A PRACTICAL THEOLOGY OF CONGREGATIONAL SONG: Developing a Wholesome “Song of the People”.

Thesis Submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Chester for the Degree of Doctor of Professional Studies in Practical Theology by

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# Abstract

This thesis seeks to put in writing a practical theology of congregational song - the song of the people. Congregational song has been overlooked; studies of church music tend to focus on choral music and studies of hymns tend to look at words rather than music. This study seeks to tell the story of the song of the people, and to develop a practical theology of congregational song derived from the song itself and from a congregation’s reflections on that song.

Congregational song has been a feature of Christian worship from the beginning and has roots in earlier Jewish practice. The traditional focus on words and on the choir is matched, musically, with a tendency to focus on written musical “text” rather than on music as it is performed. The meaning of congregational song to those who sing, week by week, in church worship is also hidden behind the reflections of professional musicians. This study addresses these issues.

After tracing the story of the song of the people, this study sets out to find out what congregational singers think and feel about their song. The resulting data is then employed in a hermeneutical conversation with academic theology in order to bring the people who sing to the heart of a practical theology of congregational song. My thesis uncovers the profound meaning of song to those who sing, and offers a framework which enables this song to be valued and protected for those who will sing in the future.

# Portfolio Summary

My **Literature Review** was entitled **“What would be lost if the church stopped singing?”** Previous writing on singing in the Christian tradition tended to focus on choral music or on words rather than on the song of the people. This review details the paucity of writing on congregational song; yet the richness of recent psychological, physiological, sociological and anthropological studies demonstrates the benefits of singing for the individual singer and the strengthening of social bonds, especially under duress.

In my **Publishable Article** I wrote about **“Music and Worship: the Dark Side”**, examining music’s potential to manipulate and control. I found a evidence that music’s power can be abused, resulting in the emotional manipulation of crowds and the torture of individuals. Of special concern was the lack of theological writing on the abuse of music in worship, particularly as electronic advances have now given musicians access to sounds and rhythms beyond their technical skill.

In my **Reflective Piece, “On preaching as Jazz”** I examined the roots of Jazz in suffering, darkness and poverty, the links between suffering and creativity, and the risks of improvisation. My reflective sermon pictures were found to be similar to jazz charts which enable groups of jazz players to structure their improvisation. The participative use of my picture sermons was similar to traditional participative black preaching - the same community from which jazz arose.

My **Research Proposal** sought to bring these strands together in order to formulate the nature of the long piece. Entitled **“Developing a Constructive Practical Theology of Congregational Song”** it outlined my intention to study a congregation during worship and to interview individual members of it, in order to understand what singing adds to worship and what it means to congregational members. At the end of the study I hope to have delineated a theology of congregational song, and gone some way towards answering the question with which I began: “What would be lost if the church stopped singing?”

# Introduction

Early in the doctoral process I was describing my study to a member of a choir to which we both belong. He commented “but what congregations sing is mostly rubbish”. This negative perception has been voiced by skilled musicians, with the ability to sing choral music beyond the capabilities of most congregational singers, and in academic theology, where congregational song has been regarded as flawed and potentially dangerous.[[1]](#footnote-2) I set out to find out what theology of congregational song might arise from the song of the people themselves, and from their own thoughts on their song. This means putting the song, and its singers, at the heart of this study.

The story of the people’s song seems never to have been told. In Chapter One of this thesis I set out to tell this story, beginning with the Old Testament and ending with a reflection on the situation today. This is not the whole story – I write from a western perspective and steer the story towards Europe, England and the Church of England as I approach the twentieth century. This story had to be unpicked from wider writing on church music, often in fragmentary form. Silence on congregational song has occurred in a number of ways. First, writing about church music almost always focuses on choral rather than congregational music. Secondly, where there is material on hymns there is a focus on words rather than music. These tendencies were covered in my initial Literature Review.

Further invisibility occurs when the focus is on written, rather than performed music. Finally, writing on congregational song tends to be from the perspective of “professional church musicians”- there seems never to have been any study on what congregational song means to congregations. This study reveals congregation song as something significant to those who participate in it. Thus, Chapter Two sets out methodologies and methods which enable the song of the people and their thoughts about this song to be heard: ethnography and Ordinary Theology, participant observation and semi structured interviews. The interview data was analysed inductively, allowing the themes to arise from the data, so far as possible allowing the people to speak for themselves.

Chapter Three sets out the themes arising from the interview data, using the transcribed words of the interviewees. This is a key moment for this study, and for the study of congregational song. The emerging themes enable a fresh examination of some of the material in Chapter One, particularly in respect of the place of Jesus’ own song, and how the first Christians must have remembered it.

Chapter Four is a hermeneutical conversation between the interview themes and academic theology. Here, Memory is set alongside anamnesis, and Community is found to be an aspect of Memory. A hidden form of Lament, emerging from the interviews, is examined in the light of academic theology on lament, and the impact of negative body theology on the physical act of singing is revealed. This is a two way conversation: an Ordinary Theology of song challenges academic theology, and academic theology sets the Ordinary Theology of song in its context and demonstrates connections that were not immediately obvious.

Chapter Five summarises and concludes my study, arguing that song is easily overlooked and fragile, but is of importance to congregations, academic theology and the practice of the church. It is something which needs to be valued, protected and encouraged. Its meaning challenges the church’s practice as song becomes a means of participation in anamnesis, a place of praise and lament, a place where community is built and sustained, and a place where body theology is done, even if this is unnoticed by the singers themselves.

# CHAPTER ONE: The Story of Congregational Song

## Introduction

Despite the relative theological silence on congregational song, this chapter argues that song has always been a part of Christian expression and tradition. The song of the people has ancient roots and a story which deserves to be told. However, song is ephemeral; the notes leave our mouths and disappear into the air. In some cases the written music remains, in other cases the printed words are left behind, often as poetry in their own right. Sometimes we are told of songs in a descriptive way; for example we are told that Jesus sang at the Last Supper, but exactly what he sang needs more elucidation. At other times we assume song, as with the Magnificat, for example; this has been sung so often that we cannot imagine that Mary might have said, rather than sung, her words.

The hidden story of congregational song needs to be teased out from the pages of the Bible, and from Christian history. So I begin with this task – identifying aspects of the story of the song in more general references to music, from the stories of the first Christians, from the written words of theology and from written music. I begin with the Bible before moving on to consider singing in the post-biblical Early Church. I then consider the rise of polyphony, before looking at Reformation debates about music in worship. After this I will examine the “Golden Age of Hymnody” and singing in the contemporary church.

