their perceived intrusiveness; by contrast, genetic arguments notwithstanding, gays tend to be classified as extrusive. This extrusiveness is defined in terms of the truly Christian ‘us’ and the not-so-Christian ‘them’. Extrusiveness is perceived to imply volition. Thus gays are also perceived to have the opportunity for social resurrection; that gays could ‘straighten’ up what had ‘gotten wrong’ if only they turned to God (appendix i, lines 229-231).

In the preceding two sections we have examined left-right and high-low binaries as two separate sets. In the following diagram, I have combined them to see what kind of overall symbolic spatial arrangement might emerge. If the high-low and left-right contrasts can each be presented as a straight line, one vertical and the other horizontal, combining the two produces something akin to a diametrical line. Closest to the left side of the altar (i.e. near the Christian flag) and at its highest point are placed the Afro-American slaves. Still primarily based in the

Diagram 3: The Christian World



left corner and fairly high up, but not as much as Afro-American slaves. are contemporary Afro-American adults. Unlike the Afro-American slaves, they are no longer entrenched in the left corner. Instead, they have spread to the right side and, therefore, are members of society (i.e. the side of the American flag). Afro-American youth are placed further to the right, and somewhat lower and therefore, less Christian, compared to the adult group. The youth are placed on a similar level as Euro-Americans who seem to occupy the right hand corner primarily and the lower level of the church; this is because they are more of this society. At this level, though, they do spread out to the Christian side, the left. Gays, by contrast, are placed in the extreme right corner and the lowest level; they are part of the 'modern' society but are not seen to be truly Christians. As to the Euro-American slave owners, as I have mentioned earlier, I suspect they do not even belong to church or to the Christian world. Within this world, the gap between Afro-Americans and gays is greatest. To the extent that this view is generally held, it must be very difficult to be both Afro-American and gay.

There are many different minorities that have become more conspicuous in American society over the years. Among them are different ethnic communities such as those of Asian-

There are many different minorities that have become more conspicuous in American society over the years. Among them are different ethnic communities such as those of Asian-Americans and Latinos –and the different national groupings among them. I once asked the pastor where he placed other ethnic minorities. The following Sunday I received the answer from the pulpit. Having more or less repeated my question, he told the assembly that ‘they’ (other ethnic minorities) are like ‘us’ (Afro-Americans). To my knowledge, this was the first and last time that this topic has been raised.

Different ethnically based minority communities may, like the Afro-Americans, be intrusive. It is not clear that that alone makes them truly acceptable to Afro-Americans as being sufficiently alike. There are many different causes that can be attributed to one’s intrusiveness. Some, like Asian Americans, are perceived to be of a different society and, therefore, to be permanent foreigners even if they were born and bred in the USA. Further, many of these communities are not Christian, let alone Baptist. It thus becomes questionable if the spectrum of intrusiveness to extrusiveness can be spread over the same symbolic space that gays, Euro-American (Christians) and Afro-Americans occupy in this sermon.

7. Shaping the Sermon:

Sermons are very frequently marked by a call-and-response interaction. They can also be shaped through the use of refrain. The main theme serves as the main refrain; and the actual words of the main theme (or words that closely parallel them) are repeated like a refrain. This has several consequences. It breaks the sermon into several parts; and at the same time, it provides continuity from one to another part. In the process, the sermon acquires a rhythm, which paces it.

As I have mentioned earlier, the main refrain and theme of this sermon is "living above the ordinary". It is repeated, word for word, nine times throughout the sermon (appendix i, lines 1, 2, 9 to 10, 66 to 67, 158 to 159, 161 to 162, 178 to 179, 182 to 183, and 284)

Typical of oral discourses, Afro-American preaching frequently resorts to repeating the main theme from time to time. I have heard many different preachers who preach in a similar fashion (cf. Best Black Sermons). These refrains mark the different sections of the sermon. Here, all the sections are marked by a refrain at the end. In the last two sections, the refrain

marks both the beginning and end. As the line placement of the main refrain indicates, it is not necessarily repeated at regular intervals (there are 6, 55, 90, 19, and 105 lines respectively, and in that order between the refrain). There are five parts of varying size, content, and manner of delivery.

The use of refrain helps break the sermon into several diverse parts rather than a continuous piece of presentation. Listening to the latter kind of sermon for the thirty to forty-five minutes could be quite a painful experience. Instead, this stylistic device creates a rich texture to the sermon and allows the preacher to tailor his presentation differently partly in view of the kind of interaction there might be between himself and the assembly.

The first part (appendix i, lines 1 to 10) was delivered in one register in a slow measured voice. The preacher is addressing the assembly as a relatively quiescent audience. The main theme and the overall pattern of the sermon are established here. The preacher forges a link between the smaller collective of the church and the larger one of Afro-Americans in general; thus what is applicable to one is also applicable to the other.

The second part (appendix i, lines 11 to 65) starts off in a slow and deliberately measured tone, but it gradually picks up pace as the 'Amen!' starts sallying forth. The preacher makes the first interactive connection with the assembly. He differentiates then integrates different groupings within the congregation (e.g. youth, the middle-aged adults, Afro-American elders). Different registers are used.

There is a sudden shift in the third part (appendix i, lines 67 to 159) where the pitch becomes more emotional. Occasionally assuming the voice of Afro-American slaves, he merges Afro-American present and past. Afro-Americans are distinguished from past and present Euro-Americans who themselves are differentiated. The interactive link between the preacher and the assembly has become more intense and will be so in the remaining two parts.

By the fourth part (appendix i, lines 160 - 179), especially by the end, the preacher has captured the assembly and is carrying them with him. The tone continues to be emotional, the pitch high and the pace fast. The topic has shifted from slavery to contemporary issues, the family.

The fifth part (appendix I, lines 180 – 284) is the most varied in tone, pitch and pace and register. Laughter is quickly replaced with anger. Many of the themes that had been raised

earlier are developed further before they are brought to a close. In developing these topics (e.g. family, justice, deliverance), new issues are also raised (e.g. gender relation in a marriage, homosexuality, justice as greater and more open economic opportunities, current affairs etc.). A good part of the sermon was delivered with marked gestures and with 'liquefied' words. The end of the sermon is characterised by 'call-and-response' between the preacher and the assembly. This becomes more intense as he reaches the end of the sermon.

The refrain had different significance in each of the five sections of the sermon. It was first and foremost a marker indicating the end of a section. A logical connection between the preceding statements and the refrain did not always exist.

When the number of lines and words are counted in the cold light of a printed text, the difference in the size of these parts is so obvious I wonder why I did not notice it during the sermon. In fact, I was left with the impression that they occurred at fairly regular intervals; and it came as a surprise to find out that they actually occurred at very irregular intervals as a written text.

This disparity between the actually different lengths of the five sections of the sermon and the perceived similarity in their duration can be partly explained by their different contents and manner of delivery. While I never shouted 'praise' or gave signs of 'feeling happy', I did become affected by the interaction between the assembly and the preacher. No doubt my perception was coloured by this.

There is, however, another reason. It lies in the use of a refrain.

The use of a refrain or the repetition of the same thing at intervals is one of the simpler but effective ways of marking time. Its recurrence marks the passage of time. Underlying this is the simplest binary pattern of time reckoning (Overall Introduction, section 3, especially 3-2). If I use the notations that I have been using throughout the dissertation, we have

$$(A_1 \rightarrow \text{not-}A_1) \rightarrow (A_2 \rightarrow \text{not-}A_2) \rightarrow (A_3 \rightarrow \text{not-}A_3) \rightarrow \dots$$

(Where $A_1 = A_2 = A_3$, and $\text{not-}A_1 \neq \text{not-}A_2 \neq \text{not-}A_3$)

The call-and-response interaction between the preacher and the assembly also has a similar pattern. Instead of the contrastive binary between rhetorical exposition and the refrain, the binary of call-and-response is based on the contrast between the individual and the collective. The underlying pattern is similar; it is marked by a contrast of a longish interval (the words of the preacher) and a short outburst. These intervals are quite irregular although they fall within a certain range (i.e. between four to a dozen words).

Both the repetitions in the form of the refrain in a sermon and the repeated brief response of the assembly indicate that the regularity of this kind of time-reckoning rests on the repetition of the same or similar thing at intervals. The contrast between the interval and what is repeated is based on two things. Firstly, it is based on the interval being clearly different from what is repeated; whether one interval is alike to another is not really relevant. In this sermon, the semantic content both of each of its section/part and of each interval in the call-and-response are quite different from the other. Secondly, the contrast between the intervals and these repetitions is based on the difference in duration. In the case of this sermon, both the intervals as well as the nomothetic section/part are of longer duration compared to the brevity of the repetition.

These two kinds of binary patterned time-reckoning observable in the delivery of sermon need not be related to each other; there have been many sermons that have this call-and-response feature in them without the other stylistic feature. As it happens here though, the call-and-response pattern is nested within the larger framework based on the use of refrains; it is most conspicuous in the fifth part.

8 Time Presented:

As befits a long sermon, there are several different kinds of time represented. Firstly, there are the different generations of contemporary Afro-Americans. Secondly, there is the historical time marked by the time of slavery as opposed to now. Finally, there is also time seen in the context of the Bible.

At St Patrick's, generational differences or stages of life were seen primarily in the context of the family and individuals. At Salem, these are seen at the level of larger collectives, age cohorts. Thus, middle-aged adults constituted one collective as opposed to the youth who constituted another. In the process, one's horizontal link with other members of a collective is

emphasised at the expense of the vertical link based on one's different stages in life. This is especially the case since there are different age cohorts existing side by side at the same time.

Time is presented as a historical flow. That is, relations are presented as being between those who had lived through an epoch in history and those who have lived or are living in another. In this sense, the presentation of inter-generational relations is analogous to the relation between Afro-American slaves and contemporary Afro-Americans. And at first sight, this historical flow seems to be unidirectionally linear.

The manner in which the liberation of Afro-Americans from slavery is presented would, however, indicate that there is a repetitive pattern within this linearity. This repetition is presented as divine intervention. Thus, the Israelites were delivered from slavery from the Pharaohs; so too Afro-Americans were delivered from slavery. This repetition is not presented as automatic. It is only because Afro-Americans were true Christians that there was divine intervention: the faithful willed it by their true devotion.

As Baptists frequently say, to be human is to be born in time; by contrast, God's time is perceived to be timeless. Ultimately, the two kinds of time would seem to be irreconcilable; one either lives in human time or in God's timelessness. However, the idea of salvation on earth in the form of deliverance from slavery for example, presents human time as being punctuated by God's time. Somewhat analogous to the call-and-response interaction in preaching, salvation on earth is made possible through an interactive process. The faithful demonstrate the depth of their faith, and God is perceived to have responded by delivering them from profound misery. As with the Catholics, since God's timelessness is reconciled with human time, what results is still 'time' of a kind. It may however not belong to the regular human time which is shaped by human beings alone. Rather, it is in counterpunctal relation to it; because it did not emanate from the intrinsic flow of regular human time. And as such, it becomes a time marker that separates the time before its occurrence with what followed later. In fact, it becomes part of time-reckoning.

Chapter VI

Talking to Friends at St Patrick's, Figuring Things Out at St Mary's

1. Introduction:

Both St Mary and St Patrick's share common features that are different from Salem's. Some of the differences between the two Catholic churches are differences that are found within this commonality, such as the use of the same liturgical structure that has been universal for Catholics. Both churches function on the assumption that there is a distinction and, therefore, a need for a negotiation between **Church** and **church**. Some aspects of the **Church** are non-negotiable and provide commonality among different churches including St Mary and St Patrick's. Where negotiation is possible, it can at times be tense. One can see this tension/negotiation in the long hesitation heard before the pastor of St Mary very briefly mentioned the papal suppression of the Jesuits (appendix iv, line 32). The homilies delivered every Sunday are an important part of this negotiation.

It is not only the universalism of the **Church** that provides a shared trait. Another is shared ethnicity; both pastors are Euro-Americans. At a more personal level, they have been friends since their days in the seminary. More generally, the pastors of the three churches, Salem, St Mary's and St Patrick's belong to the same generation give or take a few years.

The discussion of the sermons delivered in the two churches will be put together in one chapter. Their similarity is better traced together in contrast to the sermon delivered at Salem. And their differences are better understood when some of these similarities are traced. Consequently, the first section will be a discussion of some of these commonalities. Subsequently, this chapter will be divided into two parts, two sections each, that will deal with the homilies delivered at St Patrick's and St Mary respectively. As with Chapter V, I shall start with some of the stylistic features that pertain to the sermons in the two churches respectively. Following this, I shall touch upon some of the issues that have been raised in these sermons.

My criteria for choosing the homilies were different from those I used for choosing the sermon for Salem. The interaction between the congregation and the official celebrants of mass were muted compared to that in Salem and could not be a basis for selection. Instead, I chose them based on two considerations: the saliency of the themes I had found represented in other

parts of their respective Sunday services, and, secondly, on comparability. The two sermons that are the main focus of analysis were delivered in the two churches on the same Sunday.

Although not chosen with the first consideration in mind, each of the two sermons reflects the oft repeated themes of the two churches respectively. After analysing these sermons, I shall discuss some of the ways the preachers in the two churches reconcile what might be a more universal message of the Scripture with their local conditions. As with other chapters, this chapter will be concluded with a brief discussion of the patterns of time-reckoning.

2. Miscellaneous Commonality:

A good deal of their commonality is the result of the universalistic organisation of the Catholic Church. Vatican II allowed greater leeway for the localisation of the liturgy, but within the context of this universalism. In the case of Catholic churches in Champaign-Urbana and in the U.S., the rites of the Eucharist remain much the same. The mass I attended in the two churches was very much like the mass I attended in Catholic schools elsewhere, including one in Japan.

The celebration of the Eucharist and the communion rite are synonymous with the celebration of mass. The homily, or the sermon, might be omitted from the celebration of mass, but never these two rites. Ultimately, the authority of the priest lies in the celebration of the Eucharist. Other Catholics may deliver the homily, none other than a priest can preside over the communion rite. As a corollary, the authority of the priest ultimately rests with the universalistic Church. The relatively secondary importance of homilies is conspicuous in the celebration of weekday mass where the homily might be omitted, or is sometimes very perfunctory. Reflecting the greater importance of the Eucharist, some Catholics would actually skip the homily and come to church just in time for communion, not generally a behaviour that is approved.

The secondary importance of the homily in relation to the Eucharist is also marked spatially. The Eucharist is celebrated in the centre of the altar, at the altar table, which is wide (one could see both corners even when three adults stood side by side by the table) and tends to be made of expensive material. It is also placed furthest from the nave. The sermon, by contrast, is delivered from the ambo (a lectern table) that looks and functions like the pulpit. The ambo

has been placed on the right hand corner (viewed from the altar to the nave) of the altar. It is placed near the edge of the altar area and is closest to the nave. It is wide enough for one person to stand behind it. At both St Mary and St Patrick's, the ambo was made of wood and was of simple design. If the distance between the altar table and the nave symbolised the mystery of Eucharist, the relative proximity between the nave and the ambo indicated the effort to make faith more accessible.

Another feature that asserts the universalistic trend of the Church is the lectionary. There are usually three readings from the Bible during mass on Sundays. They all come from the lectionary, which is a compilation of readings selected by the Vatican for each day for three years. Thus, on any given day, Catholic churches would have readings from the lectionary for that particular day. The days in the lectionary are not marked with reference to the Gregorian calendar as such but are marked by the week and, within the week, the days of the week. These weeks are defined by the liturgical calendar in relation to Easter and Christmas. The weeks that fall within either Easter or Christmas time (e.g. Lent or Advent) will have special readings geared for the two events respectively; the two intervening periods are referred to as 'ordinary'.

I have selected sermons from St Patrick's and St Mary's respectively that were delivered on the same day, 1st March 92 (appendices II and V), an ordinally numbered Sunday. And they will be the main focus of my analysis. Both sermons shared the same reading from the lectionary; but they are remarkably different from each other in their content.

The pastor/preacher has a less complex relation with their respective congregation than at Salem; one of the reasons I could analyse their homilies together. This is in marked contrast to Salem where the complexity of this relation made the sermon a 'collective' product. Like many mainstream Euro-American Christian churches, it is the norm in both Catholic churches for the congregation to sit quietly through a sermon. In this, the relation between the preacher and the congregation is somewhat akin to that between the actors and a theatre audience in traditional European theatre, for example. The two roles remain distinctly apart. More so than in theatres, it is difficult to gauge the true reaction of the congregation from their behaviour in church. Apart from a few exceptional occasions at St Mary, the congregation do not clap or do anything much else at the conclusion of the homily. Sunday service continues without pause.

These homilies use similar materials. Quite frequently, the preachers in both churches refer to books, cartoons (such as Charlie Brown, or Calvin and Hobbs here), magazine articles

(such as in Newsweek), national newspapers, and sports events; again, there are differences within this similarity, and they will be discussed in later sections. Generally, they are referred to as if most members of the congregation are also familiar with them. One is left with the impression of relative ease where both the congregation and the preacher largely share similar tastes in life. Underlying this are the relative comfort and trust many members of both churches might feel with the different institutions of society. The cartoon characters tend to be Euro-American in terms of ethnicity, which may make them difficult for Afro-Americans to identify with. This kind of comfort and trust seem to be lacking in Salem: when there is reference to outside publication, it is primarily confined to the local newspaper especially when it has mentioned a member/s of the church.

As I have mentioned briefly in Chapter I, sermons in both churches are of greater brevity than any delivered at Salem. When there has been a need to accommodate other events within the one-hour allotted for a service, the homily would be curtailed or, in some cases, cancelled at St Patrick's. Of the three churches, the homily delivered at St Patrick's has been the shortest; it has never exceeded ten minutes. By contrast, homilies at St Mary have varied considerably; some sermons would only take seven minutes or so, while others would exceed twenty minutes. In order to maintain a semblance of integrity of the materials coming from each of the two churches, I shall first discuss St Patrick's in terms of the manner in which the homilies are delivered, and subsequently the actual content of the sermon. I shall follow a similar pattern in my discussion of the homilies delivered at St Mary.

3. Talking to Friends at St Patrick's:

In order to maintain some consistency in my dissertation, I have chosen sermons delivered by the pastor of St Patrick's. However, preaching at St Patrick's, like other features of the church tends to be a collective effort. Partly because there have usually been an assistant pastor and a deacon, homilies have been given on a rota system. Leaving aside other permutations, the pastor would give a homily one Sunday out of three. And as I have mentioned in Chapter II, the same person delivered the same homily at all the four services on a Sunday. The pastor explained to me that this was to ensure that everybody received the same message

regardless of which service they attended. And listening to the same message emphasises the unity among the church members.

There have been other permutations where the homily would be replaced by another activity. When the catechumens (i.e. those undergoing training to become baptised as Catholic) have reached their final stage, not only would they attend mass as a group (and leave before the Eucharist) but at times, the person responsible for their training would come to the ambo and address the congregation for one of the services. During Easter, the priest and several members of the congregation would assume different roles and enact the reading (the priest would usually assume the role of Christ, while others would assume the remaining roles, which, depending on the reading, could be the disciples, those who jeered Christ in his trial, or marched to Golgotha etc.) Sometimes allowances are made for special occasions: when a doctor, a former parishioner, who had been working in Africa and who had received financial support from the church returned home, she addressed the congregation to talk about her experiences in Africa. Similarly, if other events such as baptism took place, the homily would frequently be curtailed.

There are some stylistic differences between the pastor and others in their delivery of the homily. When I first started visiting the church, everybody addressed the congregation from the ambo. The only exception has been the re-enactment of the trial and tribulation of Christ which took place around the altar table during Easter. Within a couple of years, the public announcement system at St Patrick's accommodated a clip-on mike. Those who use it, and the pastor does almost every time he gives his homily, would stand in the middle of the altar area sometimes walking down a step or two or even right down to the aisle and address the congregation.