Foley highlights an essential and almost incomprehensible difference between our own culture and that of the Old Testament: the difference between oral and written cultures.[[2]](#footnote-3) Hebrew was a very early written language, although, for most people, the auditory was far more significant than the written. Even after the rise of Hellenism, which valued seeing over hearing, hearing continued to dominate in Palestine. Jesus was an aural preacher rather than a man of letters.[[3]](#footnote-4) The Gospels reflect this oral culture, especially Mark’s Gospel which is dominated by an oral form of storytelling. Foley insists on the significance of oral culture as the backdrop to the music of the Bible. When one considers singing, which brings something extra to speech, the significance of oral culture becomes even more marked.[[4]](#footnote-5)

## Music in the Bible

### The Hebrew Scriptures

Braun describes music as “among the most perplexing phenomena of the past”, because of its ephemeral nature.[[5]](#footnote-6) There have been archaeological discoveries of ancient musical instruments, but song leaves no trace. Here is a richness that is lost, for we can no longer access it. Haïk-Vantouraattempted a reconstruction of early Hebrew music,deciphering the musical signs (te’amim) of the Hebrew Bible to produce recordings of the psalms as she had deduced them. Exciting and evocative though the resulting music is, her work has been dismissed as conjecture by recent scholars.[[6]](#footnote-7)

The Hebrew Scriptures are full of references to singing with some two hundred and thirty five references in the NRSV Lectionary to the words sing, sang, song/s and singer/s collectively.[[7]](#footnote-8) From these references, much can be deduced. For example, the words of an early Song of the Well reflect the search of a nomadic community for water, revealing song as part of everyday life.[[8]](#footnote-9)

The Psalms include terms of musical direction, specifying particular instruments to accompany different moods; stringed instruments and flutes for lament, and percussive instruments to open worship and gain the deity’s attention. There are instructions for pauses and emphases, and for communal shouts involving congregation and choir.[[9]](#footnote-10)

There is evidence of a capella singing during the flight from Egypt, with Moses and the Israelites singing, “I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.”[[10]](#footnote-11) The same song seems to be repeated later by the women with an instrumental accompaniment of tambourines.[[11]](#footnote-12)

There are some instances of people singing to one another, suggesting responsorial song: “Is this not David, of whom they sing *to one another* in dances, “Saul has killed his thousands and David his ten thousands”’?[[12]](#footnote-13) There is more responsorial singing, with additional contributions from a crowd, in the story of Ezra’s rebuilding of the Temple.[[13]](#footnote-14) The intricacy and complexity of the words of the Song of Deborah suggest that the music of songs increased in complexity through time. Although only the words remain we are told that they were sung by Deborah and Barak.[[14]](#footnote-15)

During the postexilic period, music became an even more important feature of Temple worship: vocal and instrumental music was performed by guilds of professional musicians said to be descended from Levi. The Book of Psalms is known as the “hymn book of the Second Temple,”[[15]](#footnote-16) although there is no evidence that *all* the psalms were used at the Temple.The Temple was a significant centre of music, with stringed and wind instruments and a priestly choir. Temple music included the voice of the people as well as choirs and soloists. Psalm 44, for example, could have been performed by individual singers, choir and congregation.[[16]](#footnote-17)  Psalm 136, with its repeated refrain, demonstrates how the voice of the people may have blended with professional musicians in Temple song. The Mishnah also refers to this responsorial form, the congregation responding to each verse with a refrain. Foley sees the music of the Temple as being an important part of the church’s sonic landscape.[[17]](#footnote-18)

A substantial number of the psalms, and other passages in Lamentations, are laments; these are easily overlooked because lament is not common in current hymnody, although my congregational research uncovered a hidden form of lament, still surviving in worship today – this will be discussed in Chapters Three and Four.[[18]](#footnote-19) Lament psalms can be collective or personal:[[19]](#footnote-20)collective laments were public responses to catastrophes such as war, famine and disease.[[20]](#footnote-21) Psalms of personal lament were responses to sickness, understood as Yahweh’s wrath for sin. Some personal laments were calls for help against curses.[[21]](#footnote-22) Mowinckel argues a connection between form and substance, crying out to the God whose might and kindness they have experienced in good times, and invoking God to turn back to his people in times of trouble. Often the first word of a Lament invokes Yahweh’s name and asks him to “hear us”. Lament often continues by reminding Yahweh of his relationship with his people: “O Shepherd of Israel”; “O God of our salvation”; “my God”.[[22]](#footnote-23)

Writing on Lamentations, Gwendoline Knight[[23]](#footnote-24) writes of the *qînâ* rhythm of 3+2, commonly used in lament. Musically, this rhythmic form would feel unbalanced – a rhythmic “limp”. This limping metre is often accompanied by verbs of weeping and lamentation.[[24]](#footnote-25) The originally simple chanted music of the psalms,[[25]](#footnote-26) together with this “limping” rhythm, would give rise to powerful emotions in these songs of sorrow.[[26]](#footnote-27) The traditions of praise and lament are both reflected in my congregational research in Chapter 4, demonstrating that these ancient traditions still survive in the song of the people. Of particular interest is the hidden survival of lament which occurs when specific hymns evoke memories of deceased loved ones.

The Hebrew Scriptures, then, provide a rich account of song in worship, including congregational song. It is not always clear how much was sung by special choirs or “professional” singers and how much by the “ordinary” people, but the song of the people clearly had a part to play. We no longer know what this song sounded like, but we know that it existed; then, as now, singing was an important feature of worship, state occasions, domestic celebrations of various kinds, and as part of everyday life.

### The New Testament

Music’s development in the life of the Early Church can be surmised only tentatively from the New Testament, as it covers a short time in comparison with the Hebrew Scriptures. Jesus is said to have sung a Passover hymn with his disciples after the Last Supper.[[27]](#footnote-28) What he sang is an interesting point, and will be discussed (below) in a consideration of the song of the Early Church. Paul and Silas sang hymns in prison at Philippi.[[28]](#footnote-29) “Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs” were part of the pattern of Christian worship.[[29]](#footnote-30)

Mowry divides New Testament lyrics thus: hymnic passages translated into Greek from Aramaic and likely to have sprung from the earliest Jewish Christian churches. These bear characteristics of biblical psalmody. Three of these are Luke’s infancy narratives– the Magnificat,[[30]](#footnote-31) the Nunc Dimitis[[31]](#footnote-32) and the Benedictus.[[32]](#footnote-33) Then, further Aramaic-into-Greek hymnic texts in Revelation: [[33]](#footnote-34)A Song of Thanksgiving,[[34]](#footnote-35) A song of praise of the Slain Lamb,[[35]](#footnote-36) and hymnic material in Chapter Nineteen with responses of “Alleluia” and “Amen”, probably for Eucharistic use.[[36]](#footnote-37) There are further examples where the structure is biblical, as was probably the music, but the parallelism reflects Hellenistic rhetorical construction.[[37]](#footnote-38)

Mowry locates three examples of a third type of hymn: in praise of Christ as Lord,[[38]](#footnote-39) in praise of Christ as the Image of God,[[39]](#footnote-40) and as the Eternal Logos.[[40]](#footnote-41) These hymns are remote in form from Jewish psalmody, being without parallelisms, and characterised by brevity and equality of line. All are in stanza-form and are thought to originate in the formative years of the Christian community.[[41]](#footnote-42) It is noteworthy that these lyrical passages are among the most memorable in the New Testament: singing, even in music’s absence, has brought its own beauty to the New Testament.