Of the three churches, the sermons tape-recorded at St Patrick's have been by far the easiest to transcribe. The church has a good sound system so that the homily would be carried clearly throughout the church, including the vestibule, the least quiet spot in the church; I tended to stand there, very frequently in the company of some toddlers and their parents. Generally, the congregation, including the children, has remained respectfully silent during the homily. Last but not least, the preachers, especially the pastor seem to put considerable emphasis on clear elocution. His voice has been slow, careful and smooth; sudden changes in pitch or pace, especially common in the sermons delivered at Salem, are absent. His homilies are the least mixed in registers. The register most often used is educated but not overly intellectual. thus

making his sermons accessible. A change of voice such as when he has been presenting the voice of someone else engaged in conversation, for example, makes it distinct from his own pastoral voice. As the transcripts of the three sermons attached in the appendix show, they have been scripts that had been carefully worked out and memorised in advance. Of those three, the first two were transcribed from my own tape-recording, while the last is a copy of the sermon that the pastor had carefully written out in advance. There is hardly any difference between the first two and the last transcripts. In terms both of their brevity as well as their preparedness, sermons delivered at St Patrick's have been diametrically opposed to those delivered in Salem. While long complicated words have been avoided, the style was far from colloquial. Grammatical errors, repetitions and interjections were absent. They are closest to a written text.

Stylistically, the sermons delivered at St Patrick's tend to have the most linear structure. One argument or point will lead to another. And this continuity is stressed. As we can see in the main sermon for comparison, the continuity is sometimes asserted by the repetition of the same theme (appendix ii, lines 17, 24 and 50); as has been the case in Salem, this also helped pace the sermon.

The careful deliberation that is obvious in the preacher's vocal performance is also manifest in his gestures. Of the three churches, homilies delivered at St Patrick's have been accompanied by the least of gestures. The arms have been seldom if ever raised suddenly, nor higher than the shoulder, nor flung widely away from the body. After the pastor has started delivering his homilies from the centre of the altar he would start with arms outstretched toward the congregation. It has been a deliberate act of welcome by a host to his guests/friends.

4. Family and Friends:

The three sermons that I have selected from St Patrick's have one point in common. No matter what their respective theme might be, there almost always is a mention of the nuclear family and, to a lesser extent, friends. In keeping with other representations of the family that can be observed during Sunday services, what is being presented here is a nuclear family. It is not just any nuclear family, but an idealised one.

This nuclear family is presented primarily from the perspective of the parent or a guardian figure like a teacher. Thus emphasis is on protective nurturance even if one is not

always entirely successful at it¹. This is the case even in the main sermon for analysis here (appendix ii). Underlying the idea of nurturance is the notion of perfectibility, which in turn implies an imperfect present. These imperfections both in the present as well as in the future (in the form of one's children) are remedied by nurturance.

Who or what then is the object of this nurturance? A few decades ago, one might have explicitly identified it as one's 'soul'. In the homilies I have chosen from St Patrick's it is identified in more post-modern terms as the 'core of 'one's 'being'; this is in turn equated with the child, not only young humans, but also the 'child' in one. And children are objects of nurturance. The divine or what is the bearer of the divine is almost ineffably fragile, and is found in small everyday things of life:

Although these seem extraordinary experiences to us, perhaps they are simply extraordinary moments of awareness of what is really quite ordinary, that is the presence of God in our midst. But for the most part we are so busy and so wrapped up in our own pursuits that we fail to see his presence in our midst, and so we have no story to tell, no Gospel to preach as did Paul who also saw the Lord.

(a paragraph omitted)

The beauty of an old face, the elegance of snowflake, a child's laughter, a friend's voice, a nagging pain, a failure, -every experience is filled with a presence that can awe us, and even change us to change our lives (appendix iv, lines 80, 84 and 94 – 96).

Fundamentally, we all began as the marvelous creation of a loving God. We are made in his image and likeness. We are blessed with many gifts of body and mind and spirit; but we have some real limitations; for as our second reading reminds us: 'we have a corruptible frame.' (appendix ii, lines 24 – 26)

St Patrick's puts more emphasis on cherishing and nurturing one's better self than on fighting punitively with one's sins. This message is repeated in many homilies, not only by the pastor, but –with one possible exception that I have mentioned- by all others who come to the ambo to address the congregation. It is not a church that is at war with society or anything else. Rather, it is a church that presents what is as the starting point and affirms it as such. The focus of the church is the individual, not society or other forms of collective. Individuals are presented as being engaged in different walks of life in different capacities; and pursuing one's duties thus

¹ 'Recently, I had a visit from a very wonderful family. They're a lively group, mother, father, two brothers, five sisters. But the mother said to me: "There are some days I don't think I can stand another minute of these kids fighting." appendix iii, lines 4 - 6

is presented as a vocation of a kind. One does this by coming to terms with oneself. All are accepted since none is criticised.

The emphasis on the nurturance of children and of oneself implies a link between the present and the future. However, there is very little link between the past and the present; there is no causal explanation for how one might have ended up being a 'wounded child'. Whether this has been a self-inflicted or other inflicted wound, or whatever other way it might have been caused, it is a wound, and so far as the sermon is concerned, that is all that matters. The emphasis is on its alleviation. This lack of historical continuity/causality combined with the concurrent emphasis on the family, makes the family a two-generation nuclear family; the status of its children and parents become ambiguous once the children reach maturity.

The children are mediated with society through their families and church, and, to some extent, through other institutions such as school. In the case of adults though, the family no longer seem to play a mediatory role. Implicitly, we have here adults who no longer have their protective shield, which also acted as a bridge to society. In their daily lives, this connection is forged through their fulfilling their roles in whatever institution they are affiliated. In these changed circumstances, the church becomes a mediator.

5. Figuring Things Out at St Mary:

Delivering homilies at St Mary, like celebrating mass, has tended to be the sole responsibility of its pastor. This is partly the result of the staffing situation: the pastor is the staff. Occasionally, other priests would deliver homilies in his stead. If a priest stayed at the rectory; then he would give homilies from time to time. Unlike at St Patrick's, homilies at St Mary have always been the responsibility of the clerics, not of the lay members.

Sunday service has always included a homily regardless of what else took place during the service. The annual diocesan appeal for donations to be made would be tucked in in the course of the service, which would be prolonged as a result. And the re-enactment of Easter has been treated as a part of the reading, as indeed it is. Baptism has not led to a curtailed homily, nor announcements by either the pastor or by a church member. Thus a combination of a long homily and other events including announcements can and have once stretched the service from the usual one to two hours and more.

The pastor has transcripts of his sermons; he has given some to at least one of the church members. It is clear that considerable work has been put in the preparation of his homilies. However, judging from what I have heard during service and from my transcripts of his tape-recorded sermon, I doubt if he faithfully follows the transcript. The manner of his delivery is akin to thinking aloud some thoughts that he and the congregation might have had while reading the lectionary. Taking transcripts of sermons delivered in St Mary has proved to be a considerable challenge; there are some portions where repeated hearings have not brought me any closer to understanding what has actually been said. Although the adult congregation has tended to be seated quietly to listen to the homily, quite a few children would usually be busy running up and down the aisle (which has occasionally resulted in not always quiet parental intervention), and babies would cry from time to time. The sound system has usually carried his soft voice over these interferences, but only just, certainly not enough for my tape recorder. Finally, the pastor had a very relaxed manner of delivery. His overall tone has been conversational.

His delivery has usually been slow and careful, no sudden changes of pitch or pace as one finds in sermons delivered in Salem. Sermons delivered at Salem are more different from those delivered at St Mary and St Patrick's than the two Catholic churches are between them. Between the latter two, however, homilies delivered at St Mary tend to have a greater variation in pitch and pace. These variations are very different in character from those found in Salem. There at Salem, they have reflected, among other things, heightened passion. Here at St Mary, they have stressed the tentative character of the sermon. There are many pauses where it is clear that the priest is mulling over things². The tentativeness is not a public expression of a lack of confidence; rather, it was groping for a convincing presentation. At Salem the members of the assembly have joined the preacher in the build up of passion and religious fervour. At St Mary, the priest has joined the silence of the congregation in his frequent and ponderous pauses. Compared to sermons delivered at St Patrick's there is a greater variation in register, which might vary from erudite to colloquially jocular. Also, while homilies at St Patrick's have tended to quote or paraphrase Scriptural passages in modern day English, homilies at St Mary tend to quote more directly from what sounds like the King James' version. There can be a sudden change from the jocular to the more serious and archaic tone of the Scripture. The shift from one

² "there is, in one case, in one of his last games, Ruth was playing at Cincinnati..." appendix v, lines 66 - 67

to another register was quite sudden; so too were the shift of voices. The pastor would suddenly assume the voice of another, sometimes in the middle of a more deliberate pastoral exposition.

The structure of his sermons tends not to be as linear as those delivered at St Patrick's. Somewhat like many sermons delivered at Salem, some of the sermons are made of several different panels. These panels, whether they are fairly self-contained narratives or a set of arguments within a sermon, are bound together, sometimes loosely, by an overall theme.

Like many other aspects of Sunday service, the gestures that the pastor made have seemed fairly spontaneous as if he has been gesticulating rather extravagantly in the middle of a conversation to make a point or ponder on a matter. Some of his gestures seemed to be aimed at dramatising a point; on those occasions, his arms (usually his right arm only) have been raised above his head. The appearance of spontaneousness was due, for example, to his resting his right arm on the ambo and lightly supporting his head almost as if he was listening.

6. The Duty to Question the Status Quo:

The homilies delivered at St Mary stress two points: firstly, the importance of the individual, and secondly, the need to uphold collective morality. More clearly than either of the other two churches, St Mary strives to establish a connection between the individual and society whatever his/her role in society, marital status or ethnicity. And there are many ways for an individual to connect to society, and through it to God:

You may have noticed at the same time that the system is not functioning altogether real well. So we get up on our knee and say: 'Give us this day our daily bread' and work for a better system that would include millions of people who are starving. Now if you go to a farmer in the field and ask him about his spirituality about the Kingdom of God, and you see him working in the field bringing in his harvest and you ask: 'what are you doing?' He could say to you: 'I am praying the Lord's prayer'. If you go to a research scientist that is working for better methods of farming ... If you go to a person working on a road for a better distribution of that bread out in the more inaccessible parts of the Third World ... If you go to a politician or, let us say, a person who badgers politicians ... (appendix vi. Lines 29 – 40)

Unlike the other two churches, there is no clearly identifiable collective that acts as an intermediary between these individuals and society at large. The church of St Mary does not mediate in the same way as St Patrick's or Salem have done. It does not present an institution

like the family as a mediator. And there is no identifiable mediating community, such as one based on ethnicity that could also give a common identity to the church members. The church members at St Mary each have complex relations both with different institutions of society and with different communities.

In his many sermons, the pastor presents a world where it is not only the system that has failed. It is a world where what should be is not. Thus, governments, especially the American one, are presented as failing to support the powerless and acting in bad faith; in worse situations, governments are presented as being repressive:

Several weeks ago the United States officially criticised the British policy of returning Vietnamese refugees within the camps in Hong Kong, returning them back to Vietnam against their wishes; while at the same time, United States returned boatloads of Haitians back to Haiti where there is good evidence that there is violence and oppression. (appendix iv, lines 41 –44)

It is not only governments that are frequently seen to be failing, but also many different kinds of authority figures. Thus we have a father who is not a father (appendix iv, 107 – 110), the Pharisees and scribes who should lead but only condemn (appendix vi: 8 – 14, 82 – 84), a fickle baseball crowd that quickly discards a once powerful athlete (appendix iv, 60 – 81). We have here a picture of failed nurturance; that is, those from whom one might rightly expect nurturance fail to provide it. Injustice is a failure to provide love, the alleviation of suffering, or greater equity. This is why there is an equation between individual and collective morality:

I think it is false to say that the Gospel applies to persons but not to peoples and nations (appendix iv, 52 – 53).

Because of this equation, the solution to this failure can be based on individual initiative. The individual is presented as stepping in and trying to fill this void. On one hand, these are individuals who are asked to be vigilant with themselves because they themselves carry the potential for failure in relation to others:

Jesus is calling us we should be his disciples, to be aware of our own human frailty and to free ourselves with the good grace of God from intolerance and lies of the mind (appendix iv: 134 – 136).

On the other hand, the individuals who do so are very frequently people who themselves might need or have needed nurturance like children, outcasts, and others of lowly status. Very frequently, they are people who might feel themselves outsiders for one reason or another; perhaps due precisely to their being outsiders, the sermons present them as being capable of seeing injustice. Their quest of justice for others appears to have the quality of a David confronting Goliath, someone who is essentially weak and alone rising against the powerful. The story of Babe Ruth and the little boy that the priest draws on best epitomises this theme:

(referring to a time when Babe Ruth was declining as an athlete and was being quickly abandoned by sports fans) And the crowd began jeering, catcalls, booed for the whole stadium was the sound of boos and hisses. He (Babe Ruth) was standing shaking his fist; this was an incredible humiliation for a man that had been probably the most idolised sports figure of his time. At the moment a little boy leaped over the railing and ran out to the field, tears running out of his cheeks and went over to the old man and he cuddled his legs. Babe reached out and picked the boy up and he hugged him. The crowd became silent. And then he set the boy down, and he took his hand and they walked back together, famous Babe Ruth and the little boy. People began to applaud and cheer. The whole stadium was cheering. I think there's a couple of things happened here. One is that I think many times, people join the chorus whatever it is, join that's power within the group. It also tells us, here was one little boy who despite the crowd did not have a two by four (i.e. a beam in his eye), and who saw a great man deserving honour (appendix iv: 70 – 81).

The people depicted in the sermon are frequently outsiders who are active in their quest for justice. Divine intervention, though implied, is not to be expected:

If you pray for justice and you sit back and let God take care of it there, you're going to have a long wait (appendix v: 1 – 2).

...God does not shape this Kingdom of God alone. Because people everywhere co-operate in this work. Because the Kingdom of God is people working together and not God doing it alone (appendix v: 17 – 19).

Whether one is a research scientist, or a farmer, or whatever, one goes on the quest for this Kingdom, which the priest has defined thus:

Jesus announced the Kingdom of God. ...What he is talking about is God's will. This is God's will for you. And as he heralds along God's will, this is God's word that is given to us as a goal to strive for.

We are very much involved in doing God's will and that Kingdom, the Kingdom of God is a social and religious and political order that reflects God's justice (appendix v: 5–10).

The church members of St Mary engage in joint activities such as signing a letter to a politician, and some of them are active in supporting their sister parish in El Salvador. These are instances of individual consciences coming into confluence with each other. There is no specific collective goal. This is especially noticeable with the question of 'race'. As I have mentioned in Chapter III, the individual church members are probably the most vocally explicit in their awareness of ethnicity. However, this is one issue that is usually not brought up as a topic in the sermon. It is not that the question is not referred to. It is. However, compared to other socio-political issues, it is raised rather obliquely and fleetingly.

(Talking about the death penalty in the U.S.A.) You could see that, oh, of some two hundred thousand burglaries committed every year, that two hundred murderers are placed in death row, you wonder about the other nineteen thousand eight hundred people. And you would send them to get a profile of the people in death row. They tend to be people of colour, people whose victims are usually white, and so therein is public jeering that we often join in on and refuse to consider the individual (appendix iv: 88 – 93).

Ethnicity is a sensitive issue in current American society. It is perhaps not an easy topic to raise even in a church like St Mary. Its diversity in terms of ethnicity and otherwise may both hamper discussion and allow it to be mentioned up to a point. Acting in unison is not depicted as the objective of going to church at St Mary. The church is a place of retreat for those who fight for the 'Kingdom of God'; it is also a refuge and sanctuary for those who have been visited by the failure of others and who have to be weary of potential (or actual) failure in themselves. In fact, the two groups are one and the same people.

The church, I think should be a place where people feel most at home with their community as broken as it may be. There should be a sign on the door that says: 'This is the home for the broken.' That means it is a place where you are accepted, where you are not criticised, where you have tranquillity (appendix iv: 137 – 140)

7. Mixing the 'Local' with the 'Universal':

Christian clergies normally preach from the Scripture, which largely consists of narratives of historical events related to the Jews that took place in the Middle East. There are at least two problems doing this: firstly, how to render the Middle Eastern cum historical locale universal, and secondly, of relating that to the present and specific locale of the preacher. The former problem is perhaps not as serious as it first seems. Most Christians are accustomed to assuming both the historicity of the Bible and its universality. There is, of course, considerable variation in how much weight one puts on either. In the case of Baptist ministers I have heard preach, they seem to emphasise the universality of the Scripture; historicity per se seems to be of relatively little relevance; the value of historicity lies in its authentication of the divine that is universal in nature. Among Catholics, the balance between the two seems to be more ambiguous.

The Baptist practice of delivering sermons underlines the universality and, therefore, time-transcending character of the divine. Thus a Baptist minister would say that he has been moved by the Spirit to choose a particular passage. Consequently, whatever passage that has been chosen (and, by implication, most any passage in the Scripture) is word for word both universally valid and historically rooted. A sermon re-enforces the universal validity of the Scripture which in turn supports the local validity of the sermon. As I have mentioned earlier, since Catholic priests have to develop their sermon from readings which obviously are not their own choosing, there seems to be a greater onus on them to establish the local validity of the passage. In the process, the historicity of the Scripture becomes a more salient issue. That is, how much of the Scripture is a direct expression of universal truth? Conversely, which part of the Scripture is but an expression of the specific conditions of that locality, both temporally and culturally, and, therefore, cannot be applied directly to current local conditions. There is a third issue that is implicit in these: what and how much concessions should one make to current local conditions in interpreting the Scripture? We can see some of these differences in the way the pastor of Salem and St Mary respectively deal with the position of women in the Bible.

At Salem the pastor quotes the Scripture:

Paul said: –(an aside where the preacher addresses the congregation directly:) women don't get mad at me! Go on with Paul!- 'wives submit themselves unto your own husband as unto the Lord. The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the

Church. He is the saviour of the body therefore as the Church is subject to Christ, so let wives be unto their own husbands.'

Is that the word? I didn't write it! (appendix i: 250 253)

By contrast, at St Mary, we hear the pastor say thus:

That was the sense they had of the importance of law that the man of the house would be burdened with learning the law. In the 23rd verse of the 31st chapter in the Book of Proverbs, it refers to this. That the wife must be judged almost three times as a wife than (a man) as a husband....

I know this is very very strange to some of you: "Give me that verse. when I go home, I'll scratch it out of the Bible." But out of a sense of duty, parents make sacrifice frequently to see their children are educated. That never seems strange to people in other cultures...(appendix vii: 25 – 32)

The historicity of certain customs or norms is emphasised as one would emphasise the difference of cultures. Many historical differences are presented as cultural differences. The socio-cultural and temporal milieu in which St Mary finds herself is yet another locale like other socio-cultural cum temporal locales. These different localities are bound together to some extent by cultural relativism; the fact that something is unacceptable in the present milieu does not make it absolutely unacceptable. Relativism, however, is an attenuating consideration. Underlying that is the assumption of universality of certain values, which determine right and wrong.

Another method that is more conspicuously used among the priests in the two Catholic churches is what the pastor at St Mary has termed 'translation' where a passage or a portion of it is interpreted in contemporary terms:

I like to offer the following as my own translation of this passage: 'Why quibble about a speck of saw dust in your brother's eye and fail to notice the two by four in your own eye. You have a lot of nerve to save your brother: "Let me take that tiny speck out of your eye." When you don't notice the two by four in your own eye. You own it. Wait till you clear the eye of the two by four, then you will see more clearly tiny specks in others' eye.' (appendix iv: 16 – 20)³

³ In the King James' version, the passage is: 'Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.'

The pastor adopted the more colloquial pronunciation of 'two-by-four'. Here again, the assumption is that the underlying value remains universal and that it is only its expression that is constrained by historicity. Some passages need more careful translation. These are passages, which, at first sight, may contradict the values of the local community. In these instances, 'translation' is based on qualifying a Scriptural passage with local interpretation. Thus, the pastor of St Patrick starts his sermon as he frequently does, by quoting a portion of the reading which he subsequently qualifies thus:

Hearing the scripture passage such as: 'A good tree does not produce decayed fruit, anymore than a decayed tree produces good fruit. Each tree is known by its yield' might cause enormous guilt or shame in some persons. I did this, that's the fruit, therefore it must mean that I am a bad tree, a bad person. ...good people sometimes do bad things.(appendix ii: 9 – 12)

This passage is further interpreted so that the language becomes distinctly post-modern and the meaning less harsh:

The Gospel today is not talking about isolated sins or just occasional good deeds. but is asking the question: 'what is at the core of our being?'(appendix ii: 16 – 17)

Somewhat differently from the first kind of 'translation', the second type is premised on the assumption that the universalistic values are hidden in the text. The local values into which the text has been translated are justified by these implicit universalistic values. That the culture and time of the sermon are also confined to a locale is affirmed by the liberal reference to a then popular book. The second 'translation' is in contrast to the way sermons are preached at Salem. In the sermon I have just quoted, we notice that the initial theme ('a good tree etc.') that has been sounded is switched in the middle by the translated theme ('what is the core of our being?'). As we have seen in Chapter V, sermons at Salem tend to repeat the same theme ('rising above the ordinary') from the beginning to end. There is no need to switch or 'translate' a theme picked up from the Scripture, for example, into a distinctly contemporary form.

Underlying these two different forms of 'translation' are different patterns of time-reckoning.

8. The Sermons and Reckoning Time:

In the cases of both St Patrick's and St Mary, the patterns of time-reckoning found in the sermons re-enforce the pattern of time-reckoning discerned throughout the Sunday service. In terms of temporal direction St Mary would seem to have an essentially directionless pattern, while St Patrick's seems to have an ambiguous unilinear directionality.

A recurrent theme in the sermons at St Patrick's has been the family. However, this is a family with the temporal depth of two generations; it is a family with parents nurturing their young offspring. The children are in their youth well before they reach maturity and leave home to start with their career and/or their own family. As a corollary, the parents have not reached their old age where they may be grandparents facing questions of death and dying. There is linearity in the pattern of time-reckoning to the extent that a child will grow from babyhood to youth and so forth. Also, if the end is not clearly defined, the beginning of a family might be easier to determine; in terms of Sunday services, it is indicated by the baptism of the new born; in the sermons, this is less clear. To the extent that nurturance is associated with children, the emphasis is on the present and the future. Generally, the past does not feature much in these sermons.

If we think of each family and its time-line as indeed a line, we have many short lines starting at different points running in parallel with each other. There is, of course, one false note in this visual analogy: there is no indication that these different short lines are themselves arranged on a unidirectional line. At a collective level, families each with the temporal depth of two generations are put together rather than aligned with each other. And they come under the giant umbrella of St Patrick's the church, which is presented as a home cum nurturing family for its church members. Although St Patrick's is an old church by the standards of Champaign-Urbana, its history does not feature in the sermons that have been delivered. It becomes a church for all seasons. Thus what we have here is a relatively short time-line that seems not to be grounded in any other kind of time-reckoning.

St Mary's pattern of time-reckoning seems directionless for other reasons. The pastor of this church tends to present different periods of history, in the United States or of other countries -mainly ancient Palestine- like different cultures. Historical differences, just like cultural differences, are to be understood in terms both of the underlying commonality of man and, conversely, of the specificity of the period. This commonality is established at the individual

level primarily; each church member is encouraged to strive for an empathetic understanding of others presented in the sermon. Historical causality or, more simply, continuity is not relevant. It would be difficult to establish causal relation between ancient Palestine and modern America, for example; but causal relation and/or continuity in American history are not really explored either. Heritage, for example, is not an issue. Heritage in this individualistic church is largely a matter of personal history. In a self-consciously multi-ethnic church like St Mary, one wonders if a common past can be easily presented. What matters most is causation based on inter-relation in the present. This inter-relation is presented primarily in the context of international relations. People separated by time enjoy absolute sovereignty compared to coevals separated merely by national or cultural boundaries. Collective time, or shared time seems to be created mainly through collective action (sallying forth for communion, signing letters of petition, engaging in other projects together, etc).

Representationally, time and space seem to be placed more or less on the same plane and are left undefined; this stresses the assumption of diversity among individuals. The images of these individuals are rather bleak. Whether one is placed in dire circumstances as the El Salvadoran boy (V: 104 – 123), or completing one's career as a baseball player as Babe Ruth, or engaged in different activities as a research scientist or as a farmer, these sermons present individuals each engaged in their own walk of life, marking time in their separate and valiant way. Collective time-reckoning seems to lie in volition and action and may be of a relatively short duration:

...the Kingdom of God is people working together and not God doing it alone. This sense of shared responsibility to build the Kingdom should be reflected in our prayer (appendix v: 19 – 20)

CHAPTER VII

PART III: CONCLUSION

1. Introduction:

The three churches form three distinct communities, each different from the other. These differences are reflected in the degree to which they form a close group among themselves. However these differences are not unbridgeable; they all can and have accommodated people changing their church affiliation for various reasons. Also, as I have shown in Part III, the character of these differences also changes over time.

This difference is even seen in the organising principle they all share: similarity. Section 2 of this chapter will explore this variation. Their differences can be seen both in terms of the contents as well as the degree of similarity.

Each church present a different kind of relation a Christian might have with society. This touches upon the variety of ways one could attain salvation both in one's afterlife and, to some extent, on earth. In section 3 I shall be briefly exploring the different meanings of earthly salvation that each church seems to be giving.

The different presentations of the relation between a Christian and society are also seen in the different ways time is reckoned. Section 4 will cover some of these differences. And in the following section (5) I shall examine some of these differences in the context of 'race' relations. By 'race' I mean the relations between Euro- and Afro-Americans. Some patterns of time-reckoning that were discerned in my study have been influenced by the calculus of 'race' and imply a certain type of inter-ethnic relations.

In section 6 I shall come back to the topic of time. Whereas section 4 concentrates on the actual way time has been reckoned in different churches, section 6 will focus on the overall pattern.

2. Birds of a Feather:

The members of each church share traits among themselves that make each one distinct from the other two church communities. As faith communities, they are moral communities that each upholds a set of values that is different from those of others.

St Patrick's, for example, is a church that seems to be most at ease with society as is. There seems to be an assumption that there is a generally upheld structure to life; ideas related to the stages of life reflect this assumption. These ideas are represented in the service and influence the way church members form groups. Of the three churches, this is the church where the members behave most circumspectly. Although not all members are married or with children, the basic social units presented at St Patrick's have been the family and the couple. The children of St Patrick's, for example, are the most closely supervised of the three. As an organisation, it is the most formally well organised of the three and accommodates the largest number of members; Sunday services typically conform to their well regulated schedule. It has deliberately adopted a collective decision-making process; many different aspects of activities related to the church, including community outreach, have been developed and maintained under their respective aegis. Smaller groups formed among the large congregation tend to be formed on the basis of shared common traits such as belonging to a similar age group, sharing similar life experiences etc.

In contrast to St Patrick's both St Mary and Salem are churches that are more clearly at odds with some aspects of American society, but, as we have seen, differently.

Salem is the church that is more obviously so. They evince considerable discomfort with society at large; this was especially the case when I first started my research. The old church had truly been a sanctuary in which people bonded together to form a close knit community. Common ethnicity with its implicit understanding of shared experiences and, possibly, assumption of shared destiny has been the glue. Ethnicity and religion in the form of Christianity re-enforce each other mutually; that is, one's ethnic identity is affirmed by one's Christian identity and vice-versa, one's Christian identity is confirmed by one's ethnic identity. Although this has been changing over the years, the ties among the church members are emphasised while the boundaries of social units that are found in society itself such as the nuclear family are underplayed. Similar to St Patrick's, groups are formed within the church based on being in similar stages of life –e.g. similar age group. There is also considerable

emphasis placed on collective decision-making. However, where St Patrick's relies on a well-defined and formalised structure for its organisation, Salem relies on a more loosely structured organisation. Premised on a more generally shared identity as Afro-American Christians many of the commonalties found in Salem are those that have been created in the church itself in the course of, for example, 'feeling happy'; these commonalties in turn re-enforce their more generalised identity.

St Mary, somewhat like Salem, is a church that is at odds with society. However, unlike in Salem, there seems to be comparatively little discomfort about it. Its church members seem, on the whole, comfortable being uncomfortable. More firmly espoused to individualism and/or to diversity than either of the other two churches, there is more insistent emphasis on individual agency; and the church's critical attitude toward society is primarily directed towards public institutions. The multi-ethnic character of the church is a conspicuous affirmation of this diversity that takes other forms as well. There seems to be greater acceptance of situations that most people might find uncomfortable such as being in conflict over an issue, whether personal or public. Overall, its American members are individualistic and seem willing to go to considerable lengths to have their own way. There is considerable emphasis on group solidarity among the Koreans, be they American or Korean citizens; many of them eventually return to Korea. Whether they are consciously individualistic or not, there generally is a feeling of deliberately shaping one's life. Thus boundaries of social units they belong to from outside the church are maintained conspicuously in the church itself. Parent-child relations seem relatively unaffected by the service; there is little effort at supervising the children to conform to the service.

As I have mentioned repeatedly, each faith community shares common traits among itself so that one community is different from another. This kind of community is formed because its members feel comfortable in and attracted toward a certain kind of moral community. Part of this shared commonality rests on what degree of likeness is acceptable or desirable. There is considerable variation in the kind of detail and level, which bind members of the different churches. For the Korean-Catholic community at St Mary for example, it is not only shared nationality, but also shared faith and worship and, therefore, locale that bind them together. Among other expatriate groups, shared nationality alone is sufficient.

One of the more important common traits that the church members of St Mary share among themselves is the acceptance cum expectation that they may actually be very different from each other in different ways. This is a different kind of commonality than one found in either Salem or at St Patrick's; it is more abstract. The common traits the latter two emphasise are more specific; they put weight on similarity of experiences.

Despite this similarity, there are noticeable differences in the way a community is formed in Salem and St Patrick's respectively. At Salem, shared experiences created on the spot are important; the church relies on the spontaneity and cumulative improvisation of members. 'Feeling happy', the 'call-and-response' during the sermons, for example, are cases in point. Communal unity and ethnicity is reaffirmed in the process. By contrast, collective unity is moulded through carefully co-ordinated efforts through prior and frequently collective deliberation at St Patrick's; this is especially the case for the Sunday services. A tighter and less deliberately constructed tight-knit unity is found in the smaller church based groups. Because ethnicity does not serve as a common denominator, commonality seems to be found within the context of a more compartmentalised life which perhaps only a smaller number of people could share. For the larger group such as the congregation at mass, there is greater deliberation. Thus, the linking of arms during the Lord's Prayer at the 9:30 a.m. mass is pre-arranged and of comparatively short duration.

A corollary emphasis on commonality is the degree and nature of differences that are accepted within a group. The emphases on commonality and on differences among a group are not directly correlated as they seem if we just look at the case of St. Mary; there we see commonality at the most abstract level and actual and copious differences at a more concrete level. How specific or abstract the commonality that is sought is a function of, among other things, the degree of cohesiveness within a group, the extent to which there is a perceived need to maintain that cohesiveness, self-perception, the perception of others, or, more reflexively, how the group understands others to perceive them. If these change, then so too the extent to which one seeks more specific or abstract commonalties. Salem, as I have stated, has been the most tightly-knit community of the three; given that Afro-American churches have been the public institution most identified with Afro-Americans, this may not be surprising. And over the years that I have been visiting the church (Spring 89 to 99), some common traits have persisted such as being restrained in the expression of differences resulting from relationship issues, or the efforts

to individuate church members in the course of the service. By contrast, the extent to which gender differences are marked have been changing over the same period.

There are two issues that each church shares among themselves and somewhat differently from each other. One is a certain attitude toward emotional expressiveness. Another is a point that I have already raised: the relation between their church and society. These two points will be explored in the following two sections but with a somewhat different slant from this section.

3. 'It's a Hard Way to Heaven'; Seeking Salvation on the Way:

To be a Christian means believing in life after death. One's salvation ultimately means being united with the divine in afterlife. Life in society as such is the time one hews one's way to salvation, to that union, what the Baptists call 'home going'. There was a time when life seemed to be relevant only in relation to this afterlife; to use a language more familiar to Catholics, one led life as a member of the Church Militant (earthly life) fighting for the Church Triumphant (heaven).

Over the years, and well before I began my research, there was a shift of emphasis on the notion of salvation that affected the three churches among others. In the case of the Catholics, this change probably resulted from Vatican II where a more secularly pro-active church was advocated. In the case of Afro-Americans, improvement in life conditions is probably the decisive factor. Of course, ultimate salvation is still sought in one's afterlife. As a corollary, ultimate accountability of one's life is a matter of afterlife. In the meanwhile, however, many consider that some Christian victory could be snatched in the many battles of life; small salvation can be won on earth itself. That is, to put it in my agnostic terms, instead of laying a straight and narrow path leading to eternal salvation, one can and/or should build a way station or, better still, a city of God in society itself. Given this view, the three churches share the view that grace is primarily something that one works for, rather than as something that is mainly given. Again, there seems to be some differences in their respective implicit assumption about how much grace is given, and how much is gained through individual striving.

Though it should be obvious to any devout Christian by now, I want to state categorically that this section is not a theological discussion. I shall be focusing on the kind of earthly

salvation that is presented in these three churches from an anthropological perspective. Ultimate and divine salvation, like the question of individual faith, is not the focus of this dissertation.

The difference in the three churches is also reflected in the different presentations of earthly salvation. In terms of religious symbols, St Patrick's seems to be modelled largely on the Holy Family, while that of St Mary and Salem seems to be based on the notion of the Kingdom of God. The latter two also have each adopted a language that one might more closely associate with that of the Church Militant; that is, the Church Militant meaning actively confronting opponents of the divine will.

Two kinds of social unit are emphasised in St Patrick's, the couple and the family. Of the two, the family is given more emphasis at many different levels throughout the different services. At the more collective level of the church, the family is emphasised as a representation primarily of the relation between its members and God; the believers are presented as children of God who together form a family or home at St Patrick's. The church frequently presents itself as a community that functions as a family. It is not that the church is a family as a sum of its members; many of its parts are engaged in many different activities. Rather, the church as a whole is presented as a family or more accurately the home of a family where its members might feel comfortable and have a sense of belonging. Considerable stress is placed on leading a healthy family life which is equated with nurturing both adult members and the next generation.

Not all the adult members of St Patrick's have raised a family of their own; many are single or just married without children. The Holy Family as a model does not pose a problem in accommodating them. Earthly salvation is presented as a highly individualised process. It is presented as a result of living 'correctly' as one goes through one's life, each in one's own way as one finds it. Implicit in this is the notion of vocation or avocation, loosely interpreted, in which one tries to fulfil one's role in life as best one can; so too, there is an acceptance of things as they stand. It is by starting off from how things are that there should be improvement, not a drastic overhauling. Generally, things in the present are not too bad, but they can be better in the future. Because of this approach, there is a tacit affirmation of society and many of its institutions, especially the family. Thus, whether one is actually active as a member in a family or not, part of this salvation lies in upholding the institution of the family where its members interact with one another amicably, as the members of St Patrick's are expected to do among themselves. It would seem that underlying these is an assumption that grace has been given with

one's life, and that one's path to salvation both here in society as well as ultimately in afterlife lies in safeguarding and nurturing that gift.

St Mary's Kingdom of God is set up in opposition to society as is, particularly to some of the public institutions in society. Implicit in this is a shared discontent with society as is. Salvation comes from striving for as close an earthly approximation of the Kingdom of God, by righting American society within itself and especially in relation to other societies. The Kingdom of God is a society that had been constructed through a combination of abstract principles and empathy for others on the part of church members. Its location is and may always be in the future because the Kingdom of God consists of applying universalistic and abstract principles such as peace and justice into the present and concrete. The direct victims of perceived injustice of society are primarily and conspicuously other than members of the congregation, people in El Salvador for example. If grace has been given early in one's life, one also seeks it throughout one's life through this quest. The Kingdom of God presented in St Mary also has a collective character. It is collective not necessarily because the church members strive for the same Kingdom in unison. The Kingdom of God has many different facets. Further, the striving for it is a matter of individual conscience that may put one in conflict with others; this, of course, does not preclude one's finding soul mates. The collective character of the Kingdom is that as a product of these diverse efforts all its members and, hence, society should benefit from it. If there is to be a loving and closely knit community, it is to be found in the future.

The Kingdom of God presented in Salem is different from St Mary's. Strictly speaking, what Salem is offering as salvation on earth is not the Kingdom of God. The two churches share a similar view in that the real Kingdom of God is vastly different from what could be found on earth. In the case of Salem, one has the impression that the difference between society and the Kingdom of God is unbridgeable. At the same time, Salem presents an image of God that is more socially active than the one seen at St Mary. Underlying this is an assumption that grace has been given and will be given in the course of one's life. One strives to gain and preserve it.

In St Mary, society is Caesar's domain; God is not seen to have intervened directly except through the life and death of Christ. It is for humans to apply the abstract principles derived from the notion of the Kingdom of God to society. There is an assumption that society can be good; and opposition to society as is is primarily a corrective measure. By contrast, society as such is not presented as being potentially good in Salem. On the contrary, it is

presented as inherently evil or, at the least, bad. To follow divine guidance means waging war on the side of good against evil. Further, as I have mentioned in Chapter V ('Preaching' in Salem), God is presented as rewarding true faith in earthly terms as well; for example, he is perceived to have intervened for the truly faithful who were suffering injustices of slavery.

In Salem, salvation comes from fighting on God's side. God may not seem to be fighting actively for his cause, but he is sufficiently involved in Caesar's domain to urge his faithful to soldier on. There is a general agreement about where this struggle should take place: in the USA. Moreover, the church members themselves or their ethnic group are perceived as the victims of society's injustices. Socio-economic success of any Afro-American is presented not only as a strike for racial equality and justice, but also as a part of Christian struggle on earth, as earthly salvation and perhaps as grace successfully gained. Because of this connotation of moral/religious virtue, tokens of socio-economic success are made visible in the form, for example, of clothing (e.g. fur coats in winter) and cars. As far as I know, Euro-American pastors in Champaign-Urbana do not drive expensive cars. By contrast, quite a few Afro-American pastors, including that of Salem, were driving Mercedes Benz by the time I started my research in 1989. At that time, there were very few Afro-Americans who drove expensive foreign cars in the twin cities.

At the moment, there is a delicate balance between the obviously successful Afro-Americans and those who are not. Individual agency is not ignored. However, lack of socio-economic success can be explained by the fact that society as is is marked by a conflict between good and evil; and ungodly forces can thwart Christian progress. Thus, while socio-economic success can be interpreted as a token of divine blessing, the lack of success does not imply a corollary lack of blessing. There is some degree of unity and equality in the shared sense of struggle for now.

The different ideas concerning earthly salvation produce different ways of reckoning time. Most noticeably, there is considerable variation in the presentation of history.

4. Using History to Reckon Time:

Many Afro-Americans reckon time by using historical references; Salem is no exception. Time-reckoning stretches over several generations; theirs is a community where their forebears

are socially present. However, their historical narratives actually have a considerable gap. Much is made of the time of slavery and the period around the civil rights movement leading to now. By contrast, little if any is said about the period between the emancipation and the early half of the twentieth century. The pattern of time-reckoning in terms of Afro-American history only is linear.

This emphasis on historical continuity is in marked contrast to the way time is reckoned at St Patrick's. Time is reckoned in terms of the present with little reference to historical continuity. This present is unchanging in the shape of the Holy Family and, their more human embodiment, the nuclear family. The family has been the bedrock of stability that ensures the future. It is like a solid vessel that navigates the flow of time. Clock time is observed like a well-run ship. The flow of time in which this ship is floating is undefined; except that it has many challenges for the ship's crew. The passage of time that is marked concerns what is happening in the ship or family itself; again, like a well-run ship, it is presented as being structured. It is of short duration; as the flight of time's arrow is concerned, it is straight and short; and to the extent that the flight does not seem to have end, the arrow seems suspended in mid-air. Further, because the larger flow of time is not defined, there is no explicatory genesis of this nuclear family either in terms of locality or of history.