Thus, the New Testament contains evidence that the song of the people survived the years of transition from the Gospels where Jewish traditions were observed, through the emergence of “The Way” as a Judaic sect, to the beginnings of the Early Church.

## Singing in the Post-Biblical Early Church

I next trace the story of the song of the people from the post-biblical Early Church to the rise of Polyphony in the following categories: the roots of early Church Music, the widening musical praxis of the Early Church, psalmody, the rise of hymnody, musical roles in the Early Church, Augustine and the rise of polyphony, monody and plainchant, and the rise of polyphony. I will then look at Reformation responses to song, in Europe and in England, before considering Post-Reformation England. Finally I will trace the story of congregational song through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, ending with a personal reflection on the song of the people in the twenty first century.

### The Roots of Early Church Music

For many years it was argued that the music of the early Christians imitated that of the synagogues. Dix, amongst others, takes this approach. He describes an antiphonal style with elaborate solos and congregational refrain, persisting until the fourth century. [[42]](#footnote-43) The connection between synagogue and Early Church worship has, until recently, been accepted, without question.[[43]](#footnote-44) However, Smith argues that this is a mistaken reading back of later Christian practice into synagogue worship.[[44]](#footnote-45) He casts doubt on the use of psalms in synagogue worship arguing that if these were not a feature of synagogue worship, then singing is unlikely to have featured either.[[45]](#footnote-46) The meagre information available about early synagogue worship suggests opening prayers, readings from Scripture and a sermon. Unequivocal evidence for the use of psalmody in synagogue worship does not appear until the second century.[[46]](#footnote-47) The songless nature of early synagogue worship has been underlined by Mowinckel who argues that singing did not come into existence in synagogues until medieval times[[47]](#footnote-48)

The song of the Early Church is relatively uncontested, so Smith asks; “are there other specific areas of Jewish religious life from which Christian singing might have stemmed?”[[48]](#footnote-49) After considering the possibilities of public events such as national assemblies, and Temple worship (its influence accepted by Foley[[49]](#footnote-50) but rejected by Smith), Smith argues that the domestic rituals of Judaism, specifically the Passover Meal, are the most likely source of the Early Church’s song. Of particular interest are domestic assemblies which included a meal, for there the greatest concentration of resemblances between Jewish and Christian practices is found. Here, the Last Supper is important, being not only traditionally Jewish but also significantly Christian.[[50]](#footnote-51)

Smith assumes that the Last Supper was a Passover Meal, although this is far from certain. The timing of events in Holy Week is a complex matter, and an in-depth analysis is outside the scope of this thesis. Briefly, the Gospels vary in their accounts: the synoptics associate the Last Supper with the Passover Meal whilst John’s Gospel times the crucifixion at the time of the slaughter of the Passover Lambs which occurs on the Wednesday before Passover or earlier.[[51]](#footnote-52) In this case the Last Supper would have been earlier in the week. Dix argues that this, earlier meal, was likely to be a chaburah; a formal supper shared between friends on the eves of Sabbaths or holy days.[[52]](#footnote-53) Either of these would have included the singing of a psalm or group of psalms. The Hallel, (Psalms 115-118) is associated with the Passover and the jubilant “Halleluiahs” of Palm Sunday seem to be part of the Hallel.[[53]](#footnote-54) Whether the Last Supper was a chaburah in Passover Week or the Passover itself, the reported hymn, sung by Jesus and his disciples, would have been a psalm or group of psalms, possibly the Hallel.[[54]](#footnote-55)

Table ministry was an important context for the disciples’ experiences of the risen Christ.[[55]](#footnote-56) Dix, although locating source of the church’s song in the synagogue, notes the nature of early Christian worship as “corporate” but not “public”.[[56]](#footnote-57) Foley locates this “corporate but not public” space as “the table”:

It is significant ... that Christianity did not emerge around any single table, or in any particular kind of house or dwelling. There is - historically speaking - no aboriginal “mother church” in Christianity. Rather Christianity arose around many tables in a variety of private and public settings. Such is the model provided by Jesus himself, who moved from place to place and table to table. The diversity of the settings for his ministry is remarkable: homes of the rich, borrowed rooms, public inns, houses of tax collectors, and even grassy hillsides. What is most notable is that none of them belonged to him.[[57]](#footnote-58)

Material covered in my Literature Review makes strong connections between singing and memory: sung words are remembered more clearly than spoken words, and singing awakens memories.[[58]](#footnote-59) It is possible to argue therefore, that the singing of the church arises from the song-induced memory of domestic Jewish rituals in general, and from memories of the Last Supper in particular.[[59]](#footnote-60) Singing or hearing the same psalms at a later time would have evoked strong memories of the original event, especially as regularly used prayers had standard melodies.[[60]](#footnote-61) This argument will be developed later in this thesis, following the outcomes of my congregational research. Here it will be seen that these early memories of the song of the first Christians played a vital part in what became the “anamnesis” of the church – the memory which makes Christ present in the Eucharist.

The table then, and specifically that of the Last Supper, is a significant source of the song of the Early Church. Foley notes that the auditory nature of the first Christians makes it as difficult to understand the word “musician” as it does “music”. It is not even certain that the first “celebrants” at table always took this role, or whether members of each gathering took turns. All that is certain is that someone must have presided, and that this “prayer led action” included song.[[61]](#footnote-62)

### The Widening Musical Praxis of the Early Church

Developing from the Last Supper, the musical practice of the Early Church is diverse. Pliny noted the antiphonal singing of the early Christians.[[62]](#footnote-63) Ignatius of Antioch, writes of singing praise to Christ “in one voice”, suggesting group singing.[[63]](#footnote-64) Flynn argues that solo singing was the most clearly attested musical role in the Early Church from Paul[[64]](#footnote-65) to Tertullian who describes solo singing at an Agape meal.[[65]](#footnote-66) A third century writer, possibly Hypolitus, confirms that psalms and “odes” were written by believers “from the beginning”.[[66]](#footnote-67)

Foley notes the responsorial nature or early Christian worship, with short praise formulae (“Amen”, “Alleluia”, “Hosanna”, “Maranatha”, and “Abba”) forming the backbone of congregational song.[[67]](#footnote-68)  He also concludes that, although the place of the Christological Hymns of the New Testament (the Magnificat, Benedictus, Nunc Dimitis and Gloria) is unknown, and the use of psalms is uncertain, it is probable that these texts punctuated Christian worship, making it an intensely lyrical experience.[[68]](#footnote-69) Prayer modes, elastic enough to accommodate fluid prose texts, may have been used, and gifted members may have improvised.[[69]](#footnote-70) Readings may also have moved from ecphonesis (semi musical recitative) to cantillation (regular musical chant).[[70]](#footnote-71) Foley argues that Jesus’ distinctive extemporaneous teaching style is linked to the ecstatic nature of early Christian worship;

This suggests an intense lyricism in early Christian worship, which prized responsorial forms, punctuated by shouts, acclamations, hymns, improvised chants, and even the gift of tongues.[[71]](#footnote-72)

These styles of singing reflect the needs of the largely non-literate congregations of the time.

### Psalmody

Among the ascetics and monastic communities of the fourth century (especially those of Egypt), psalm singing was used extensively. Bradshaw describes the evolution of psalm singing, arising from an early understanding of the psalms as prophecy regarding the nature of Christ. The desert monks understood the psalms as a summary of Scripture and reciting of the whole Book of Psalms became an essential part of the desert tradition. However, these same desert monks regarded singing as a distraction. When the practice of reciting Psalms moved into the towns, the hymnic character of the psalms became more widely understood and more elaborate forms of performance developed. After the Peace of Constantine,[[72]](#footnote-73) the emerging “cathedral” office saw a distinctive method of performance, each verse being followed by silence for reflection. Here, recitation by a Cantor with congregational response was the norm. At this point the teaching aspect of the psalms was regarded as primary.[[73]](#footnote-74)Foley notes that the increased use of psalms in worship may represent a return to the safety of scripture in the face of Gnosticism.[[74]](#footnote-75) He also argues that a more standardised use of psalms was also part of a wider standardisation process in the church, at the time that the New Testament began to be defined and the first Eucharistic Prayers were written down in the middle of the third century.[[75]](#footnote-76)

Bradshaw argues another change in the use of psalms in worship came in early fifth century Rome. Here the focus was less on the edification of the individual and more on psalm singing as a celebration of the worship of the church. The act of singing psalms, rather than the meaning of the text, became central.[[76]](#footnote-77) This is a significant moment in the story of the song of the church – one of the few times when the song, as opposed to the words, was of primary importance.

### The Rise of Hymnody

Musical styles became more diverse as Christianity spread and came under the influence of other cultures. Greek metrical forms and tonal systems became popular; the earliest surviving Christian hymn, “Bridle of Colts Untamed”, found in the “Pedagogos” of Clement of Alexandria,[[77]](#footnote-78) follows such modes and patterns.[[78]](#footnote-79) The Oxyrhynchis hymn of the third century is the earliest to survive with musical notation. Written in Greek, in praise of the Trinity, it originates in Egypt where there was a rich tradition of church music. Another pre-Nicene hymn, still in use today, is the Phos Hilaron, included by Methodius of Olympus[[79]](#footnote-80) in his Symposium “On Chastity”.[[80]](#footnote-81) The slightly later text, “Lord Jesus Think on Me”, also survives in current hymn books and is attributed to Synesius Bishop of Ptolemais.[[81]](#footnote-82)

In the late fourth century the use of hymns became more widespread as the Constantinian Settlement enabled larger groups of people to gather for worship. The Gloria in Excelsis dates from this time. Ambrose,[[82]](#footnote-83) known as “the Father of Hymnody”, has many hymns ascribed to him; while not all are ascribed with certainty, this style of hymn gave rise to a pattern of hymn singing that was “simple, devotional and direct”. [[83]](#footnote-84) Group singing, principally by monastic groups, but including lay and children’s groups, arose during the late fourth century. Congregational hymn singing first arose at this time, as did antiphonal choral singing.[[84]](#footnote-85)

The words of hymns were partly intended to counter heresies such as Arianism: in Constantinople the Arians sang hymns in the streets while John Chrysostom organised orthodox hymn singing to contradict them. Similar events occurred in the conflict between Ambrose and Justin in Milan.[[85]](#footnote-86) It is the correctness, or otherwise, of the words which has been noted in history. More recent singing in the civil rights movement in America suggests that these early singers may have found solidarity and strength in their song.

A fifth century reaction against hymn singing in the Eastern Church stemmed from the argument that the words were free interpretations of the Bible, not the actual words of Scripture; the Te Deum is an example from this time. The Council of Braga[[86]](#footnote-87) forbade the use of non-biblical poetical compositions in church. This was not revoked until the Fourth Council of Toledo.[[87]](#footnote-88) The fifth century gave rise to two hymns still found in the hymn books of the Eastern Church; the Monogenes and the Cherubicon.[[88]](#footnote-89) Although the early doubts about hymns did not endure, the short-lived ban is thought explain the small number of hymns surviving from this period.[[89]](#footnote-90)

### Musical Roles in the Early Church

Flynn names role, style and liturgical/musical change as the three perennial issues of church music.[[90]](#footnote-91) The matter of role is well demonstrated in the first six centuries, with the solo singing of the musically gifted typical of the first three centuries being replaced by ministerial chant with congregational response from the fourth century onwards. The fourth and fifth centuries saw the rise of the office of Cantor, as psalm reading gradually became psalm chanting. Unison congregational refrain is often mentioned at this time, suggesting that this is a new practice.[[91]](#footnote-92)

Political turbulence during the sixth and seventh centuries has left sparse evidence of congregational song, although fifth century practices continued in places spared political turmoil.[[92]](#footnote-93) Elsewhere it is possible to discern the replacement of the Cantor with the Deacon. Gregory I reversed this practice in CE 595. During this period groups of secular clerics began to form scholas focused on singing. Congregational song was replaced by that of a choir. Congregations were not entirely silent, however: there is evidence of congregational singing of the Sanctus until the twelfth century. The formation of the scholas meant that women were silenced in parish and cathedral churches, although female monastic communities allowed many musical roles for women.[[93]](#footnote-94)

Voices were, on the whole, the only “musical instrument” in churches until the late middle ages when organs gained a liturgical role in the west. Injunctions against playing other instruments suggest that these instruments were sometimes used during this time.[[94]](#footnote-95) From the end of the fourteenth century the full range of musical roles, still in contemporary use, had emerged.[[95]](#footnote-96)

### Augustine[[96]](#footnote-97) and the Rise of Polyphony

Augustine’s six-volume treatise “de Musica” was written during his “retirement” at Thagaste. The first five books deal with metre and rhythm. The sixth volume was circulated independently and has a different character, restating Plato’s belief that mathematical principles underlie everything in the universe, and are the clues to its providential ordering.[[97]](#footnote-98) Augustine’s treatise concerns the nature of number (Book One), metre (Book Two), rhythm (Books Three and Four), and verse (Book Five).[[98]](#footnote-99) These five volumes had a huge influence on the music of twelfth century Paris where rhythmic polyphony came into existence.[[99]](#footnote-100) An increasing tendency towards elaborate glosses meant the one-to-one relationship between words and notes was abandoned and the problem of coordinating two or more voices arose. Composers confronting this problem had recourse to Augustine’s treatise, developing different rhythmic modes, each based on the repetition of different rhythmic feet, producing a rhythmic method based on Augustine’s proportions:

Ultimately, the whole polyphonic tradition of western Europe can be traced back to the pioneering efforts of the composers of twelfth century Paris and their work, in turn, was based on Augustine’s treatise.[[100]](#footnote-101)

Augustine acknowledges his vulnerability to being moved by music, especially by the psalm chants he heard at Milan cathedral. He recognised that “fitting music” could bring the meaning of the words home to the heart. Augustine was convinced by Plato’s thesis of a special affinity between music and the soul: no other “art” (Augustine actually regarded music as a science) is as independent of four of the five senses, and thus controlled by mathematical principles. This demonstrated the soul’s transcendence of the body. [[101]](#footnote-102)