St Mary's time-reckoning seems timeless in terms of direction. References to different historical periods are frequent not only in the sermons but also in some of the social events that are organised, such as the Paschal meal. Compared to Salem, for example, St Mary alludes to a greater variety of historical periods whether they concern American history, Church history, or Biblical times. It is however, very difficult to place St Mary as a faith community in any one historical or temporal continuum. Although history is acknowledged, time is not really reckoned in terms of history. This is because emphasis is mostly placed on the distinctness of different periods, which have become analogous to different cultures. If there is continuity, it is achieved at a more abstract level where many differences can be transcended through intellect and empathy.

There seems to be a correlation between the size of the collective and the depth of historical continuity. As Evans-Pritchard had pointed out in the context of the Nuer and their genealogy, the larger the collective the Nuer referred to, the deeper the generational reach or, in this case, historical continuity (1969).

The lack of historical continuity reflects the smallness of the social unit most emphasised in church, the individual qua individual. Actually, there are two social units at St Mary. One is the individual; and the other is the Korean congregation. I don't know that the non-Korean members of the congregation look upon their Korean counterpart as a single person. The latter's presence serves to underline another individualistic assumption: the members of St Mary come from different walks of life and each have different history.

St Patrick's has the historical depth of two generations. This would be enough for the presentation of the nuclear family. Salem, which has the greatest historical depth is also the church that refers to the largest collective, both the church itself as a whole and Afro-Americans as an ethnic group. Again, the ideas of Evans-Pritchard are applicable in explaining their historical presentation, which seems to skip a few generations between slavery and contemporary Afro-Americans. In the context of kinship, several generations of forebears who are found between contemporary groups and their common ancestors are compressed. It is the original and, at times, distant ancestor whom all have in common that also provides unity to the large collective. Somewhat similarly, the presentation of shared ancestry from Afro-American slaves re-enforces ethnic unity.

Pointing out a correlation between the size of the collective and the extent of historical continuity does not explain why: a) these three churches seem to present different historical depth, or b) why they seem to emphasise collectives of different sizes.

Admittedly, both Catholic churches lay claim to having an ethnically diverse congregation; and St Mary obviously has one. Further, ethnicity seems to be important for Euro-American Catholics (e.g. Irish Catholics, as opposed to Italian or Polish Catholics etc.). Further, many of them have a history of immigration that is later than the Civil War. The Mid West does not have Euro-American regional history that stretches back in time as much as does the East Coast.

Note however, that St Mary presents the congregation as 'American' in relation, for example, to another parish in El Salvador. If Euro-Americans do not have a long regional history in the Mid West, neither do the Afro-Americans. Unlike Native Americans, for example, the two 'races' match each other in historical depth in most areas of the USA. Regionally speaking, the history of slavery is mainly the history of the East Coast and of the South. Further, as I have mentioned earlier (Part III, Chapter V section 5), there is considerable variation in the

Afro-American experiences, both historically and regionally. Quantitative comparison may not be particularly useful in this context, but the variation among Afro-Americans may not be as great as that among Euro-Americans of different ethnicities. However, as the master narrative of slavery shows, a narrative or a master narrative that overcomes these differences is not inconceivable. Further, Euro-Americans could leave aside 'race' relations and focus on other aspects of Euro-American history; when this happens, it tends to be fairly personal, or strictly social (e.g. the anecdote regarding Babe Ruth). Or again, they might refer to the many interracial collaborations in the past few decades; this has not happened.

Additional explanations seem to be in order. Some of these explanations would be concerned with the issues of 'race'. I shall touch upon some of these issues in the following section. Moreover, I shall be doing so in terms of the different attitudes these churches have to emotional expressiveness.

5. Different Feelings, Different 'Time'

'Race' and ethnicity are very complex issues in America. This section is an extension of the previous one, but largely from the perspective of 'race' relations. I want to discuss some of the possible reasons for history not being used as an identity marker either for Euro-Americans or Americans in general in the two Catholic churches. I shall examine this question primarily in terms of guilt and anger. Related to the latter issue are the different attitudes toward emotional expressiveness. Unlike many books written about race relations, this section is not concerned with offering a solution except to suggest that the participation of someone who is neither Euro- or Afro-American in the discussion of 'race' may lead to one. Talking impressionistically from my own experience, such participation seems to have caused discomfort among some Afro- and, especially, Euro-Americans. I don't know how much of this discomfort resulted from my being perceived a 'foreigner', or as being of neither 'races', or from the manner of my presentation.

Very early on in my research, an Euro-American minister came to preach in Salem. Unlike Afro-American ministers involved in pulpit exchange, he came alone without the supportive presence of his church members. He apologised for slavery, for segregation and all the hurts that Afro-Americans had suffered and suffer as a result of racism. At the end of the service, he stood by the door with the pastor to greet the outgoing church members. Some

members looked the other way as if embarrassed, and hardly any shook hands with him as would have been customary with ministers standing by the door. I could see colour slowly creeping up the minister's face.

Being neither of the two 'races', I found myself sympathising both with the Euro-American minister and the church members of Salem. This was partly because I felt I had somewhat analogous experiences. As a Japanese who lived in post-World War II Philippines for a few years, I thought I knew what it felt to face anger as a member of a guilty party. At the same time, having lived in Europe and now in the USA, I also have some idea about what it meant to be on the receiving end of racism.

Perhaps, it was inevitable then that I would ponder over related questions of anger and guilt, especially in the context of 'race' relations. Over the years, I became aware that there was a protocol of race that very frequently guided the relation between Afro- and Euro-Americans. Avoidance and contact are carefully handled¹. The Euro-American minister unintentionally caused a breach in this protocol. Members of other ethnic groups seem to be excluded from this protocol, but can be nevertheless be trapped by it. Relations between the two have been changing over the years and have many complex dimensions; for example, there are considerable generational differences. What follows are based on my observation of people who were in their late twenties and older at the beginning of my research (1989).

Generally, Euro-Americans do not identify themselves as such either as an individual or as a group. This is partly due to their being the majority. Unless one were a white supremacist group, for example, it is not usually easy to define a group overtly as Euro-American or predominantly Euro-American. To do so especially in relation to other ethnicities, particularly to Afro-Americans, very frequently touches upon the question of Euro-American responsibility. Even to identify oneself as a member of an Euro-American collective as the minister did at Salem could at times cause difficulty –probably with both 'races'. There is considerable difference between Euro- and Afro-American perceptions even about current racial relations

¹ For example, an Euro-American will usually not ask a favour from an Afro-American stranger, and vice-versa. an Afro-American will not from an unknown Euro-American. One may not ask help with one's luggage in an airport, bus stop or some such public places. They may find themselves grocery shopping together, but they seldom exchange recipes.

(Sigelman and Welch 1991: 47 - 66)². Consequently the perception of what might constitute Euro-American responsibility will probably vary equally. Further, an acknowledgement of collective guilt can be construed as an implicit assertion of power by those who have experienced discrimination; again, there is considerable difference of view about how much (and in what context) any one group has the power to effect change. At the same time, as the writings of Shelby Steele (1998), for example, show, there seems to be a reluctance on the part of many Afro-Americans to shelve the question of guilt. Without the luxury of living physically away from each other as citizens of different nations do, these issues can become a thorn in one's side.

It is difficult to gauge the impact of living in a university town the size of Champaign-Urbana on inter-ethnic relations. Given its size, the people of different ethnicities mingle regularly. They work, shop and study together. Now more so than ever they frequently live in the same neighbourhood³. It is difficult to tell how much of this underlying tension can be resolved by living side by side. This is especially the case if there are some differences in dealing with emotional issues as is the case especially between Salem and St Patrick's. I have frequently wondered how communications between them could be possible. A common language does not seem readily at hand. This would further complicate the expression of feelings that might be complex and painful.

'Race', rather than class would seem to be the main consideration in explaining the different attitudes toward expressing feelings. Though class cannot be discounted entirely, it is not particularly relevant in the comparison of the three churches. None of the three are clearly identifiable of one particular class. Instead, they all seem to enjoy considerable class diversity in their respective congregations.

Rationality is given considerable premium in both St Patrick's and St Mary. At Salem, there is greater room for expressing feelings purely in terms of feelings; explanations for the why and wherefore of these feelings do not always seem necessary. The subject of feelings in both Catholic churches is primarily the individual. In Salem, there is more explicit emphasis on the church as a collective. Thus even if it started as an individual expressing his/her feelings, the group may join in to share the feeling.

² Whereas only 11 to 23 % of Euro-American respondents in 1989 said that there were discrimination against Afro-Americans in several areas of American life, 37 to 61% of Afro-American said so in the same survey (Sigelman and Welch 1991: 57)

³ Many of the Afro-American population are still concentrated in one residential area that straddles both cities.

Even during the service, feelings belong to the realm of the individual at St Patrick's. They are depicted in the context of a rational narrative of personal experiences such as events that took place in the childhood of the preacher or in his daily life. A causal relation between one's personal experiences and feelings is implied. And there is an assumption that these can be shared and, therefore, understood. The narration, just like its music is delivered in a practised and measured tone. If there are strong feelings associated with that experience, they are implied. This implicit emphasis on the rational presentation of feelings echoes the attitude of Anouilh's Becket (Part I, Chapter III, section 2); feelings are left in check so that the situation does not get out of hand.

The relatively small discussion/social groups that are organised at St Patrick's also point to this assumption that personal experiences can be shared and understood by some. In a small group, a more individuated personal narrative can be developed. Premised on mutual understanding, one's narrative can contain more personalised details including different feelings. At the same time, such a group is different from a one-on-one friendship; it is more like a 'family' whose image is upheld in St Patrick's. As we have seen in the case of Yoko (Part II), there are negotiations in the construction of the narrative even in a one-on-one relationship. However, it is primarily a direct negotiation between the two involved. In a group, there is not only multiple one-on-one negotiations by members, but they each also negotiate with the group in toto –assuming, of course, that there is no group within a group. Thus, the degree to which one could individuate oneself even in terms of narrative may be more limited in a group. There very frequently are models for the construction of narratives which not only prescribe some topics or themes and but also proscribe others.

Rational and measured display of feelings that one finds at St Patrick's are found to be less than satisfactory for many members of Salem. For them, that is not **church**. Conversely, some at St Patrick's voluntarily admitted to their discomfort in and disapproval of the kind of display of emotions that one sees at Salem.

Passion is welcome only when it is righteous and/or fits the religious context at Salem. Only then can passion rise above 'intellect'. I am not sure that strictly personal feelings that may be neither righteous nor religious such as grief resulting from bereavement or anger and frustration resulting from a relationship problem such as divorce are any more readily accepted by members of Salem than they are among the population at large. Very frequently waves of

feelings ebb and flow during a service at Salem. What might have started off as a trickle in the form of an individual expression of feelings, for example, through a testimony builds up to a rising tide where a good portion of the church are directly involved. Even if they were relevant at the beginning –and, this is not always the case- the specifics of individual narratives are transcended by a collective sharing of feelings. This in turn meant that the causal relation between one's feelings and specific experiences became relatively unimportant. Similarly, different feelings were frequently expressed during the service, including, at times, anger. These feelings, like the specific narrative associated with them, became almost irrelevant in the course of service. A different set of feelings was fostered instead; these feelings were a product of the moment which the assembly in the church both amplified and consumed at the same time.

The intensity of feelings expressed may vary in degree from one to another service. However, these feelings are perceived to be similar in character: 'feeling happy' or 'feeling the spirit'. Underlying this is a master narrative of suffering overcome or of being blessed through the redemptive power of God both for the individual and for the group. Suffering is presented as the results of natural causes such as illness, or of living in the world at large –e.g. problems accomplishing a task. And the world is not the making of Afro-Americans but mostly of Euro-Americans.

The complex feelings associated with Euro-Americans are to some degree extended to the many different institutions of American society. However, the two are not always seen as being identical. As observed among Salem church members, there is considerable ambivalence toward present day socio-political institutions of society where anger and expectation, among other things, are mixed together in this potent brew. Afro-Americans and other minorities have made considerable inroads over the years. And it is not clear how long or how much overlap Afro-Americans will perceive between Euro-American ethnicity and the socio-political institutions of society. For example, one of its members is the chief of police of one of the twin cities; no doubt, his presence is not the only reason for this, but the kind of anger that newspapers report Afro-Americans as having against the police has not been expressed in church.

There still is anger and resentment against Euro-Americans and the many institutions in American society; they are not fully resolved either in terms of Euro-American ethnicity or in the form of other institutions. Whether this anger stems from the past or the present and personal experiences, it is interpretatively projected to the past. As we have seen with the parallel drawn

between the Book of Exodus and the fate of Afro-Americans, God is seen as the redeemer even on earth. Lingering anger and resentment against Euro-Americans can be seen in the implicit denial of Euro-American contribution for the betterment of Afro-American conditions. There is a tendency to reject relations between the two ethnic groups that smack of power considerations⁴.

Coming back to the unfortunate Euro-American minister who preached in Salem: could he have had a better result if he talked with passion? Perhaps... Could those who are being apologised to share similar feelings with the one doing the apology? One might also ask whether, even in terms of feelings, the issues of anger and guilt can or should be resolved in terms of apology. Meanwhile, there often seems to be an uncomfortable silence. And St Patrick's and St Mary do not have a past that stretches far in terms of race relations. By contrast, it is sometimes difficult to tell the past apart from the present in Salem.

Sections 4 and 5 of the concluding chapter to Part III looked at some of the underlying socio-cultural factors that can shape a group's time-reckoning. That is, these are specifically local factors behind a pattern of time-reckoning that might be more generalised. And in Section 6, I propose to examine some of the patterns of time-reckoning from a more general and abstract point of view.

6 Temporal Rhythms:

As I have mentioned at the beginning of this chapter (section 2) Salem had the clearest presentation of collective identity which was in turn expressed in terms of time-reckoning. It had the most complex and more complete pattern of time-reckoning. And primary focus will be placed on my observations in Salem; I shall briefly re-examine the manner in which the services were also a way of marking the calendar. That is, as we have seen, through the dress pattern of ushers, for example, the church had evolved a pattern of time-reckoning that was based on the time-reckoning practices in American society at large but that was nevertheless uniquely its own.

The adoption of binary principles facilitated the creation of their own way of reckoning time. As we have seen with the changes in the services carried out in the new building, Salem is not always bound by binary principles. Their adoption, however, has provided an effective way to organise the church as a distinct community; moreover, as the case of the sermon indicates,

⁴ For example, Shelby Steele's argument against affirmative action is partly based on its perceived ineffectiveness; it also seems to be based on his anger toward Euro-Americans who he presents as indulging in a power play to assuage

binary principles lend themselves to improvisatory organisation. Gender, space and time, most were organised along these principles. In a somewhat different way, I have shown that a sermon can also be constructed on binary principles. In this final section of my conclusion to Part III, I shall concentrate particularly on the different binary representations of time. Moreover, I will show that this binary pattern can be discerned in another kind of time, historical time.

The sermon is constructed on a simpler binary principle than are calendrical representations during Sunday services. A binary set is made of one defined member (i.e. the refrain) another essentially undefined member, or a member that is defined only in relation to the defined member (i.e. not the refrain). No two undefined members are alike. The only feature they do have in common is that they are of a longer duration than the defined member. We thus have:

(Where A = the main refrain)

$$(A_1 \rightarrow \neq A_1) \rightarrow (A_2 \rightarrow \neq A_2) \rightarrow (A_3 \rightarrow \neq A_3)$$

In this rather simple construct, the defined member remains constant. It was also, as we have seen, quite effective in pacing the sermon on an ad hoc basis. In the process, the sermon appears to have a regular structure.

Historical cum Biblical presentations in sermons frequently have this simpler binary pattern. What is repeated from time to time according to these presentations is divine intervention, more notably with the Babylonian captivity of the Israelites, the Exodus from Egypt, and, more recently and historically (as opposed to being cited in the Bible), the liberation of Afro-Americans from slavery. As with the improvisatory binary rhythm of the sermon, the interval between each repetition varies considerably both in duration and historical events. It is the belief that such a binary pattern obtains under certain conditions that affirms one's faith in repeated divine interventions. Although unpredictable, these divine interventions are repeated from time. And from this point of view, Afro-American history of slavery and liberation becomes part of a cyclical pattern; this is so even though on its own, it is linear. However, as cyclical time goes, these are repetitions with great gaps (both temporal and geographical)

their guilt feelings.

between them. Implicitly, divine intervention may recur in the future; however, it would be difficult to define when or what shape this would take.

The patterns of time-reckoning based on calendrical observation are more complex. The ushers of Salem, for example, mark time by combining two different kinds of binary sets: one to reckon the passage of months, and another of a year. Time is thus reckoned very regularly. Each of the binary sets have well defined members in terms of content and duration; specifically, they are marked by regular changes in their clothing (for the women ushers: the first Sunday of the month –red-, and other Sundays of the month –black-; for the male ushers: the Fall-winter season –black-, and spring-summer season -white)⁵. In theory, each set is autonomous of the other. If one were to visualise them, they may look somewhat like the following:

(Where A and B each stand for one of the two seasons, O for the first Sunday of the month and P for the remaining Sundays:)

$$(O_1 \rightarrow P_1) \rightarrow (O_2 \rightarrow P_2) \rightarrow (O_3 \rightarrow P_3) \rightarrow (O_4 \rightarrow P_4) \rightarrow (O_5 \rightarrow P_5) \rightarrow \dots$$

$$A_1 \longrightarrow B_1 \longrightarrow A_2 \longrightarrow$$

Compared to the earlier pattern, it is probably more stable and easier to maintain over a longer period. Once the binary set is defined in terms of its members and duration, further changes and additions may be made on the original pattern. This seems to be the case with the way time is reckoned by the ushers at Salem. Initially, the two binary sets related to time-reckoning were subsets of another binary based on gender. Over the years, this gender based binary became less important. As a result, the male ushers' clothing incorporated both binary sets; that is, apart from marking seasonal changes as they did before, they also began marking the change of months (by putting on a red shirt on the first Sunday of the month). If we take temporal changes with the longer intervals to be the main set, and those with shorter intervals to be the subset, we have the following:

$$\{[A_1(O_1 \rightarrow P_1) \rightarrow (O_2 \rightarrow P_2) \rightarrow (O_3 \rightarrow P_3)]\} \rightarrow [B_1(O_4 \rightarrow P_4) \rightarrow (O_5 \rightarrow P_5) \rightarrow (O_6 \rightarrow P_6)] \} \rightarrow \{[A_2(O_1 \rightarrow P_1) \rightarrow (O_2 \rightarrow P_2) \rightarrow (O_3 \rightarrow P_3)]\} \rightarrow .$$

..

In theory, once the pattern of time-reckoning has been stabilised sufficiently, one might add more variant patterns. Further, these patterns may not necessarily be based on binary principles.

If we just looked at the way time is reckoned through the regulated variation of the ushers' clothing alone, it would actually be quite difficult to discern the passage of years. The change in the months and the less frequent one of the seasons are too synchronised to tell one cycle of seasonal change apart from another. In the case of Salem, this dilemma is solved by the various annual church functions, especially Women's Day and, to some extent, the Brotherhood Banquet where church members adopt similar kind of clothing.

⁵ The Catholics also mark calendrical changes through clothing. In their case, the clergy puts on different vestments according to the liturgical calendar.

General Conclusion

About Time ...

1. Introduction:

Reflecting perhaps a predilection for apocryphal stories, I sometimes felt that my dissertation was like the story I heard about Balzac except that I lacked his equanimity. Balzac, so the story goes, once stuffed an olive in a de-boned pigeon (or tern or some such small bird), which in turn was stuffed in a partridge, which in turn was stuffed in a chicken, which was stuffed in a whole goose or some such series of fowls of increasing sizes, which was stuffed in a whole pig and/or a series of some such other 'edible' mammals again of increasing sizes including a cow. When the whole production was cooked. Balzac discarded the cow and a series of sundry edible mammals and fowls, each one of them without demur, and just ate the olive. One would of course say that the olive would not taste the way it did were it not for its special 'seasoning'. This, I hope, is certainly the case in my dissertation.

This chapter deals mostly with the 'olive' of my dissertation, patterns of time-reckoning and, secondarily, on time-related topics. I will however start this chapter with a brief summary of each of the three parts that constitute this dissertation.

This will be followed by a brief discussion of identity in relation to time-reckoning, especially to the clarity the pattern of time-reckoning. The question of identity has not been the main interest of this dissertation. Nevertheless, it has been a recurrent topic and frequently overlapped with ideas related to time-reckoning.

Another issue that recurred in all three parts of this dissertation is related to Radcliffe-Brown's notion of the 'unity of the sibling group'. I shall re-examine this idea as an extension of my discussion on identity. As we have seen, this concept can be applied to other groups than corporate groups that Radcliffe-Brown himself applied to.

Section 7 deals with the question of temporal directionality. Some of the patterns that have emerged in the course of analysis will be discussed very briefly. Many of them

directionality. The combination of these differently patterned time-reckoning can foster an overall time-reckoning that marks the passage of time.

Another approach to time-reckoning put forth by some anthropologists such as Hubert and Mauss, and Leach is to view it in terms of alternation of different units of time. Borrowing the term from Hubert and Mauss, I shall examine different patterns of time-reckoning as different patterns of temporal rhythm.

I shall conclude this chapter and dissertation with a few questions related to the way we reckon time.

2 Part I: 'Our' Time

Part I covered five literary texts that dealt with three different kinds of voluntary death: each death had been normatively sanctioned within a particular cultural context. For different reasons, each death not only marked individual time, but also collective time. Their death was an assertion of their autonomy despite their powerlessness in changing their circumstances.

In the case of Anouilh's Becket, Bolt's Thomas More, Christian martyrs both, and Mahabharata's Amba who immolated herself, the assertion of their autonomy took the form of willy-nilly confronting the state (Becket and More) or the male oligarchy (Amba). With the possible exception of Abe Yaichiemon, the seppuku described in Ogai's two short stories (The Last Will and Testament of Okitsu Yagoemon, and the Abe Clan) are not the result of a confrontation; their deaths took the form of accompanying their respective master in death. These deaths were not those of social isolates; on the contrary, their deaths upheld values that have been important to a particular society or group.

Through his quiet opposition and eventual death, Bolt's Thomas More upheld the institution of individualism, which assumes a pre- or extra-societal self. Personal integrity, meaning the continuity or the constancy of the self both as a whole and in quality, becomes an important virtue. There is a clear distinction between what is of the state and therefore public and collective on one hand, and what constitutes the personal and private and individual on the other hand. This distinction overlaps with the contrast between work (public and collective) and leisure (private and individual). In the world of

Bolt's More, leisure takes precedence over work. The temporal direction associated with the ideology of individualism is linear; ideally, it should be a clean straight line.

Anouilh's Becket represents a world where the distinctions between work and leisure or between the private/individual and the collective/public do not exist. It is a world constructed on the notion of vocation, which is different from a 'calling'. The 'vocation' associated with Becket has a meritocratic bias; the individual is closely if not indissolubly identified with the institution s/he is affiliated; one with a 'calling' may not have such strong institutional affiliations. Where 'vocation' is a matter of ascription, such as being a monarch, the distinction between one's self and the institution is not so clearly marked. In a meritocracy, the organisation of one's life and, therefore, the way one reckons time is based on one's vocation. The temporal continuity of the person is not so important for one with vocation; because heeding one's vocation can mean a complete break from one's previous life. Within the context of a vocation, however, linear continuity is implied.

The notion of vocation seems to be undergoing change among some members of American and European cultures; the importance attached to the continuity of the self has a bearing on this change. The linear continuity presented by Anouilh in Becket's life comes somewhere else than from the notion of vocation. The virtue Becket defends has been 'honour' which is relational in character. In his case, it dictates the relations both between his self and an institution, the Church, and among different institutions, such as between the Church and the state.

Amba's identity is based on her gender and caste. Time-reckoning is based on the different stages of life as a Hindu woman, a life course that has been denied her by Bhishma. To the extent that her life of penance is a period of waiting, it has a timeless quality and represents a break from the temporal continuity of the stages of life. There is, however, a continuity of her identity. Temporal continuity is achieved through re-incarnation. To the extent that her avatar is expected to undergo his/her own stages of life, there is repetition. The two different life cycles are linked by the continuity of the soul.

Mori Ogai's Okitsu Yagoemon disembowels himself in order to accompany his old master in death; this type of ritual suicide is known as junshi. This is justified in

terms of exchange. Yagoemon is repaying a debt of gratitude he incurred in his youth; his master forgave him for a crime that would have otherwise been punished. The time lag between the master's death and Yagoemon's junshi is justified in terms of the need to complete his duties to the han, or the feudal fiefdom. The overall pattern of time-reckoning that emerges is binary: the period when he was a retainer working in the han government, and the short period after the permission from the daimyo when his intention to commit junshi.

Unlike Okitsu Yagoemon, Ogai's Abe Yaichiemon and his family have suffered indignities even though it was officially accepted that he too had more or less committed junshi. One of many samurais to have done so, but the only one not to be fully accepted as a case of junshi by other samurais and, to some extent, by the han government itself. One of the reasons for Yagoemon and his family's indignities has been Yagoemon's 'bad' timing. He was thought to be lagging behind when other samurais were committing junshi. The time when some of the samurais have been disembowelling themselves has been a time when samuraihood has been unambiguously asserted. It was thus a time when the identity of all the samurais of that feudal state had been re-emphasised. Symbolically, it was a time of fusion, fused time; and as such it was very different from other times when more regular and diverse activities took place without necessarily referring to each other. This short period has also been a time marker more clearly dividing the rule of the two daimyos, the deceased and his heir.

3 Part II: Yoko's Time

The main concern of Part II has been the examination of individual time-reckoning. It is a pattern that emerged in the course of an individual, Yoko, narrating her life story. This consisted talking about her life before and after the death of her younger son and covers a period of a few years before I conducted the interview¹. And her time reckoning was largely based on two models, one based on the stages of life, and another on generational continuity.

¹ The period covered stretched roughly between 1985 to 1990, the year of the interview. Additional interview was conducted in 1993.

Yoko's narrative might be interpreted as an assertion of her identities as a daughter and mother. And indeed it is, at one level. There are several differences between Yoko and the characters in Part I. Considerations of power and agency frequently associated with temporal directions are absent in her narrative, which is primarily a quest for coherence. Yoko has been reconstructing a world shattered by two consecutive bereavements. This has meant her making connections among three generations of her family, her parents', hers', and her sons'. The link has been forged through the concept of indirect exchange. She has repaid the debt of gratitude she had incurred from her father becoming a parent herself to her sons. At the same time the relation between her and her dead son is one of direct exchange, and is based on a relation of co-evality. Fumio need not reach out to the next generation to complete the exchange. The exchange is already complete.

4 Part III: What Time is God's Time on Earth?

Part III is based largely on what I had observed during the period of 1989 to 1993 at three churches in Champaign-Urbana, St Mary, St Patrick's and Salem Baptist Church. The focus has been on collective time-reckoning. Denominational differences, though important, were not the only consideration. Since the last is an Afro-American church, issues related to ethnicity, especially those related to what is normally understood as 'race', also entered the picture; but they were far from being the whole picture. These many differences were also seen in the way each reckoned time both actually and representationally.

St Patrick's has been the church that seems most at ease with society; the church emphasises mediation between members of the congregation and society at large. Having the largest congregation of the three, it also has the most predictably regular time-keeping in real time. For example, Sunday services begin and end within the stipulated hour. Its weekdays are organised with pre-arranged meetings of committees and other groups (e.g. support group). The weekday and the weekend are spatially differentiated. (Parish Center and the church building). This disciplined approach is also reflected in the importance attached to fulfilling one's allotted role in society, whether it means being a

parent, teacher, or whatever. The church itself is modelled after the family, particularly the nuclear family. Time-reckoning associated with the nuclear family seem to predominate; the nuclear family represented tends to be a family of a couple and young children. Time-reckoning based on stages of life is combined with this; however, the life cycle is incomplete because there is hardly any representation of middle or old age.

St Mary has adopted a more critical stance toward society and its more public institutions. The link its members have with society is based on their reformist approach. While fulfilling one's role may be important, the emphasis is placed primarily on the individual qua individual. Of the three, it is the church that enjoys and accommodates the greatest diversity. St Mary probably has the most unpredictable time-keeping actually because many different things are variously accommodated in the Sunday services. This is the only one of the three to have the service interspersed with moments of silence. With almost no weekday activities, St Mary remains just a church, a place of worship.

Representationally, this church has a pattern of collective time-reckoning which almost seems timeless. Stressing ethnic diversity within the US and cultural diversity internationally, temporal differences are presented as if they were part of spatial difference; different cultures are found in different societies that have different geographical locale; so too historical differences were a matter different temporal locales. Somewhat similarly, historical time, for example, is presented as another culture. Nevertheless, there is a time or a temporal 'beat'. These are almost fleeting moments when different cultures (such as America and El Salvador) or ethnicities come together and briefly form a community. How this fleeting moment when diverse groups and individuals share time fits into an overall pattern of time-reckoning in terms of direction is not clear. While one may empathise with other groups and individuals, each of them may have different ways of time-reckoning. Thus, we have a repeated beat but perhaps not a very clear direction at the collective level.

Salem Baptist Church has a weary attitude toward society; the term 'sanctuary' meaning refuge might best describe it in this context. This was especially the case in its old building. It plays both protective and mediatory roles for its members in relation to mainstream society, which is largely identified with Euro-Americans. Ethnically the

mainstream society, which is largely identified with Euro-Americans. Ethnically the most monolithic of the three, it also has the most close knit and self-contained community.

Reflecting the rapid changes taking place among Afro-Americans, it is the church that has changed the most even over the years of my research. The most comprehensive pattern of time-reckoning has been observed at Salem; this changed over time. Gender based binary patterned time-reckoning among the ushers observed in the old church (up to Summer 1993) changed into primarily role based binary patterned time-reckoning. The pattern of time-reckoning that is most conspicuous representationally is the historical one; both concerning Afro-Americans as an ethnic group and Salem as a church community. Salem is marked by different annual celebrations. Afro-American history is primarily the history of Afro-American slavery, and is in turn situated in the narrative of divine intervention; the liberation of Afro-Americans from slavery is presented as being analogous to the story of the Jews in the Exodus and, to a lesser extent, with the Babylonian captivity. In terms of actual time-keeping, there is considerable flexibility: it fluctuates more than at St Patrick's but not as much as in St Mary. Typically, Sunday services last between two to two and a half hours. There are some meetings during the weekdays, but compared to St Patrick's, for example, it is sparse and not so varied in activities.

5. Identity and Time:

Part I of this dissertation has dealt with extreme situations which were life crises for an individual. These crises challenged the way of life and, hence, the identity of the main protagonist who rose to protect them. I justified their selection on the assumption that those who struggle to maintain or restore their identity were likelier to go to great lengths to clarify their position and, therefore, define their identity. Since one's identity influences how one reckons time, I have also assumed that I could observe a clearer pattern of time-reckoning. Moreover, since identity is relational in character, a clear definition of one's identity would, I believed, also mean that the person, group, or institution in relation to whom one was defending one's identity would also be clearly

delineated. I was right to some extent; but perhaps more than that, I had been lucky in my choices as this section will show.

Yoko in Part II had also felt that her identity as a mother had been challenged by the death of her son. The loss of her father also meant that her bond with him had become contested. In her narration, she establishes her identity both as a daughter and a mother by linking them together; this link consolidated both identities and provided coherence to her narrative. A clear pattern of time-reckoning could be recognised also. It was based on the stages of life where each life has been linked through the notion of exchange.

When one is placed in a crisis or in difficult circumstances where one feels obliged to assert one's identity, sometimes in spite of circumstances that challenge it, one would indeed clearly define one's identity. In the process, one also has a clear pattern of time-reckoning.

This view appears to apply to Salem as well, a church that most clearly represents a minority group that finds itself in adverse circumstances. Equality among its members is emphasised through the notion of fraternity. The diverse identities they may have in the world at large are mostly subsumed under the common identity as Afro-Americans and members of a close knit church community. It has a more complex and, at the same time, self-contained pattern of time-reckoning than in the other churches.

Not every character whose identity has been challenged in Part I has succeeded in asserting it. Try as he did, Abe Yaichiemon² was not successful. At best, Yaichiemon's efforts ended with ambiguous results. As we have seen, this ambiguity has been disastrously magnified for the members of his family. By contrast, Okitsu Yagoemon has been successful in asserting his identity as a loyal retainer and samurai. And he has a clear pattern of time-reckoning; Abe Yaichiemon himself does not.

The hunch I relied on in choosing some of the subjects of my dissertation that are discussed in Parts I and II has only been partially right. A crisis or an adverse situation may force one to assert one's identity. One does not necessarily successfully do so. Not succeeding in defending one's identity tends to mean not having a clear pattern of time-reckoning. Many of the cases I chose happened to be successful.

² Part I, Chapter VI

Underlying this is the importance of relationships in the definition of one's identity. Asserting one's identity successfully means having a clear or recognisable relationship associated with that identity. This entails some degree of negotiation with the audience and/or with those one has that kind of relation. Yagoemon failed to assert his identity unambiguously as a samurai because he failed in this negotiation on both fronts, his master and other samurais.

There is another exception. This is Bolt's More. His identity as an individualist protecting his self may be clear to Bolt's audience. However, given the character of this identity, Bolt's More would not have needed an audience. It does not depend on acknowledgements from others. It suffices that More himself knows. We have here an identity whose relation with others, including society and its institutions, consists of not having a relation; thus any relation one has is optional.

The nature of More's identity raises question about the presentation (or rather the lack) of time-reckoning at St Patrick's and especially St Mary.

The identity that is emphasised at St Patrick's is that of being a family member, primarily of being a parent. This is essentially an identity that belongs to the private domain but with public responsibility. Parents to the young are expected to socialise their children as members of the society. Once this duty has been carried out, the parents can revert to their private identity and life whether it consists of being a partner in a marriage, a single person, a retired senior etc. What the individual qua individual is in his/her privacy is not presented. For the same reason, the church community is presented as a family; a family mediates the private individual with society. The stages of life that is presented concurrently with the nuclear family is incomplete because one's phase of life is not so important in determining one's many identities.

To the extent that there is one, the identity presented at St Mary is of an individual differing from, if not actually challenging, public institutions. More so than other presentations of different identities, St Mary's is unusual in defining identity through what it is not, neither public nor collective. Somewhat like More's identity, it is enough that the members (and God) each know their own identity/conscience. This is reflected in the lack of a discernible pattern of time-reckoning in terms of directionality at the collective level.

Neither Catholic churches presents an overarching identity that is collective in character as Salem has done. Ethnic identity is one of the more established group identities in US society; but it is reserved for minority groups. Neither church is ethnically homogeneous like Salem has been; although St Patrick's has been predominantly Euro-American. Neither church has given the impression that theirs is a minority community; there has been a level of comfort with society that was not seen at Salem. This probably contributed to the relative absence of a forceful collective identity.

As a community, Salem not only asserted its ethnic identity as a group, but it also differentiated individual identities within the group itself. The different identities of church members were most clearly marked in Salem by different clothing and spatial distribution within the church (e.g. the ushers were usually at the back of the sanctuary/nave, and the deacons were seated in front of the altar area). Many were individuated as active members through an acknowledgement of events in their personal lives (e.g. marriage, birth, illnesses, deaths, promotion etc.) and the roles they played in the church (e.g. preparing for a church event). I had explained these in terms of Radcliffe-Brown's idea of the unity of the 'sibling group'. I have used his idea throughout this dissertation. In the following section, I shall briefly return to this idea.

6. Unity of the 'Sibling' Group:

The Abe brothers and their family (including their servants), Amba and her two sisters, Yoko's two sons, and the members of Salem constitute 'sibling groups'. There are three issues that concern them, differentiation, solidarity and equality within the group.

Radcliffe-Brown briefly touched upon the unity of the 'sibling group' in his discussion of corporate groups such as kin groups. Within his overall discussions of the structure of corporate groups, this idea is somewhat of an anomaly. His ideas on the unity of the sibling group are primarily about perception and actions based on that perception, not about the structure of a group. Although Radcliffe-Brown did not mention it, this idea touches upon the question of reflexivity. The perception of and actions based on that perception by those outside the group affects the perception and action of those within the group in relation both among themselves as well as to those

outside. These in turn affect the perception and action of those outside the group. Infinite regress is a possibility with reflexivity. We have a hint of this with Abe Ichizoku where there are more than two sides to this (i.e. the Abe brothers and their family, the samurais of the han, han government officials, the daimyo - Part I, Chapter VI, section 2).

Depending on the character of the group, there is difference in the relative weight put on differentiation, solidarity and equality within the group; its relations with others will also differ. The character of the group is in turn influenced by, among other things, how much the group is seen as apart from others, how much the members of the group are seen as interchangeable by others, the level and quality of perceived or actual hostility/threat from outside. The more the Abe brothers were seen with hostility as members of the family, the more they became isolated from their peers; so much so that they gradually withdrew from the company of other samurais. As we have seen, they eventually and unequivocally chose solidarity and equality among themselves.

In the case of Salem differentiation very frequently go hand in hand with solidarity and equality. There is a general awareness that others differentiate Afro-Americans unfavourably; moreover, many members of the church seem to think that others, mainly Euro-Americans, perceive them as being interchangeable. While the world outside is not seen as being particularly benign, it is not seen as being dangerously hostile.

The tragedy of Amba lay partly in her inability to recognise herself as a member of a 'sibling group' where the members were interchangeable. Failing to maintain unity, she exposed herself to danger.

Other situations such as school desegregation may be better understood through applying the idea of the 'unity of the sibling group'. Ever since the Civil Rights Movement, many have tried to desegregate schools. Children of different ethnicity are in the same space and 'time' where formal instruction is concerned. Do they, however, always share the same 'time' in terms of differentiation or solidarity? If, for example, Afro-American school children for whatever reason perceive themselves and/or are perceived as different would they compete with and, hence differentiate themselves from children of other ethnicity? From some of the anecdotes I have heard, some children tend

to turn to their 'own' group for differentiation; at the same time, they emphasise equality among themselves as a price for solidarity.

During the many years that I have been mulling over questions of time-reckoning, I frequently wondered what 'sharing' time means apart from being in the same temporal location as defined by mechanically consistent and reproducible measurements of time, frequently symbolised by the twenty-four hour clock. Some of the possible definition of 'sharing' also underlies temporal directionality.

7. Directions of Time

So far as actual patterns of time-reckoning are concerned, temporal directionality is not only culturally but context specific. Since temporal directions imply continuity in time, social relations help forge this link and are of paramount importance. Some time-related ideas put more emphasis on the nature of these social relations, while others stress the principals involved in these relations. Analyses of temporal directionality in terms of agency tend to put more emphasis on the question of principals, that is, the kind of 'person' who is involved. Studies related to exchange, or to rites of passage emphasise the nature of social relations.

The starting point of my dissertation has been on the principals in social relations, individuals and groups. I have focused primarily on the presentations of different relations as opposed to observations of actual relations being constructed. Most of them have asserted some degree of continuity in their lives through one kind of relation or another. The individual or the group has been mediated with these relations through the identity/ies they have assumed. Apart from historical references made at Salem, these relations covered a few generations at the most.

Time-reckoning involved in temporal directionality is very complex and is based on combining several different kinds of time-reckoning which may each have different directional pattern. Many were combinations of the cyclical pattern of time-reckoning and of the linear one. Similar events, actions or relations have been repeated successively. Thus, Amba's soul went through a new life cycle as Sikhandin/i; each cycle of life is lined up next to another. The temporal continuity that Yoko forged was through indirect exchange, where the 'gift' (one might call it 'nurturance') was passed on

from her father's generation to herself, and, in turn, passed on to her sons. Succession to the headship of a han or a household is similar to Amba's linked life cycles: one cycle of succession is lined up next to another. The pattern of the life cycles of successive heirs in relation to each other is more like Yoko's; each life cycle overlaps with the other where the successor is a member of the household of his/her predecessor. The glue for this continuity varies considerably. Amba's has been karma that stresses causality and perfectibility. The continuity of succession is based on the passing on the object of succession –be it high office, headship to a household, the household itself etc.