Augustine’s belief in the independence of music from bodily senses, along with that of the soul’s transcendence from the body, however, reveal the basis of Augustine’s negative impact on music which must be held alongside his positive contributions. Augustine struggled with the “sensual wiles” of music which he regarded as a form of entrapment or bondage, from which he needed to be released by God.[[102]](#footnote-103) His descriptions of music’s alluring power is often expressed in very similar terms to his laments over his sexual sins, wishing for the sound of “sweet songs” to be banished both from his ears and from the church. Augustine’s suspicion of music echoes down the centuries, and is behind much subsequent negative discussion of music. His belief in the primacy of the text is still reflected in much writing on church music, which very often turns out to be a discussion of words alone[[103]](#footnote-104) Augustine’s body/soul dualism and suspicion of the human body, still impact on the experience of singing in church today: as will be seen in Chapter Three, the congregation I studied mostly failed to recognise singing as a bodily activity – only a ‘”non-singer” saw the body at work in his inability to sing in tune.

### The Rise of Polyphony and the “counterbalance’” of Mys tery Plays

The church’s music gradually developed from unison (octave) singing, through organum (singing in parallel fourths or fifths) to fully developed and complex Renaissance Polyphony. However, the development of polyphony came at a cost: by the sixteenth century church music had become choral, rather than congregational. As they were gradually excluded from liturgical singing, the music of the laity moved out of the church doors and found expression in medieval church dramas or mystery plays[[104]](#footnote-105) Richard Rastell has written two volumes on music in early English religious drama, in which he unpicks the music from text and stage direction, and outlines the use of music in cycles of mystery plays based on the Bible, lives of the saints and moral tales.[[105]](#footnote-106) This time also saw the birth of carols for Advent, Christmas and Easter. These are primarily responsorial, giving the people refrains easily learned without printed materials. The word “carol” emerges from circle-dance, tying these songs back into the lay-led celebrations from which they sprang. The “ordinary” lay experience of faith survived, even if its home was outside the doors of the church.

## The Reformation (1517-1648)

The Reformation was another time of great change for congregational song, and again, there was a variety of approaches and experiences. One obvious fracture line runs between Lutheran and Reformed theologies: Luther, an Augustinian monk by training, and a fine amateur singer and lute player, had a positive view of music, while Calvin and Zwingli were both suspicious of it. Luther saw music as a gift from God, which, alone amongst the arts, produces “a calm and joyful disposition”.[[106]](#footnote-107) Calvin and Zwingli regarded music respectively as a potential distraction and as human in origin and therefore to be mistrusted. Luther reinstated and reinvigorated congregational song, wrote hymns and promoted musical education for school children and for trainee ministers. Zwingli outlawed music in church altogether although MacCulloch points out that when the people of Zurich demanded the reinstatement of church music in 1598 it became clear Zurich’s printers had been producing hymnals for other Protestant denominations for the past fifty years.[[107]](#footnote-108)

Steering a middle course between Luther and Zwingli, Calvin allowed singing in church and was enthusiastic about psalm singing. Quoting Augustine, Calvin saw danger in listeners being moved by the music rather than by the words: he saw words as a moderating influence on the music. He thought music should be majestic and grave. The idea of using secular songs in worship was abhorrent to him.[[108]](#footnote-109)

These differing responses reflect a range of theological stances: one the one hand the suspicion about music, which had become especially prevalent since Augustine, was reflected in the some Reformed traditions. This lead to either to the silencing of music or to tolerance as long music was subservient to the words, and neither used secular tunes nor stirred the emotions. In Lutheran theology, on the other hand, hymn singing became a practical expression of the priesthood of all believers, as the whole congregation sang together. Kimbrough notes that this was especially the case in the return of the Gradual hymn to the congregation, giving the people the ability to respond to the Epistle and prepare for the Gospel.[[109]](#footnote-110) This same doctrine later became one of the central beliefs of the Methodist Church – another place where congregational song became highly valued.[[110]](#footnote-111) Kimburgh also notes that the Tractarian Movement in England, with a hierarchical approach reflecting that of Medieval Catholicism, distinguished between the music of the choir, priests and servers, and that of the congregation whose song was known as “ordinary” and regarded as inferior.[[111]](#footnote-112) As will be seen in Chapter Three, the word “ordinary” has been taken up in a stream of Theology (Ordinary Theology) which values “ordinary faith” and brings it into conversation with academic theology.

Thus, while it is not possible to argue that a belief in the priesthood of all believers leads universally and directly to a flourishing of congregational song, it is clear that the doctrine did have an impact on the song of the people: this was part of the democratization of the church - a theological shift which placed a greater emphasis on the laity and their ability and right to approach God directly. Despite an emphasis on individual salvation,[[112]](#footnote-113) there was also clear communal emphasis which is often overlooked. As the song of the people is also largely overlooked it may be possible to argue that a whole strand of communal aspects of Reformation theology have been overlooked as a consequence of a frequent forgetfulness about the people’s song. During the Reformation God’s people gathered to worship together, and this worship was very often expressed in song – indeed, song was the chief means of congregational participation in the liturgy. As will be seen in Chapters Three and Four, song is still a vital expression of the people’s worship, still representing the most frequent means of collective lay participation in worship.

Demonstrating that the Catholic/Protestant fault-line in the Reformation was not as clear as is often assumed, Calvin’s concerns about words are echoed in the Council of Trent[[113]](#footnote-114) which almost banned polyphonic music because its increasingly elaborate style obscured the words. Palestrina’s Missa de Papa Marcelli saved the day, its more restrained style demonstrating the possibility of verbal clarity in polyphonic music. The Council of Trent also prohibited the use of secular melodies in church music.[[114]](#footnote-115) The Roman Church, however, was seeking the audibility of Latin text, while Calvin’s concerns were for vernacular text. Luther, who wrote Eucharistic settings of both Latin and German texts, believed that the human gifts of words *and* music showed that Christians should praise God with both. For him, the emotional power of music was positive. Others regarded music’s emotional power with suspicion.[[115]](#footnote-116)

The Reformation is the birthplace of the hymn, the earliest Protestant hymns making use of earlier Gregorian melodies. Jan Hus[[116]](#footnote-117) published the first Protestant collection of vernacular hymns and psalms in 1501. Most of them were taken from Gregorian chant and secular song. The first Lutheran hymn book appeared in Wittenberg in 1524, the poetry and tunes of German hymns becoming a great source of inspiration to later German composers such as Schütz, Buxtehude, Pachabel and the Bach family. J.S. Bach harmonised many of these hymns or chorales for four-part singing. It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of the chorale in German life. Luther’s collection of hymns included old and new, high art and folk songs, and left space for both choir and congregation in its use of unison and polyphonic singing.[[117]](#footnote-118)

### The Reformation in England

Periods of exile on the continent and subsequent returns to England and Scotland lead to some cross fertilization of English and continental psalms and hymns: the familiar tune Old Hundredth appears to have sixteenth century Dutch origins, while psalm-paraphrases and tunes from England and Scotland similarly found their way to Europe. England had no single “voice” expounding Reformation theology. Instead, it had the Book of Common Prayer (BCP), which, as Westermeyer reminds us “points to the life of prayer over the life of thought.”[[118]](#footnote-119) Almost as soon as the BCP was published, a musical setting, suitable congregational use became available – Merbecke’s setting of 1550. Adhering to Cranmer’s requirement of one note to one syllable, “Merbecke” was “functional plainsong”.[[119]](#footnote-120)The turmoils of English history meant that it was sent into obscurity for almost two hundred years, re-emerging in the nineteenth century when it came into common usage. Merbecke was largely alone in England in his attempt to provide service-setting music for the congregation, although metrical psalms remained for the next three hundred years.