Even where there is considerable similarity, depending on what or on which particular relation is emphasised as a connector there will be some differences in the pattern. This is the case even within the same group. In Ogai's short stories, both types of linkages, overlapping and coterminous cycles, are presented at the same time, especially in Abe Ichizoku. Succession to the Abe household is presented in terms of generational continuity in a family where the life cycles and interest of the predecessor and successor overlap; by contrast, succession to being a daimyo is presented as consecutive incumbency to office and, therefore, in terms of coterminous cycles. For the successor, both types of time-reckoning apply; and depending on the context, the emphasis will be differently put.

Just as subtle difference in the context would lead to a somewhat different pattern of time-reckoning, so too, a similar pattern of time-reckoning can hide underlying differences. For example, the ideology behind the linearity of Bolt's Thomas More is different from Amba's or possibly of a Christian pattern of time-reckoning. The individualism associated with Bolt's More (and possibly Clarence Thomas in Greenhouse 1996: 196 – 208) emphasises origin or the past as the source of linearity. The person/child that one was (or the self that one has been from an indeterminate time) moulds what one is and will be; the past is one's present and will be one's future. One may go through several careers, and other changes in one's life course, but one would nevertheless claim continuity because one's self has charted a straight line by remaining essentially the same. By contrast, traditional Christian eschatology stresses the other end of the linear continuum, the future. This is perhaps more marked with Amba's pattern of time-reckoning, which is future oriented. One strives for salvation or, in Amba's case,

for rectification in the future, which is a negation of one's past and present; one might travel lighter in her world in the end.

Defining the temporal directions of a situation without analysing the actual time-reckoning and therefore the social relations may have very little explanatory utility (e.g. referring to work time in capitalist societies as 'linear'). The relation between temporal directions on one hand and time-reckoning and social relations on the other is not one between the metonym and the main body. Temporal directionality is more like an abbreviated expression of time-reckoning. As a part of context specific analysis, there are advantages in studying temporal directions. Firstly, it provides a different angle to approach complex relations, which might be explained more simply in the process. Secondly, because temporal directions mark connections among events and actions their analyses will allow for a more holistic approach.

8. The Rhythm of Time:

In the case of temporal directionality, the content is the form. The underlying perception of temporal continuity and of causality may be universal, but these are not the concern of this dissertation.

In the several cases that I covered, there was one particular pattern of time-reckoning that recurred continuously. This was the binary patterned time-reckoning or temporal rhythm. There was marked variation in the content; that is, the contexts in which this pattern was observed were very different. If the form is not entirely independent of its content, it seemed to have a considerable degree of autonomy. Combining both the simple and more complex models, not to mention an intermediary one (but without implying evolutionary change) I interpreted the following to belong to this category of time-reckoning:

- Becket's martyrdom (Part I, Chapter II)
- Junshi (Part I, Chapters V and VI)
- rites of passage (Part I, Chapter IV)
- church services on Sundays
- the repeated silences during Sunday service at St Mary (Part III, Chapter III)
- fleeting moments of community at St Mary (Part III, Chapter III)
- the singing of the Salem choir at certain intervals during service (Part III, Chapter IV)
- the singing of hymns in the two Catholic churches

- the various annual celebrations at Salem (Part III, Chapter IV)
- the binary patterned dress code of the ushers at Salem in the old church building (Part III, Chapter IV)
- pacing a sermon through the use of refrain (Part III, Chapters IV and V)
- the call-and-response in Afro-American sermons (Part III, Chapter V)
- references to divine intervention such as the Exodus and the liberation of Afro-Americans from slavery (Part III, Chapters V)

All of these share either features: the repetition of the similar, or repeated alternations. Given the difference in context and therefore content, the question concerning what similar features all these may share arises. That is, apart from the fact that similar things are repeated (simple model) or similar alternations are repeated (more complex model), do they also share similar structural pattern? I believe that the underlying similarity has to do with duration.

8-1. Duration/s Revisited:

The main point of Howe's objection to Maurice Bloch's argument has been the culturally specific character of duration. The duration of an event/activity etc. is context specific; moreover, as 'waiting' shows (Part I, Chapter IV, section 5), duration is frequently contested. However, the combination of 'durations' or the combination of two consecutive events/actions/relations that each covers a length of time may have universal features. The members of any one specific combination may be culturally specific; but the overall relation between these members in any one combination may be found throughout these different combinations.

In the real world there are no doubt many combinations or sets of durations where the members are more than the two of a binary set. This, I suspect, would especially be the case where time-reckoning involves complex and multiple combinations. Here, my discussion will be solely in terms of binary patterned temporal rhythms. This is for the sake of simplicity and because it provides a starting point for another way of discussing different patterns of time-reckoning.

The difference between the complex and simple models of binary patterned temporal rhythms is the difference in the kind of durations that are combined. One consists of the combination of a longer duration (whose length may vary on each

repetition) and another of a clearly shorter duration (whose shortness is relatively well defined). The other is a combination of one long and another short durations or a combination of two durations of more or less equal length; in the more complex pattern of time-reckoning; both members of the set are well defined in terms of length of time and/or content.

8-2. *The Simple Model:*

The simpler model of binary patterned temporal rhythm consists of a set where only one of the two members is defined. The other is a member by virtue of not being the defined member; the member that is not defined need not be similar to the undefined member in another similarly constituted set. Generally, the defined member is the shorter in duration and is the easier to identify.

Among the cases I have mentioned earlier, the following would be instances of the simpler model: martyrdom, pacing a sermon through the use of a refrain, the call and response in Afro-American sermons, references to divine intervention, the annual celebrations at Salem, fleeting moments of community at St Mary*, the repeated silences during service*, the singing of the choir*³. Some of the situations covered are microscopic in character (e.g. the sermons, the silences etc.) while others are macroscopic (e.g. divine interventions such as the Babylonian Captivity, the Exodus, and the liberation of Afro-Americans from slavery).

Some combinations of a fairly well defined or easily identifiable event/action/relation of a definably short duration with an undefined or less definable event/action/relation of a relatively indeterminate but longer duration seem to be more heavily shaped by specific socio-cultural factors. Such would be the case especially with the notion of divine intervention. However, one could also question if these very culturally specific events occur or are classified thus because there is a form and, therefore, a vessel to carry them? That is, because it happened once, did others make it happen again, or classify some ensuing events etc. as repetitions?

Sporadic repetitions are not unknown in other cultures (not always on such a grand historical scale as the biblical episodes or as the emancipation). Divine

³ the inclusion of the last three, marked with an asterisk, may be disputable, especially so with the last two.

interventions (both through saintly intercessions, as well as direct ones) on smaller scales are frequently identified; among other things, they are frequently presented as the basis for experiences narrated in testimonies. During Les Evènements of 1968 in Paris, some media figures drew a parallel with the French Revolution and the Paris Commune. The Meiji 'Reformation' (Meiji Ishin) more properly translated as 'restoration' implies repetition; and, though unsuccessful, some politico-military activists in the early Showa period (1920s and 30s) talked of Showa Ishin. Another people whose history has been presented as a repetition, the repeated quest for Israel, are the Jews (Don Handelman and Lea Shamgar-Handelman 1990)

Some of the patterns, especially those observed during Sunday services may be similar to some aspects of carrying out a 'task' (i.e. the silences, the refrains in a sermon, the singing of the choir). The repetitive elements help pace the service or the sermon and divide it into different sections.

Generally, the events/actions or the 'temporal beats' that are repeated are simpler in character than whatever has been happening; as a result, they frequently break the flow of whatever has been happening. Usually, what has been happening involves more complex set/s of activities/events etc. and therefore implies multiple flows if flow they do. Thus, the repetition of the temporal beat tends to have the effect of bringing these different and multiple flows together (even if perhaps at the level of a shared gaze). Thus, the temporal beat also tends to be shared time where a larger number of people share in the same activity and events. For example, a 'break' is more likely to be shared by all the workers in terms of activity. In the case of some nurses in England, they have organised special breaks to organise a support group among themselves.

If we look at the different annual church celebrations at Salem from this point of view, one might also add the following. Firstly these temporal beats may emphasise the overall unity of the group. Secondly, and concurrently, they form a different re-alignment within the group (e.g. there is a different configuration during the Women's Day as opposed to the Brotherhood Banquet through the different active participants).

This pattern of time-reckoning seems inherently unstable; especially if the intervals between the repetitions are really not defined at all either as content or duration except that they are not the repeated beat. If this form has the character of a charter for

the future (as opposed to the form being applied to interpret the past), there may be a tendency to shift toward the more complex model.

8-3. The More Complex Model:

Some instances that began with a simple model might have gradually evolved into a more complex model; and there may be changes in reverse. However, I suspect that many patterns of time-reckoning might have been of the complex model from the beginning.

The more complex model of binary patterned time-reckoning have both members of the binary set defined; as such, it is another instance of dualistic patterns observed in many other cultures (Maybury-Lewis 1989: 1 – 7, Eisenstadt 1989: 346 – 347). The fact that their respective durations are defined may be more important than whether one member is of a longer duration than or equal duration as the other. I cannot tell whether this is for specifically cultural and/or more universal reasons. It would seem that as with the simpler model, the member with the shorter duration tends to have a collective character; however, this may be for reasons of socio-cultural pragmatics (which may also be the case with the simpler model). Both members also are defined in terms of content. The relation between the two members is part of the definition. Thus, the relation between the two would be either of equality or of different status. Implying alternations, this pattern is likelier to repeat itself continuously so that one might think of the resulting overall pattern as cyclical (by contrast, the pattern of repetition of the simpler model is irregular). Because both members are defined, this pattern of time-reckoning is more stable.

Among the cases I have cited earlier rites of passage, junshi (more specifically, the relatively short time following the death of a daimyo or an important samurai lord when several junshi take place), church services on Sundays, and the binary patterned dress codes of the ushers more clearly belong to this category. The call and response in Afro-American sermons when it is the ministers who are responding belong to this category; this is because the ministers exercise more expert control than the general assembly in church normally does. Following Mauss and Beuchat (1979), one might also add seasonal changes of life like the ones they depicted of the Eskimos.

The member in the binary patterned time-reckoning with the shorter duration is collective in character in the case of junshi, the church services, the ushers' dress code, and the call and response in sermon. The first Sunday when the women ushers of Salem put on a red blouse and white suits (as opposed to the other Sundays when they put on a white blouse and black suits) is the day the whole church takes communion; and generally, more importance is attached to first Sundays. In the case of junshi, the notion of equivalence that is frequently implied in symmetrical exchanges makes the period preceding it equal or almost equal in value with the period of junshi. That is, the equivalence is not between the status of the master and of the retainer/s, but between the two contexts.

Because the pattern is stable it is probably easier to combine several different ways of time-reckoning to create a more complex pattern; it also probably facilitated objectification of time. Combining the complex model with the simple one may help stabilise the latter. This was the case with time-reckoning based on the dress codes of the ushers at Salem which contained two different kinds of cycles. Their combination with the yearly church celebrations stabilised the latter in the context of the time-reckoning of the church.

Some of these cycles can be so regular on their own that time-reckoning is not cyclical but actually circular so that differentiation between two cycles may be inadequate on their own. Combining the simpler model may help this differentiation. This was again the case with the ushers' dress codes. Both the duration and content of each of the two members of each of the two binary sets (annual and monthly) were constant. The monthly cycles were to some extent differentiated among themselves in relation to the seasonal cycle (e.g. winter as opposed to summer months, at the beginning or end of the seasonal cycle). The annual cycles cannot be differentiated on their own. They can be differentiated in reference to the series of annual church celebrations each of which are differentiated from the others as well as among their own kind respectively in terms of content. For example, Women's Day has been celebrated for more than fifty years (the pastor in question in the Pastor's Anniversary was appointed in 1981), involving mainly the women of the church, but with some different organising members from one year to another, it requires women to alter their attire slightly but obviously every year.

Among the many different patterns of time-reckoning found at Salem, we can see how the different church celebrations held annually complement the binary patterned monthly and annual cycles. A fuller time-reckoning obtains somewhat like the Gregorian calendar on which it is based, but is nevertheless uniquely of the church. However, not all the patterns of time-reckoning I have discussed (which are not all that one finds at Salem) dovetail each other so tidily.

Moreover, a pattern of time-reckoning that seem to complement another so well may just as well fit into a third pattern different from the other pattern it seems to be complementing. For example, Women's Day can also fit into the pattern of time-reckoning based on the church women's calendar of activities. Zuidema has shown how one particular event can combine several different kinds of time-reckoning. A rite of passage of life transition also marked a rite of seasonal change; the initiation rite of Inca youth took place at the winter solstice (1992). The overlapping patterns of time-reckoning amplify the significance of an event. However, they add to the problem of coherence, if indeed it is a problem. It is this question of coherence that I shall touch upon in the following section, which is also the conclusion of this chapter.

9. Conclusion

Maurice Bloch's criticism (1977) of Geertz was based on the argument that ritual time is not the same or even similar to the time observed in the day-to-day lives of Balinese. By contrast, Geertz's article (1973: 360 – 411) echoed Durkheim's idea that religion represented society; there seems to be an implicit assumption that there is some degree of coherence between society and religion and, therefore, in society itself; the different parts of society are linked together into a fairly unified whole, society, which might be represented. In the post-modern world of fragmented societies, one wonders what 'society' religion can represent. In arguing their cases, neither Bloch nor Howe have assumed such coherence. While pre-modern societies may not have been as fragmented as societies today, it is not clear that they were that 'unfragmented' either. In terms of time-keeping, for example, pre-modern societies have had complex patterns (Glennie and Thrift).

Whether for the sake of power, autonomy, identity or just for the sake of coherence itself, the cases I have covered dealt with individuals and groups who have sought one kind of coherence or another. In the cases of the individuals, both real and fictional, this quest for coherence reflected the extreme or difficult situation they were in. The same degree of coherence was not found in the other two churches. Neither church has been under similar pressure, nor do either of them such quasi-permanent source of group solidarity as ethnicity. In fact, not having the same degree of coherence has not stopped them from prospering or holding on vigorously. And even at Salem, the coherence in the pattern of time-reckoning seen in the ushers' dress code is different from one that is based on their activities during service.

One wonders if local coherence whether of an individual or of a group translates into coherence at a larger scale or, in the case of a group, into coherence at an individual level. For example, did workers have so much integrity in their life that its loss was felt when they had to submit their work hours to the capitalist work-discipline regulated by the clock as E. P. Thompson has argued (1967)? And the society he was referring to was less fragmented than our post-modern society. In Thompson's world of work discipline one is alienated from one's fellow men and from oneself. Conversely, where there is local coherence, is it enough? For example, Salem has a fairly coherent pattern of time-reckoning within the church and, up to a point, within the Afro-American world. However, this coherence is partly based on a dissonance at the all-American level.

Granted some sense of continuity is necessary, does coherence need always be continuous especially at the collective level?

Is resorting to the repeated 'beat' in the simpler binary patterned time-reckoning one way these issues are tackled? One of its effects very frequently consists of bringing several different strands of time together, like the main stem of the azalea bush might do for a 'timespread'. In an extremely complex post-modern society like the ones that many of us live in, its smallest sector tends to have very complex way of keeping time. Talking about an overall pattern of time-reckoning as a smooth flow is no longer possible –if it ever was. In such a situation, are we more likely to see the repetition of these temporal beats? And if so, at what collective level does one find it? For example, is there any

relation between the celebrations of VE Day (end of World War II in Europe) and the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth (1976) and the public mourning of Princess Diana?

Appendix i

Transcript of a sermon delivered in Salem (3 Feb. 1991)

I would like to talk today about 'Living above the ordinary'
'Living above the ordinary.'

5 We're still in the early weeks of a new year. I'd like to encourage your hearts, your spirit and your mind, that we will all strive to be the very best we can be.

For the motto is 'why be less than the best'. Why not be a recipient of all that God has for his children?

10 So many of us are coming up short because we are living below what God has taught us, living in the plain of the ordinary. We know when you are the people of God, you must live above the ordinary.

The month of February is what we call Black History month when the Lord's saying stays the same most Sundays throughout this month. I will be speaking on some area dealing with the black experience

15 The month of February gives us as a nation the opportunity to focus near on those positive things that have been done by people of colour which are omitted from our regular history books. I'm certain it was no accident that these things were omitted, but these things were omitted by design.

20 A nation who is dead set on one race being considered the premier and our race being left on the bottom of the totem pole. As black people we must not only focus on such issue during February. We should be focusing on areas of our own history throughout the year.

Some have the luxury of having things laid out for them in the regular textbooks. But you know that our people always had to dig a little deeper, run a little faster, only just to be up with the crowd. So it becomes ours as a people to not wait until February of each year, to focus on those things that we should pass along to each succeeding generation.

25 So often, our young people have had to come along and go over some of the same mistakes that we made in our days. Some of the same pitfalls that we have fallen into, our children are coming along right behind us falling in the same pits. But if we are ever to elevate ourselves as a race, we as parents and the generation that's moving along we must try somehow to smooth out some of the rough places in order that our children, our children's children might not make the same mistakes we have made.

30 And I'd like to say to the children of this generation: 'You've got to be willing to listen to wisdom. You've got to be willing to listen to those who have gone before you in order that you will be able to profit from their experiences.'

35 So many times, many of our young people feel that they know it all. You know some of them might have gone further in school than some old folk. However, this does not give you all that you need. Some of the old folk that could not even read their names as they say in ?voix parlez? have far more mother wit, far more wisdom than many of our younger generation. So, so

often. when we come along as young people and some of us did it in our days when we were young. We felt like old folk were old and foggy. and that they didn't hardly know anything. But believe me, as I continue to live and life continues to unfold before me. I recognise those things that my parents taught me were true.

And as we look today in the Book of Proverbs- the Proverbs is divine wisdom applied to earthly conditions of the people of God. The Hebrew term for proverb means a comparison. And it came to be used in an age, in any age as a moralistic pronouncement. Many proverbs are condensed parables. The sayings of this book form a library of instructions on how to live Godly life here on this earth and how to assure ourselves of the reward that comes at the end of the day.

Thus, these Proverbs are not so much popular sayings as they are distillation of wisdom from those who knew the laws of government. And though the theme running throughout the Book of Proverbs is wisdom for living, the specific teachings include instructions on folly, on sin, on goodness, on wealth, poverty, on the use of the tongue, pride, humility, justice, vengeance, strife, gluttony, love, lust, laziness, friends, the family, life and death. So almost every facet of human relationships is mentioned here in the teachings of the Book of Proverbs. Now, I want you to know that these are just as fresh today as they were when they were originally written

The motto of the wisdom teachers and theme of the Book is: 'The Fear of the Lord is the beginning and the starting point of wisdom'.

There are so many individuals who feel that they have the wherewithal to make it on their own, to go beyond God. Never acknowledge him as your Lord and your saviour. But I want to tell you all that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. This means that you have a reverence for God expressed in submission to his will. We've got to come to the realisation that it is not our will that we want to be done, but that we should want God's will to be done on earth as it is done in Heaven. We have to come to a recognition that God's will is working so well in heaven that we ought to want the same will down here on this earth.

Wisdom, my friends, is not acquired by a mechanical formula, but it is acquired by a right relationship with God. We've got to have a proper relationship with all-mighty God. And this brings me to the words of my text. And they are: 'where there is no vision the people perish; but that he that keepeth the words of the Lord, happy is he'.

We also strive to live above the ordinary. And I submit to you first that we must live above the ordinary as a people.

When you look at the history of the black people in America, I'll be the first one to admit that we don't like what we see. What do we see. We look at our people and we see that we are in the midst of economic slavery. Many of us are deprived of the earning power that we do have, economic slavery.

We also see brutality, we see individuals mistreating one another, not only do we see brutality as it has to do across racial lines, but we even see brutality in our own race, we have what we call black on black crime. Not only that, my friend but we see genocide and I think you'll an the idea in the message.

For my friend, the black men were brought to America to work in the cotton fields, in the tobacco plantation, and in the cane fields of this nation. For a people who claimed to be church going and Bible-believing Christians, I wonder: were they putting their Christianity into practice or were they just doing what the things that they wanted to do; and then many of them tried to use the words of God to justify slavery!

85 If my Bible reads as theirs did, the Bible says out of one blood God made all of the human beings that dwell upon the face of the earth. Listen to ??? (religious radio?) program in the morning the fact that Adam and Eve were the first parents of the human race. The human race that only left Noah and his family and his men. Out of the loins of Noah and his family came all of us. It matters not what colour our skin might be or the hue of our hair or whatever: it says to me that God made us all good and that God did not make any junk. But when God made us he said that it is very good. I thank God that I am part of that very good.

90 Many of these so-called Bible-believing Christians treated their slaves as subhumans. They enacted laws, my friend, that made it a felony for anyone to teach a slave how to read or write. When they drew up the Declaration of Independence that state truths that were self-evident that all men were created equal that they were endowed by the Creator with certain inalienable rights; among these are: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. My friends, when 95 they wrote that Constitution, the 'all men' clause did not mean black men. They put in the Constitution that a slave is equal to only 3/5 of a person. Isn't that ludicrous!

100 These slaves were forced to work in the heat and the cold. They cleared the land from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes. They were sold from the slave markets like animals from auction blocks. Men were sold away from wives and children, women were separated from their husbands and from their children: sisters and brothers were separated never to see each other again. What a cruel way to treat a human being. And this form of inhumanity to man gave rise to the plantation system, to the Southern aristocracy. Slaves on the plantation were divided into two categories: one, field niggers and the other, house niggers. And the house staff were picked from the lighter skinned slaves called mulattos; and these were slaves fathered by white men. 105 They pitted house niggers against field niggers by telling them that they were better than their darker brothers and sisters because they had white blood running in their vein.

These African-Americans, our forefathers and mothers were not a part of any freedom, not even the freedom of religion.

110 When they felt the need to worship God they would select some inaccessible place and would worship under the veil of darkness. The house staff would go and as they would pass out, and they would issue the warning to the field slaves. You could hear them singing in their songs as a way of disguising the pronouncement.

They said: "steal away, steal away to Jesus, I ain't got long to stay here."

115 They would continue moving through slave camps telling one group after another: "Steal away, steal away to Jesus, I ain't got long to stay here." Not only that, but another way they would pass the information along saying there will be a meeting tonight, a meeting tonight, a meeting on the old camp ground. This would serve notice on them that a meeting was going to be held on that night.

120 Then, my friends, they will congregate under the cover of darkness. They will have church. They will give praise and honour to almighty God. Although they live under hard taskmasters, although they lived in inhuman conditions, yet they felt that there was a God somewhere, a God that ruled and superruled. And they believed God's words that He was good to those who loved God and to those who were called according to God's faith.

125 Because of their African background, they would give way many times to their spiritual emotions. And sometimes, the meeting would get a little. You know what it is to be caught in the spirit of God. Somehow or the other you want somebody else to know what is happening on the inside

Our religious heritage is not to sit up and just be quiet, our religious heritage is to say: 'Amen!' To say: 'Thank you Jesus!' Say: 'Praise God!' And I don't believe that we just conjured
 130 this kind of thing up: because it is in the words of God that we make this joyful noise unto the Lord all you live! Hallelujah! There is enough colour in you all we all ought to be willing to make a joyful noise.

Sometimes you know, we've gotten so modernistic, that we can hardly say Amen in the church anymore. The preacher gets up preaching and seems you want to leave him to do it all.
 135 But if you believe in anything that he's saying, if it's true, the Bible says you ought to say Amen. Nothing wrong in saying Amen. When you stood up you put something in you get something out.

I ain't come here to put all the jokes.! But I came to proclaim the riches of the Kingdom of God

140 Yes these slaves worked, worked from sunup till sundown. For they felt that somehow or the other, there will be a brighter day somewhere along the line. Although they served as slaves for many years they all looked forward to a brighter day. And some recognised that they will never breathe freedom's air, but they recognised that one day, they would be free when they were released from these mortal bodies

145 "I don't have shoes to wear down here, but when I get to heaven and put on shoes, I am going to shout all over God's head, Hallelujah!"

And they went on to say: "Heaven! heaven! every body talking about heaven ain't going there!"

150 They were saying to white slave holders, they were telling them that everybody talking about heaven ain't going there. They talk about heaven, but you've got to live something down here if you expect to see God's face in peace. Then on the next day after they'd gotten a little noisy that night, they wanted to know on the next day, they wanted to know if the folk over in the big house had heard.

155 And then the house servants would say: " I didn't hear nobody pray way down yon by the ??? I didn't hear nobody pray."

They were letting the slaves out in the field know that they might have gotten a little noisy but we couldn't hear you up here in the big house.

160 This was their method simply of surviving. My friends, in the year of nineteen and ninety-one, we've got to do a little more than survive. We've got to go beyond and live above the ordinary.

How can we, as a people, live above the ordinary. How can weand I submit to you that we can live above the ordinary by restoring the black family.

All of us say: 'We need to restore the black family.'

165 'We need to restore the black family.'

That's been a big problem. Someone has said that black men are an endangered species, and we are; but also the black family is also an endangered species. 'Cause somehow or the other, we've gotten caught up in these modernistic times. Men don't want to live up to their responsibilities leaving our women to somehow fend for themselves

170 My friends, we've got to do a little more than just survive. We hear often that on the radio we listen to this crime stuff. And most of the reports that's talking about a black male doing this or the other. Seem that they like to mention that more time than that it's a black male

than anybody else.

175 They don't say white male. white male. white male. But when it is a black boy. they
 ????? black black, black, black, black, black. black male had done this that or the other.

On the other hand, I like to serve notice on our black men: we've got to stop getting involved in these petty crimes, we've got to stop getting involved with things that will bring us in confrontations with the law.

180 We know the kind of society we live in. We know that our justice system is unjust. So that means we've got to live beyond the ordinary.

When you found a ?????????????? full of girls, when you go ????? you are not going to get the same respect that the other folks get. That means you've got to tighten up. live better than the rest

185 There were times when we as black folks really believed in God. we trusted God for everything. We believed in him. why, we didn't have anything else. We believed in God. and lo! God delivered us. the Lord brought us out. Now we have fallen back into some of those things. becoming modern trying to enjoy all the luxuries.

You know. we've got to have a different agenda. a different agenda.

190 There are more black men in prison today than in our colleges and universities in our nation. 21% of U.S. military forces are black folk. 1/5 of all the forces are black. Talking about genocide: 32% of those in the U.S. army. 1/3 of the army are black folk. 48.7% of all the women enlisted in the army are black women. almost half of all the women are black women. Faced with danger over there in the Gulf although they might be in support role for a while. but at the outbreak of confrontation to supply the front line (?). If this was the other way around. the whole nation will be up in arms. When somebody said that there ought to be a draft to equalise some of this stuff and bring some of the rich folk's kids into the army. all say: "Oh no. we don't need a draft."

200 Who's out there getting killed? It's going to be a lot of black folks getting killed.

Why in the first place are they in the army, why are they in the navy. why are they in the air force: because they couldn't find equal job opportunity out here! They didn't want to work in McDonald's. They felt that they could do more: they went into service and they're there! -because of the problems we have in this society.

205 Then President Bush all over the country saying building a new world order. What we need is not a new world order. what we need is a new United States of America order where men are judged not by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.

We need a new order here in Champaign-Urbana!

Worrying about human rights around the world; people in Russia and all other places. people in China and all other places.

210 But we 've got to start treating folk right here on these soils. We need equal opportunity.

Then the other day he vetoed the Civil Rights bill. How can he call for a new world order and don't want you to have your rights. They discriminated against us for hundreds of years. And now. they want us to be able to play in the level playing fields. Give everybody they say whatever they say, it boils down to the lowest common denominator, we'll still be in the bottom.

215 This nation has to come out of its doldrums and live up to its creed

Yes. the black family is an endangered species as well as families of all nationalities. For in this nation. 50% of all marriages end up in divorce. Many of the problems in the nation and

the black community I fear are the direct cause of the breakdown of family life.

220 The family was instituted by God for the good of human kind. Genesis II and XXIV says
 therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother as a flea onto his wife and they shall be one
 flesh. This verse emphasises the re-identification of two personalities in marriage. This passage
 tells us that God instituted marriage. Jesus said that marriage is to be permanent. Mark X, 6
 through 9 reads: from the beginning of creation God made them male and female. The Bible
 225 says Adam and Eve, and not Adam and Steve. It says nothing about alternative lifestyle! And
 you know we can disguise this mess, we can dress it up and start talking about alternative
 lifestyle that might sound kind of good. But God made them male and female. (Two sentences
 that follow are not distinct on the tape both because the preacher has moved away from the pulpit
 to gesticulate better, and because of the vocal approval/laughter of the congregation) God made
 us male and female. If somehow or other, you have lost your identity, you need to go to God.
 230 Something has happened to your mind that has gotten wrong, there! go to God in prayer and tell
 him all about it. The Lord will straighten you out. You want to be straight, uhhunh, the Lord
 will straighten you out.

In everything today they try to use civil rights legislation for their benefit. Even gays
 want gay rights: "We want to be able to do everything, you know, file our income tax, marry a
 235 male wife, get some of these so-called preachers to marry them".

Some of these preachers need to go somewhere else and get straightened out. Hallelujah!
 The Bible says that what God has put together let no man put asunder.

240 Back in 1965, 70 Moynihan, then ambassador to the United Nations wrote that the most
 difficult fact for white Americans to understand is that the circumstances of the Negro American
 community in recent years have probably been getting worse. And I'm here to tell him that there
 is no 'probably' to it. We have lived in it, and we have lived through that period. There is no
 'probably' to it. We know that our plight is getting worse. Most of us understand what it is to be
 segregated

245 Some folk have the audacity to say that you've got that and do that like the rest of us, and
 this kind of thing. Yeah well, we do work, we all need to do a job. But still we are not getting
 our fair share.

If the black family is to be saved, I want to tell you my friend, that we need to return to
 God's plane. In this matter to the Ephesian, chapter V, verses 22 to 30, Paul said -women,
 don't get mad at me! go on with Paul- wives submit themselves unto your own husband as unto
 250 the Lord. The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church. He is the
 saviour of the body therefore as the Church is subject to Christ, so let wives be unto their own
 husband in everything.

255 Is that the word? I didn't write it! This is (unintelligible on the tape because of the vocal
 reaction of the congregation). But he goes on to say: "husband love your wife even as Christ
 loved his Church and gave himself for it that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of
 the water of the word; that it might be reported having not a spot or wrinkle or any such thing;
 that it should be holy and without blemish.

260 So men ought to love their wife even as their own body For he does loveth his wife
 loveth himself. For No man hateth his own flesh, but nourisheth it and cherisheth it even as the
 Lord does cherish the church. No man hateth himself even as the Lord does cherish us. We are
 members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones.

So, my friends, I want to remind you today as I go to my seat, all of the government

programs will not save our race.

265 All the welfare that you can ever receive will not save you. All the social and political action programs will not suffice. We need to turn to the Lord to get us out of the dilemma that we find ourselves in. And only those who truly love God and find Jesus can we find help in times of need.

270 And I'm going to tell you that God's words are still true; that we still need to do what the Bible says. And what does it say: "if man keepeth that are called behind him would humble themselves."

We've got to be humble! Not only that, but it said that you ought to seek my face! Not only that, you've got to turn from your wicked way!

And the Lord said: "I will forgive their sins, and I will heal their ache"

275 The moment that we fail to acknowledge the Lord we'll never get anywhere. uhhunh! But I'm always recognising God, uhhunh! When things don't go well with me, uhhunh, I stagger into God's words, uhhunh! For God's words are ??????? to my ??????, a light on my pathway!

The Bible said that the earth is the Lord and the fullness thereof, the world that dwell therein, uhhunh! Not only that, the Lord is my life and my salvation whom shall I fear, uhhunh!

The Lord is a strip of my life, of whom shall I be afraid, uhhunh!

280 When my hated and wicked came, they stumbled and fell, uhhunh! Though hosts may come and ???? me, my heart says ????. uhhunh!

One thing I decide, oh Lord, and that which I will seek out that I will dwell in the house of the Lord!

Behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in its ??? You may enquire in ?????

285 Hallelujah! We've got to return to the Lord: We'll going to live above the ordinary!

Appendix ii

Transcript of a homily delivered at St Patrick's (1 March 92)

5 'A good tree does not produce decayed fruit, anymore than a decayed tree produces good fruit. Each tree is known by its yield.'

My dear friends in Christ.

A priest in another city told me about a college girl who came to him feeling that she was no good as a person or as a Christian. She would hardly look him in the eye. She had committed what she had thought was serious sin. And she had thought that meant that she was depraved. 10 Hearing the scripture passage such as: "a good tree does not produce decayed fruit, any more than a decayed tree produces good fruit" might cause enormous guilt or shame in some persons. I did this, that's the fruit, therefore it must mean that I am a bad tree, a bad person. Fortunately, this priest helped to point out to her that good people sometimes do bad things. They may sin. But that does not turn us into a bad person. We need to recognise and acknowledge our guilt 15 perhaps. But we must be ready to forgive ourselves as God is willing to forgive us, and then get on with our lives.

The Gospel today is not talking about isolated sins or just occasional good deeds. But is asking the question: what is at the core of our being? Are we filled with jealousy, anger, and resentment? Or with generosity and love and forgiveness/ The first and third readings 20 single out the yield of our words as a sign of that core identity. For example, the book of Sirach, says: in one's conversation is the test of our person. Or a person's speech discloses the bent of his mind. Or praise no one before he or she speaks, for it is then that we are tested. And Jesus in the Gospel says each one speaks from his heart's abundance. We may gossip or criticise or tear down. Or we may be generous in care, and praises and esteem.

25 What is at the core of our being? Fundamentally, we all began as the marvellous creation of a loving God. We are made in his image and likeness. We are blessed with many gifts of body and mind and spirit; but we have some real limitations; for as our second reading reminds us: "we have a corruptible frame." But even the worst of sins, original or personal, do not destroy the eternal image of God in us if we will share in Christ's victory over sin and death. If 30 we will be steadfast and persevere in our relationship to him, and engage in doing his work. The core of our being is a person redeemed by Christ and called to produce goodness of the good of his heart.

Recently I have been reading a book by John Bradshaw 'Healing the Shame that Binds You'. John Bradshaw also has made a series of presentations in public television about the 35 problems of the wounded child within. Bradshaw maintains that in itself, shame is not bad: it is a normal human emotion. It tells us about our limits; that we are not God; it is the foundation of humility and a source of spirituality. But shame as a normal human emotion can be transformed into shame as a state of being that can take over a person's identity. Once shame is transformed into identity, it becomes what Bradshaw calls toxic, toxic shame which is dehumanising. A good 40 person who occasionally does bad things now views himself or herself as a bad person. Toxic shame is not about a bad person, but it's about false conclusion that a person thinks that I am no good. Now do not confuse shame and guilt. Shame develops in the human personality before guilt does. Guilt comes along when a person begins to recognise that my behaviour is contrary to my beliefs and my values. Guilt has a presupposition of internalised rules and values. A 45 recognition that I do not always live up to those. Thus guilt is a painful feeling of regret and

responsibility for one's actions, but shame is a painful feeling about oneself as a person. Parents and teachers and others who work with children need to be especially aware of this and attend to the words they use when they talk to their children. You may have to point out even sometimes to punish the child, but don't call a child 'bad'. The actions may be bad but not the child. Be
50 careful what you communicate about another person's identity. And don't be too quick to judge. It seems like our reading has something to say about that.

But let us get back to our question: "what is at the core of our being?" On this Sunday before the beginning of Lent, that is an important question. Do our words and our action, not just isolated acts, but our way of acting and speaking reflect the dignity of our identity as a child
55 of God? Do we need to let go of some kind of unhealthy shame and affirm the good person that God has made? Do we need to repent of sin that has violated our relationship with God and others? Do we need to humbly replant ourselves in the house of the Lord and allow his plan for us, his identity, his likeness in us to grow and mature? Lent is the time for us to remove the plank from our own eye so that we may see clearly, to see as God sees and to produce fruit for
60 eternal life. Then when Easter comes we will share in Christ's victory over sin and death. And whatever may be the toil of Lent, prayer, sacrifice, self-denial, whatever may be its toil, will be done in the Lord. Come then, we want to share his victory.

Appendix iii

65

Transcript of a homily delivered at St Patrick's (9 July 1989)

On entering any house, first say: "Peace to this house." And if there is a peaceable person, your peace will rest on him. If not, it will return to you.

My dear friends in Christ...

5 Recently I had a visit from a very wonderful family. They're a lively group, mother, father, two brothers and five sisters. But the mother said to me: "There are some days I don't think I can stand another minute of these kids fighting."

And another father once said to me: "I try to teach my children to be Christian but it doesn't seem to work. Why must they fight all the time?"

10 Squabbling, bickering, arguing, fighting every dissension's seem to be a part of growing up. Why do children fight? Well, part of it, I guess, is they are testing their strength and weaknesses. And sometimes, it's also because it's modelled on them too much, even by their own parents. And certainly, the television sets teach them how to fight. If you haven't noticed it, be sure you yourself become aware of it: how much fighting, arguing, and even great violence is absorbed by our children through the television set.

15 Our society is very competitive, and it seems like family squabbles are the testing ground for that.

One might wonder if a parent of those 72 disciples sent out by our Lord would come to our house and say: "peace to this house".

Would they find a peaceable person there? Would their peace return to them?

20 Yet peace was the first and most special gift of the risen Lord to his church right after the resurrection. His followers wish him people of peace. In fact, the whole mission of our Lord was to reconcile us to God, to one another and to ourselves. And thus, he sent his 72 disciples as messengers of his peace. They were to go out even in the midst of trial and suffering.

25 For example, like St. Paul mentioned in our second reading here he said: "I am crucified to the world, and the world to me."

Yes, sometimes, the disciples were sent out like a lamb in the midst of wolves: yet peace is our message.

During our liturgy planning our group asked each other a very interesting question: "What do you look for in the church you visit when you are on vacation?"

30 Now, if you are looking just for a 20 minute of mass to get back on the road, you are not looking for very much. But if you want an experience, and if you are looking for a kind of reflection on God's reign upon this world, then I suspect you look for warmth and welcome, a spirit of prayer, joyful celebration, song and leadership, and response.

Appendix iv

Pastor's notes for a homily delivered at St Patrick's (Fifth Sunday, Ordinary Time C, 1989)

5

·With that they brought their boats to land, left everything and became his followers.·

Dear Friends in Christ:

Did you notice how there is a sudden switch of name in the Gospel reading of today?

10 The Gospel started with a man, a common fisherman, named Simon, and it ends with a man who
at the end of the story is called Peter, meaning Rock. After that night when Simon had been
fishing without catching anything. Jesus ordered him to throw out his nets once more. He
obeyed and his nets filled with fish, to the extent that he needed the help of others to get the nets
and fish into his boat. But it was not that catch that changed the man, that changed his name.
15 When handling his nets no full of fish, Simon was struck by the reality of God's presence and it
was that experience that changed him, once and for all time to come. Simon became Peter. His
whole life changed because of that experience that made him a follower of Jesus Christ. And
whenever afterward people asked him: 'How did it all start with you Peter? He would tell them
this story, just as he must have told it to Luke who told it to us today.

20 And Isiah too had an experience of God, probably as he worshipped in the temple. The
shaking over the smoke, the filling of the area with God's glory are attempts to describe the
indescribable reality of God's presence, which changed him from a cringing and fearful man into
one who said: "Here I am, send me."