Most Reformation Mass settings were for choirs, those of Byrd, Morley and Tallis being particularly beautiful. Tallis survived and composed through four reigns,[[120]](#footnote-121) altering his style from ornate polyphony to a simpler style where the words could more easily heard. Anglican Chant was not developed until the seventeenth century. Singing in church was banned altogether during Cromwell’s Commonwealth.[[121]](#footnote-122)

Routley argues a link between church politics and psalm tunes: unison singing expressed a democratic approach for those for whom the authority of the church lay with the people. Harmonised, choral psalmody was the approach of “high church” people who accepted either the authority of the King, Bishops or Pope.

The psalm tunes were “anonymous”, passed on from congregation to congregation in a musical oral culture where few could read music. Precentors commonly lined out the psalm in short phrases, with the congregation to repeating each phrase. Routley describes the main fault of this “democratic” music as “dullness”, but adds that these psalm tunes, “refined by popular and editorial criticism remain … a priceless heritage.”[[122]](#footnote-123)

### Post Reformation England (1650 – 1800)

It is said that the sixteen year old Isaac Watts[[123]](#footnote-124) complained to his father that the singing in church was dull, to which his father responded, “well write something better then”, which Isaac duly did.[[124]](#footnote-125) His hymns remained popular in the late nineteenth century: in 1891, a search of seven hundred and fifty different hymn books found that forty percent of the hymns were by Watts, as were five of the thirty two most popular hymns in 1838.[[125]](#footnote-126) Watts is known as The Father of the English Hymn, but it should be remembered that he was a wordsmith rather than a musician. Musically he used the tunes of the metrical psalms.[[126]](#footnote-127) Watt’s words still survive today in such well loved hymns as “Jesus Shall Reign” and “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”.

The Wesleys[[127]](#footnote-128) made the next great contribution to English hymnody and were even more prolific than Watts: Charles Wesley wrote the words of over six hundred hymns and John translated many more. Charles’s words were rich in scriptural references: Routley demonstrates one example which includes ten scripture references in only twelve lines of hymn.[[128]](#footnote-129) These hymns were written in the hope that people would “sing themselves into knowledge”.[[129]](#footnote-130)

Again, the Wesleys were wordsmiths rather than composers, but they had strong ideas about music and did much to standardise the usual music for each hymn, and also the names by which the tunes were known. Common practice in churches of the time was to fit words to whichever tunes they knew. These were tunes from a wide variety of sources including the seemingly perennial vernacular psalm tunes, some German chorale tunes and some freshly composed music from musicians such as Lampe - a composer friend of John Wesley’s. In 1761 John Wesley published “Sacred Melody”, which aimed at high quality, people-friendly tunes for the Methodist church.[[130]](#footnote-131) It also aimed to avoid “irresponsible vulgarity”. [[131]](#footnote-132) There was also the music of the Restoration on which to draw, especially the new operatic style of Handel; although Handel is responsible for only three of Charles Wesley’s hymn tunes, his influence brought a new, dramatic style to hymn tunes.[[132]](#footnote-133) Routley detects in the Wesleys, traces of both the Puritanism from whence they came and the Romantic Movement which was just over the horizon, the latter evidenced in John’s belief that hymn singing should rouse the emotions.[[133]](#footnote-134)

The second half of the eighteenth century was the age of West Gallery (or Balcony) Choirs. With little formal training these choirs sang popular psalm tunes, often by local composers, usually two to four voice parts, sometimes in fugue style and with striking changes of texture and meter. Early West Gallery choirs sang unaccompanied, but were later augmented by church bands which included bassoons, viols and flutes. The band players brought lively music with them, and psalms were played to flamboyant dance-like melodies.[[134]](#footnote-135) This outburst of “people’s music” in the church dwindled when the organ became popular. It is said that the balcony choirs and bands were often difficult to control, while influence over an organist was easier. The ousting of the band by an organist is given a fictional treatment in Hardy’s early novel “Under the Greenwood Tree”, which reflected events at Hardy’s church at Stinsford.[[135]](#footnote-136) As will be seen below, all was not lost. The song of the people was about to enter into what may be considered its greatest age.

## The Nineteenth Century in England

The nineteenth century was full of significant dates for hymn singing, and of important new initiatives. In 1821 the official prohibition of hymn singing (psalms only were allowed) in the Church of England was officially lifted after more than a hundred and fifty years. This was precipitated by a court case brought against Reverend Thomas Cotterill[[136]](#footnote-137) of Sheffield who had been allowing hymn singing in church out of concern that the hymn singing of the Wesleyans was luring people away from the parish church.[[137]](#footnote-138)Two years later, Cotterill’s victory brought hymn singing into the Church of England. In 1861 the first music edition of Hymns Ancient and Modern (A&M) was published.[[138]](#footnote-139)

Joseph Mainzer[[139]](#footnote-140) and John Hullah[[140]](#footnote-141) initiated of a movement of working class lay singing classes. Mainzer’s classes were so successful in Paris, each class attracting hundreds of participants, that they were outlawed, at which point he moved to London where he began again. Hullah was a friend of F.D. Maurice, his music classes were part of the emerging Christian Socialist Movement. At one stage there were over fifty thousand people across the country attending Hullah’s singing classes. Hullah’s development of musical training for teachers in London and Manchester make him the originator of music in the English school curriculum.[[141]](#footnote-142)

There was a struggle within the church at this time, between those who preferred the older psalm-tune hymns and those who welcomed the new style of Victorian hymn which made use of harmony, often at the expense of tune.[[142]](#footnote-143) A&M contained a breadth of hymns and was hugely popular. Each edition included more contemporary contributions so that, by the turn of the century it was definitely more modern than ancient. In terms of text, A&M brought the translations of Neale and Winkworth into circulation and also permanently linked some words with a particular tune; “Holy, Holy, Holy” with “Nicaea”, and “The Church’s One Foundation” with “Aurelia”, for example.

The second half on the nineteenth century was the time the evangelical duo of Ira David Sankey[[143]](#footnote-144) and Dwight Lyman Moody.[[144]](#footnote-145) From 1871 onwards they wrote Christian songs and travelled throughout America and the UK using their song as a tool of evangelism, with Moody preaching and Sankey singing. They published books of Christian hymns which became known as “Sankeys” in the UK.