25 Although these seem extraordinary experiences to us, perhaps they are simply
extraordinary moments of awareness of what is really quite ordinary, that is the presence of God
in our midst. But for the most part we are so busy and so wrapped up in our own pursuits that
we fail to see his presence in our midst, and so we have no story to tell, no Gospel to preach as
did Paul who also saw the Lord.

30 When I take the time to reflect about my daily experiences, I discover the presence of
God. God reveals Himself to us every week in the sick and the suffering. Every one could
become a story. I say God in the goodness of a woman dying of cancer and in the love of those
who were reaching out to her. And it's not an isolated story of pain and struggle, of touches,
words, silence, courage, hope –I can name five such experiences this week which spoke to me of
the presence of God. These moments reflected upon, were sometimes as scary as Peter's "Leave
me Lord, I am a sinful man." Or Isiah's "Woe is me, I am doomed." But they are so ordinary if
35 not reflected upon that we miss them, and so are unimpressed, unaffected –another dull day,
another uneventful week passes by.

The beauty of an old face, the elegance of a snowflake, a child's laughter, a friend's
voice, a nagging pain, a failure, -every experience and everything is filled with a presence that
can awe us, and even challenge us to change our lives.

40 This church today is filled with stories of that presence in our lives this week that for the
most part has passed unnoticed, and therefore left us unchanged. And if noticed, timidity, fear of
ridicule, shyness, humility, or lack of opportunity have kept us from sharing that living Gospel,
the good news of God's presence in our lives. So others have not been moved to faith, inspired
or lifted up, because the stories were not told.

45 We need Lent again this year to open us up to the presence of God in our lives. Sacrifice and self denial should free us from unnecessary distractions and preoccupation with material and secular pursuits; prayer should make us reflective of God's presence and responsive to his call to follow where he lead and acts of kindness should reflect and deepen our love for those whom God has entrusted to us.

50 Take the invitation of the church to journey with God this Lent. to discover his presence in your life and what he is leading you. And if we might wish to share our experience with each other. with parents. children. friends –we will discover that we are full of God's spirit. his presence surrounds us. and we not have to be afraid.

Appendix v

Transcript of a homily delivered at St Mary (1March 1992)

(20 min.)

5 These three readings we have heard this morning are what is called wisdom literature. Wisdom literature, the scriptural tradition is kernels of advice and commentary that is meant for reflection and meditation

10 So throughout the New Testament and also in the Gospels, we have readings by scribes and sages and by our great pastor Jesus. Quite often they use proverbs that are very succinct and forceful sayings in the most part they treat ordinary things such as our relationship with God, with family, and with our friends and neighbours. Today, Jesus presents these proverbs in images and pictures, quick snapshots. One, he uses humour and exaggeration to make his point. Almost, one might say, a cartoon proverb, we have exaggerated caricature of how we inspect others from on high when they go off. While you observe the splinter in your brother's eye you have plank in yours, you hypocrite

15 I don't have to tell you, the translation of speaking eye, the meaning of the plank, or board or all of it. I to like offer the following as my own translation of this passage: why quibble about a speck of saw dust in your brother's eye and fail to notice the two by four in your own eye. You have a lot of nerve to save your brother: "Let me take that tiny speck out of your eye."

20 When you don't notice the two by four in your own eye. You own it. Wait till you clear the eye of the two by four, then you will see more clearly tiny specks in other's eyes. Now this proverb asks us to think about leading first in self-criticism before we turn to criticise anyone else. I think this very good advice we ought to bring up to the front now that we are in the political season where candidates are into throwing mud to each other. I think the problems of this public display is that it increases cynicism I think among people, after all, this is an example writ large of these people on whom we prefer status and power, prestige, engage in this kind of activity. And then I think, once they have, the candidates have obtained office by using this tactic, they continue to use criticism, that is often based on poor information. But before we decry our own age and its problems, we have to remember that this is after all old U.S. political custom in years.

30 You remember Fr. Denis Smolarsky: he at one point found an excerpt from a letter written by President John Adams to President Thomas Jefferson about the Jesuits: this is back in May 6, 1816. Now the background to this is that: in 1771, the Pope suppressed the Jesuits. There were a number of reasons for this: one reason for it was there was political pressure. Some thirty years later that was reversed: and that's the background to this letter. The President, the former President John Adams says "I do not like the resurrection of the Jesuits. They have a general aggression. The correspondence of Jesuits in the United States were Paul Lucas and Edward Jones and any one else in many disguise as squad leaders at schoolthat prejudice officers, writers, and school masters. If ever there was a body of men who merited eternal damnation on earth **and** in hell it is this society by all means" So there is permission here*.

40 And in our own day, the author gives examples.

45 Several weeks ago the United States officially criticised the British policy of returning Vietnamese refugees within the camps in Hong Kong, returning them back to Vietnam against their wishes; while at the same time, United States returned boatloads of Haitians back to Haiti where there is good evidence that there is violence and oppression. Now some think that Gospel morality applied to individuals should not be applied to nations. I think that kind of attitude

encourages public hypocrisy of the opportunists of mind. Excessive solicitousness of powerful executives who at the same time blame public death on government chiefs Or the hypocrisy of men who defend death penalty for drug importers while pushing US tobacco exports. Or the double standard that was constantly used to criticise the violence of FNLN in El Salvador while the U.S has been directly supporting terrorism in countries like Nicaragua, or loudly criticising human rights violations in one country while supporting another country with as poor human rights record. The list goes on. I think it is false to say that the Gospel applies to persons but not to peoples and nations. I think Jesus' very simple proverb today could, should be read aloud in the government's official capital.

55 Last week the cartoon, Calvin Hobbs, Calvin says to his tiger friend "what's our purpose in life?" "Why are we here?" Hobbs says: 'we're here to devour each other out' and I think that is a familiar notion that we have come to this kind of understanding, it's OK to do whatever one needs if you remain number one.

Jesus comes along and teaches a different kind of lesson.

60 This, I think is not only behind the double standards in sports where the fully informed, where the loving fans of world series and where the has been that never works quickly and publicly reject the athletes. There is a story told about Babe Ruth, that is in his declining years, age was beginning to take its toll; finally the Yankees traded him for the Braves. And now the great Babe Ruth much older and his game was certainly not the kind of game that he played before was making the rounds in national league parks where people were expecting to see the great Babe Ruth, they were disappointed. There is, in one case, in one of his last games, Ruth as playing at Cincinatti, and he was having a lot of errors. He struck out twice. One day, he made two errors and allowed five runs for the rest. The people who came to the ballpark to see the great player were disappointed. Then Babe at the end of the day, he walked slowly and dejectedly back to his dugout with his chin down on his chest And the crowd began jeering, catcalls, booed for the whole stadium was the sound of boos and hisses. He was standing shaking his fist; this was an incredible humiliation for a man that had been probably the most idolised sports figure of his time. At the moment, a little boy leaped over the railing and ran out to the field, tears running out of his cheeks and went over to the old man and he cuddled his legs. Babe reached out and picked the boy up and he hugged him. The crowd became silent. And then he set the boy down, and he took his hand and they walked back together, famous Babe Ruth and the little boy. People began to applaud and to cheer. The whole stadium was cheering. I think a there's a couple of things happened here: one is that I think many times, people join the chorus whatever it is, join that's power within the group. It also tells us, here was one little boy who despite the crowd did not have a two by four, and who saw a great man deserving the honour.

85 Experts who study anger tell us that often harsh criticism is a way of deflecting our own fault and refusing to deal with it, projecting them on someone else and there criticising them. There are some people who are easy targets of public indignation, certainly people on death row can stand for that. Yes, these are criminals. Yes, they have done horrible deeds, but it is a sham to think these are the only persons in the world who should be sorted down. When you look at the facts of this system that brings decent people to death row, you could see that the death penalties are jerry and capricious. You could see that Oh, of some two hundred thousand burglars committed every year, that two hundred murderers are placed in death row, you wonder about the other nineteen thousand eight hundred people. And you would send them to get a profile of the people in death row, they tend to be people of colour, people whose victims are

usually white, and so therein is public jeering that we often join in on and refuse to consider the individual. I know an old priest who is now retired, he has been serving part time as a prison chaplain. And in the newspaper interview, he said: "I used to be for the death penalty, but I
 95 changed my mind after working with these men. I became someone else" I think what has happened is that he saw them as individuals after hearing their stories, and reflecting maybe on the lessons of the Gospel

This week we begin Lent And the purpose of Lent is to go off into the desert with Christ and to listen to temple gates to his challenge that we * what this means is that we look at
 100 ourselves to understand our sins, there is no two cents' worth knowing we all have our own shameful deeds yet we have a habit perhaps of casting our guilt on others, while hiding our sin. And Lent is the time we throw this paper mask off and tell who we are and then to turn to God for his mercy.

I read a little story from a publication I get called Salvadent; it's a publication that gives
 105 updates on El Salvador. This story is written by an American named David Chedder and the name of this story is "I remember you Manuel". And I think it another way to telling a parallel proverb of today's Gospel He says ... Manuel was sixteen when he first met him. He was the illegitimate son of man who already had a family. His mother was indigenous, a poor woman who made a living by washing others' laundry. Think about Manuel, his ability to express his
 110 pain, pain of having a father who is not a father, pain of society that leaves Manuel with two or three bruise Manuel's father, whose wife who swallowed her own pain with gritted teeth and tried help him and she tried to provide for him and brought him to church. Back home in the neighbourhood where I grew up in Chippewa city there is something about that place and this place to make one feel that there's no way out. Our chances are limited for a poor family.
 115 Manuel is poor, he studied alone. Yet inspired by the good life he saw portrayed in the media, he liked to dance, he wanted to be well dressed. Remember, when he tried to take hold of his life and move out from his dependency on his father's wife, he searched for a job at once. But he finally got to a formal sector of the economy. He'd stand for hours in a busy street corner all the while trying to sell our accessories. He worked till the wealthy people go to church. By the
 120 time it came to Manuel's share there was hardly enough left to buy food for himself for one day; it was a bitter experience. There are few of us where for a poor young man to achieve in a place where unemployment is over 60 %; Manuel speaks with passion about his desires for the good life. Though he has a growing sense of being trapped.

Well, I saw Manuel one day, first time in years. I saw him as I sat in a bus near the
 125 central market of Dos Santos in San Salvador. It was hard to recognise him as I saw him walking across the street I see the gait on the stone. He walked between two tough looking guys. When he turned I saw his face, there's a scar on his forehead, down his cheek, very thin from life on the streets. There he is followed by his violent friends who couldn't get out of the poverty of the spirit, stuck in nowhere, stuck between prisons, and hustling in the streets. I have
 130 no judgement in my heart of him, of this pain. I think that it happens when we examine the stories of people that are put up for public condemnation. In another place in the Gospel Jesus confronts accusers of a criminal. This was a woman caught in adultery, and the penalty was stoned death. Jesus very persistently talks the same language of this proverb that we read today. He says this person is without sin could throw the first stone. This Jesus is calling us we should
 135 be his disciples, to be aware of our own human frailty and to free ourselves of with the good grace of God from intolerance and lies of the mind.

The Church. I think should be a place where people feel most at home with their community as broken as it may be. There should be a sign on the door that says: "This is the home for the broken." That means it is a place where you are accepted, where you are not criticised that where you have tranquillity. I think that is why Jesus told us about a speck of saw dust and two by fours in people's eyes.

Appendix vi

Transcript of a homily at St Mary (20 October 1989)

5

If you pray for justice and you sit back and let God take care of it there, you're going to have a long wait. Sometimes we have to then go over that prayer and wrestle(?) or pester an official or someone to see that justice. That's part of a prayer.

10 Jesus is attacking the warped spirituality that had no concern for the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is central to Jesus' (teaching?). Jesus announced the Kingdom of God: "Hear ye. Hear ye God's will. This is the Kingdom of God." What he is talking about is God's will. This is God's will for you. And as he heralds along God's will, this is God's word that is given to us as a goal to strive for.

15 We are very much involved in doing God's will and that Kingdom, the Kingdom of God is a social and religious and political order that reflects God's justice.

Now says here to me Gospel's story today how to pray.(somewhat indistinct on tape) Will not God then do justice to his chosen that call for justice day and night? Now, just imagine you are God listening to prayers today, and many of God's chosen are calling out day and night for justice. The answer is, will he delay over that, do you suppose? I tell you, he will give them 20 swift justice

... People will sigh below and say: 'that's nonsense, I don't see swift justice going on.'

That's because we do not recognise how to pray, how this Kingdom of God works. God does not shape this Kingdom of God alone. Because people everywhere cooperate in this work. Because the Kingdom of God is people working together and not God doing it alone. This sense 25 of shared responsibility to build the Kingdom should be reflected in our prayer

If you are praying that your grandmother gets well or let us say your child breaks his arm and you pray your prayer out. Well, pray yes, getting in the car and getting the child to emergency.

30 Don't you see these are the same and part of a prayer? We are taught to pray to "give us this day our daily bread". You have noticed that God does not drop loaves of wonderbread from trees. There is a hunger and [not clear on tape] that is called for toil of research, planning, network, people, businesses, systems and governments cooperate to bring that harvest of the field as plant products ready for our plates.

35 You may have noticed at the same time, that system is not functioning altogether real well. So we get up on our knee and say: 'Give us this day our daily bread', and work for a better system that will include millions of people today that are starving.

Now if you were to go to a farmer in the field and ask him about his spirituality about the Kingdom of God, and you see him working in the field bringing in his harvest and you ask: "what are you doing?" He could say to you: "I am praying the Lord's prayer"

40 If you go to a research scientist that is working for better methods of farming, better seeds and you ask him: "what are you doing?", he could say to you: "I am praying the Lord's prayer."

If you go to a person working on a road for a better distribution of that bread out in the more inaccessible parts in the Third World, and you ask: "what are you doing?", he could say: "I

45 am praying the Lord's Prayer."

If you go to a politician or, let us say, a person who badgers politicians that there should be more justice than you see, you may ask: "what are you doing?" That person may answer as they are writing an angry letter to a politician or to a corrupt judge, that person might say: "I am praying the Lord's prayer."

50 We know that God has never liked(?) corrupt judge who need to be threatened and nagged but rather as people who refuse to do their part in answering the prayers for justice.

The Kingdom of God is the epicentre of our spirituality

Appendix vii

Transcript of a homily delivered at St Mary (8 July 1990)

5

These five verses from Mathew XI from chapters we've just heard are a source of much consolation and strength, reflection for us as we make our way. Much as Mark's Gospel did very beautiful verses in that Jesus praises God for hiding some things from the learning of the clever while they lead them onto various children. And then he describes what this hidden knowledge is. And the passage ends with invitations to receive it. As we read Mathew's Gospel we find many episodes where Jesus is faced off with the scribes, the Pharisees. These scribes and Pharisees were not vicious villains. However, they refused to accept Jesus. They were religious leaders. They were involved people frequent in their attendance in temple service; and they followed the details of the law very conscientiously. They rejected Jesus' new law because it was at variance with their version of the law. They were very stubborn. They rejected Jesus' law emerging because they had only very smug righteousness. In a word, Jesus, Jesus could not reach them. His words fell on deaf ears. I think that we want to look at these scribes and Pharisees and others; perhaps we can find in them something of ourselves. That's very humbling. It is valuable to understand our sins, our weaknesses, our stubbornness, our righteousness, if we are to be converted by Jesus' words. Now, in the verse we've just heard, Jesus speaks of the Pharisees. They, these were men who had the burden of cleverness. He is probably referring to the scribes and Pharisees. They, these men spent their entire lives in the study of law, the observance of the law. How could they manage that? They had to have guidance. Well, some perhaps had enough wealth that they could put most of their time studying the law. But it is interesting to note that, wives, their place, the place of the wife was to keep on as much as possible the work of earning a living and running a household so that the husbands were free to study. That was the sense they had of the importance of law that the man of the house would be burdened with learning the law. In the 23rd verse of the 31st chapter in the Book of Proverbs it refers to this. That the wife must be judged almost three times as wife than as a husband. It says there the husband visit wives, sitteth and praise her; sitteth indeed and praised her.

I know this is very very strange to some of you: "Give me that verse, when I go home, I'll scratch it out of the Bible". But, out of a sense of duty, parents make sacrifice frequently to see their children are educated. That never seems strange to people in other cultures where we know that children eventually graduate. Whereas husbands never did graduate*. The law of Moses describes God's justice. The problem was that, over time, these learned men who puzzled over the law and came up with details of how to carry out the law. But they ended up turning the 10 Commandments into 613 precepts. You see it for a long time society that has books for people to be covered in the law. The problem is that for people who wish to imitate the justice of God in their lives this was an enormous task; besides taking care of * and getting * and be concerned about the law and serve God: it was overwhelming. And so for many people these many regulations became a yoke. The law was described as a yoke; that is a device placed around the neck to, to use them as a beast of burden. Many people because they realised they did not live up to the commands of the law, they felt they were outside the mercy of God; and that's a big problem. And there were these learned intelligent people there to insist on the details of the law. These people had everything figured out, an exact law for every situation, and how to

45

apply the law, linking them, listening to them in order to find out how they could be right by God. Jesus criticised this whole system. Because of their sense of righteousness: 'This is the law, this is the way of God.' They dismissed Jesus because he did not seem to be able to get the law right. Now, following from this verse of Mathew's Gospel he comes up with a couple of stories where he violates the Sabbath; and it appears that he did this deliberately so that we could reflect on the lessons in the verses. In the first day Jesus allowed the disciples to pick grain on the Sabbath because they were hungry. And Jesus says, after all, his Father desires mercy over sacrifice. It is not that Jesus was lawless and not understood the law. The point of the law, the higher law, this is more important than those details of the law that have been added for the ages. In another case, in another story in Mathew's Gospel where Jesus heals on a Sabbath a man whose hand is withered. To the scribes and Pharisees who were immersed in tradition, this was a violation of the Sabbath. And Jesus' comment is so full of good sense you wonder why would these people be so upset. Jesus says "is it not lawful to do good in the Sabbath?"* Well, in each case the scribes and the Pharisees because they were focused on the details of the law, they did not understand the meaning of the law. These stories told us by Mathew, we were told, we can get the point, the point is this: that Jesus represents the law, the highest law.

Who are these wretched and clever in today's world? It would seem obvious that they correspond to They are all those people whose own cleverness and smugness interfere with their acceptance of Jesus. Who are the various children described in the verses? Well, in Mathew's time, if we read the Gospel, we see these children in the stories: they are the sinners, the tax collectors, and, yes, the prostitutes. The various children are the downcasts like the lepers who had to stay out of town, the possessed who were also cast out; and they are the various children. The various children are also simple folks, young plain fishermen and others who follow Jesus with trust. To them and to us Jesus says "learn with me" -and that's in contrast to learning to read your flaw- "look at me for I am gentle and of a humble heart". Jesus has thought of the prophecy in Zachariah about the Messiah, the Messiah king which we read in the first reading today. It says there your king shall come to you just saviour that he is meek and riding on thoughts. And others expect a Messiah king to rise in a vast chariot driven by a dozen fine horses and surrounded by a power, a great army.

The important theme in today's Gospel is that no one should feel they're excluded from the knowledge and mercy of God. That's very important. I think sometimes, we need to understand that. Indeed it is through the humble, through the insignificant, through the unlearned, through the outsiders, those who feel scorned or feel they were forgotten. It is through these persons that God often reveals the truth that is hidden for the wise and the righteous. And I can just see the wife of one of these Pharisees getting home to the kids, and taking care of the kids and feeding them, and getting things ready for market to sell and carrying the burden of caring for the family. And she knows more than this guy down there discussing the law with the others. That's what Jesus would say. The religious leaders often spoke of the yoke of the law, having to train people in prayers like cattle, like this dumb ox on the road. Jesus presents himself as the new law. That is, we have a good shepherd who guides us in the right path. That says it is a very easy yoke. We see him as someone who always forgives. His ministry is one of healing the broken heart. So today, having heard the wonderful five verses of the 11th chapter of Mathew, we are ready to carry on the rest of the day with a sense of rejoicing.

We have been reassured once again of a very gentle God of forgiveness.

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