### Women Hymn Writers

A large majority of hymn writers (words) are men but women have made a significant contribution, writing or translating into English some of our best loved hymns. Women hymn writers include Cecil Frances Alexander[[145]](#footnote-146) (Once on Royal, All things Bright and Beautiful, There is a Green Hill), Fanny Crosby[[146]](#footnote-147)(Blessed Assurance, To God be the Glory), Jane Montgomery Campbell[[147]](#footnote-148) (We Plough the Fields and Scatter, Silent Night), Eleanor Farjeon[[148]](#footnote-149) (Morning has Broken), Francis Ridley Havergall[[149]](#footnote-150) (Take My Life and Let it Be), Caroline Maria Noel[[150]](#footnote-151) (At the Name of Jesus), Catherine Winkworth (who translated from German Christ the Lord is Risen Again, Now Thanks We All our God and Praise to the Lord, the Almighty), and Jan Struther[[151]](#footnote-152) (Lord of All Hopefulness, When a Knight Won his Spurs).

Women are far less represented as composers of traditional hymnody, but are more widely represented in contemporary worship music. Here the names of Bernadette Farrell[[152]](#footnote-153) and Margaret Rizza[[153]](#footnote-154) dominate, although some of the most popular worship songs are also by women, notably Colours of Day (Sue McLellan[[154]](#footnote-155) wrote both words and music with John Paculabu). Other well used songs by women include “Broken for Me” by Carol Owens, “Seek Ye First” by Carol Lafferty and Christine McCann (Gifts of Bread and Wine). June Boyce Tillman has written extensively about women in liturgical music from the earliest days to the contemporary songs.[[155]](#footnote-156)

## The Twentieth Century in England

The turn from the nineteenth to the twentieth century saw a division of opinion in the world of English hymnody. On the one hand a substantial grouping included the names of Hubert Parry,[[156]](#footnote-157) Charles Villiers Stanford,[[157]](#footnote-158) Basil Harwood[[158]](#footnote-159) and Henry Walford Davies[[159]](#footnote-160) and on the other the lone name of Ralph Vaughan Williams.[[160]](#footnote-161) The first group sought to reharmonise and rework the music of the nineteenth century. Vaughan Williams took a broader approach, choosing the best music of the previous three hundred years and putting it to use in hymnody. The efforts of the first group were not a great success, making the 1904 revision of A&M a failure. Vaughan Williams” efforts gave rise to The English Hymnal[[161]](#footnote-162) and to a book called “Songs of Praise”[[162]](#footnote-163) which was still used in schools in the 1960s.[[163]](#footnote-164)

The English Hymnal gave more than a nod to the Oxford Movement with texts by Henry Scott-Holland,[[164]](#footnote-165) for example. It also took on board some of the values of the Christian Socialist Movement with texts by Charles Kinglsey.[[165]](#footnote-166) Robert Bridges’[[166]](#footnote-167) scholarly input is also present; he loathed the circulating editions of A&M which, he said, filled him with dread. Musically the English Hymnal drew on the skills of Percy Dearmer[[167]](#footnote-168) and Vaughan Williams. The English Hymnal was most influential, in its use of English folk song as hymns. Tunes as “Kingsfold” and “Kings Lynn” came into use through the English Hymnal, and the best of the Victorian tunes remained.[[168]](#footnote-169)

The Second Vatican Council[[169]](#footnote-170) and the ecumenical movement, which brought about the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948, brought greater sharing of music between different traditions and nations. The music of the Taizé Community is a good example of this: an ecumenical and international community, “Taizé” was started on Easter Sunday 1949 by Brother Roger [Schütz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brother_Roger).[[170]](#footnote-171) The community, though western European in origin, sought to include traditions from across the world. This is reflected in Taizé’s music which is sung in many languages simultaneously, in Latin or in a language which may not be the tongue of most of the singers. The music uses simple phrases or chants, usually lines from [psalms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psalms) or other Biblical texts, repeated and sometimes also sung in canon. Simple instrumental parts are also available.

Services using Taizé music were popular, especially with young people, in the latter half of the twentieth century. Thousands still gather at Taizé for international pilgrimages and some churches still hold Taizé services, although their popularity has diminished more recently.

The Iona Community is another example of this international and interdenominational sharing. The Iona Community’s hymn writers (John Bell[[171]](#footnote-172) and Graham Maule)[[172]](#footnote-173) have popularised music from across the globe in two books of songs of the World Church [[173]](#footnote-174) John Bell is a significant figure in Scottish hymnody: his collections of songs have been translated into many languages.[[174]](#footnote-175)

The digital age has also had a globalising effect on church music, making it possible for new hymns and songs to be shared internationally. Mission England Praise is a good example of this.[[175]](#footnote-176) Starting life as a compilation of hymns and songs for Billy Graham’s 1984 mission, it subsequently evolved into Mission Praise which went through several editions. This was followed by Mission Praise Two. A new thirtieth anniversary edition was published in two volumes in 2015.[[176]](#footnote-177) Mission Praise, with its distinct evangelical flavour, is now available in print and as downloads. Subscribers to the website are able to keep track of which hymns have been used and when, can listen to recordings of hymns and songs which can then be downloaded for churches with no music group.[[177]](#footnote-178) The story of Mission Praise captures something of the story of popular church music in the transition from the twentieth to twenty first centuries, with its roots in an evangelical mission, to the digital revolution, and its effect on church music.

The twentieth century also gave rise to another “hymn explosion” with writers such as Brian Wren, Fred Pratt Green and Sydney Carter. Issues of sexism, racism and disability impacted on words, which lead to many old hymn texts being revised or dropped. There was also a chastening of attitudes following the horrors of the twentieth century from Auschwitz to Hiroshima, Vietnam to South Africa. These writers, along with The Iona Community, have been responsible for hymns and songs with a prophetic edge and a global vision, with lyrics focusing on issues of justice and peace.

Despite this international and interdenominational sharing, conflict about church music has been rife. As Westermeyer points out, this is true especially within rather than between denominations:

Within the same denomination (choose almost any one of them), different groups have wanted to use worship and music for high art, folk art, popular currents, concerts, education, social justice, personal morality, or evangelism. Guitars made an entry into Catholic churches after Vatican II, and were soon seen in most other denominations, along with an influx of “choruses”. In many places both organs and choirs fell out of favour, often amidst rancour.[[178]](#footnote-179)

The resulting conflict between organ and choir versus music group has been one source of disagreement. Behind it lay the more familiar conflict about the extent to which secular idioms should be used in church music. Folk Masses, reflecting the English Hymnal’s use of folk tunes, were overtaken by rock, pop, jazz and even heavy metal settings.[[179]](#footnote-180) This jarring between church and popular music still perplexes many church communities. In my youth this was seen as a division between young people and older church members. This youth/age division seems to have become a division between evangelical and other churches. This will be discussed further in my personal reflection below.

Westermeyer describes the arrival of the mega church in terms of competition. While churches with liturgical traditions have often “bumped into their traditions” before the wholesale embrace of praise choruses, the new-start churches had no such restrictions. Often basing their worship on the results of market research, and with a specific target audience in mind, churches such as the Willow Creek churches have an upbeat and popular cotemporary worship style. Sadly, this music often involves little space for congregational song.[[180]](#footnote-181)

In the Church of England, three twentieth century Archbishops’ Commissions on church music said little about congregational song, focusing almost entirely on choral matters.[[181]](#footnote-182) The 1992 report, “In Tune with Heaven” noted that, by the 1960s, both congregational and choral music were beginning to feel old and tired, with parishes struggling to find music that wasn’t either too complicated or too trivial. Despite mentioning congregational song in its introduction, the report has little to say on the subject, the primary focus being on the choir or music group. The issue of congregational hymns and songs is still in want of attention; despite research demonstrating song’s therapeutic benefits, it is in danger of falling out of use, as the mega churches and some Fresh Expressions[[182]](#footnote-183) demonstrate.[[183]](#footnote-184) Thus the twentieth century, which began so well for congregational song, ended in confusion and with the future of congregational song in doubt.

## The Twenty First Century: a Personal Reflection on Church Music Today

The story of twenty first century church music is one of fragmentation. Musicians of any kind to accompany congregational singing are now hard to find and churches increasingly sing to pre-recorded music. A trend to make churches more homely places has given rise to more carpeting and other soft furnishings which deaden acoustics and can make singing a strain. The National Curriculum,[[184]](#footnote-185) together with the culling of music services to schools, has left little time for music in schools. Church schools now have their own sources for children’s worship songs which are unrelated to what is sung in church; the disparity in material does not, in many senses, bode well for the future.[[185]](#footnote-186)

The ability of churches to print their own service sheets or use electronic projection, means that choice of worship music has become almost unlimited. The Church of England is, theoretically, bound by the Common Worship liturgical texts, but there is no denominational hymn book as in the Methodist Church, for example. New music appears and disappears quickly, perhaps making hymn books a thing of the past.

The challenge of pop-style music from the evangelical mega-churches is deeply felt in smaller, local churches.[[186]](#footnote-187) However, such music is not always all it seems, and can discourage congregational song either by what Brian describes as its soloistic style or by “electronic discouragement”: we hear digitally reworked music and begin to feel our own voice has little worth.[[187]](#footnote-188) I have also observed a habit of repeating sections of a song ad lib as the worship leader chooses. At a recent conference I observed that this left the congregation making bizarre wailing noises as they sought to take part without knowing their location in the song. This is not an ideal pattern for congregational participation.

Significantly, the worship groups of churches such as the Abundant Life Church in Bradford now release albums of their music.[[188]](#footnote-189) This mimics the secular pop music scene, and parallels Cathedral choirs which also release CDs. A movement which began with the intention of enabling congregation song is now in danger of becoming more exclusive than the choirs which it sought to replace. As Westermeyer points out, the ensuing silence has not been discussed; this is not a matter of principle, but is real nonetheless:

We are not likely to argue the case for silent singing in the way of Zwingli …We are more likely not to argue it at all, but to do it in practice. We practice congregational silent singing every time we set up leaders of worship as a self-contained unit so that the people and their singing become irrelevant. It can happen with organs and choirs, amplified vocalists and bands, synthesizers and other electrical equipment, in any style or any place – wherever the sonic environment is made to appear complete without the congregation.[[189]](#footnote-190)

The balance between congregational song and the choir and organ or the band is a real challenge: how can each flourish? Westermeyer argues that, while justification can be found for places where high art and contemporary music are used to the exclusion of congregational song, they cannot be the norm.[[190]](#footnote-191) I concur with him in arguing for the incompleteness of church music without the participation of the congregation. Congregational song necessitates church musicians who are prepared to “make themselves invisible” in a way which no other church office does: “The musician’s job is to get out of the way so the people can in fact sing.”[[191]](#footnote-192) I encountered a good example of this failing to happen in my own church when the organist was enjoying “giving a bit of welly” (as he described it) by pulling out all the stops and making a lot of noise. Several members of the congregation later told me they found it intimidating and physically painful. Many gave up trying to sing because they couldn’t hear themselves, or anyone else, singing – a good example of the potential conflict of interest between church musicians and singing congregations. The problem could equally well have been a church music group, amplified sufficiently to make render the congregation’s song inaudible and irrelevant.

The potential demise of congregational song comes at a time when the therapeutic benefits of song are increasingly understood and recognised. Quoting Sachs, for instance, Brian Wren speaks of the power of music to heal, especially through its ability to bypass damaged connections in the brain and coordinate the brain’s actions:[[192]](#footnote-193)

[Music] lifts us from our frozen mental habits and makes our minds move in ways the ordinarily cannot.[[193]](#footnote-194)

Another aspect of song which is increasingly documented, and of great importance at a time when community cohesion is fragile, is song’s community-building potential. This theme of “community” will be picked up in the congregational research of Chapter Three of this thesis and in the theological reflection of Chapter Four. Westermeyer writes:

Lack of community brings with it lack of communal song. Congregational song, if it is anything, is communal. Congregational song is profoundly counter-cultural and therefore in jeopardy among us... Paradoxically though, the human race longs for community and for the song we sing together. The song of our worship grows out of a vision of community that transcends our brokenness and in a remarkable way takes sounding form among us as healing balm.[[194]](#footnote-195)

Christopher Small reflects on the community building aspects of music.[[195]](#footnote-196) He argues that music, including congregational song, has traditionally been a community-based event in which the participants, performers and audience all knew each other. Until comparatively recently, most of the world’s population lived in villages where everyone knew everyone else: this was the context of musical performance.[[196]](#footnote-197) Even in the “classical” context, the musicians were normally employees of the patron, and therefore a relationship of sorts.[[197]](#footnote-198) In the contemporary context, most musical experiences take place amongst strangers;[[198]](#footnote-199)in most cases the ability to pay for a ticket is the most unifying factor.[[199]](#footnote-200) Small argues that the resulting “temporary communities” have significant value. These “counterfeit” communities are often based on an “ideal of community and conviviality as an antidote for the loneliness of our age”.[[200]](#footnote-201) For as long as it lasts, Smart argues, this is something of value.[[201]](#footnote-202) A study of Smart’s idea of “Musicking” in relation to mega-churches with “pop star” type music groups would be an interesting area for further study. As will be seen in Chapters Three and Four of this thesis, the song of the people in church is an important part of maintaining the church community. The congregation I studied demonstrated concern that their community should be open and welcoming to others through its song. Past members of the community were also held in mind – part of song’s ability to stir the memory.

There is also hope to be taken from the fact that there has been, over very recent years, a re-kindling of interest in congregational music. This is expressed in a wide field of study, concerning congregational music in many different contexts and cultures. The fourth Christian Congregational Music conference is to take place in Oxford in 2017. The 2013 conference produced a book reflecting this global perspective.[[202]](#footnote-203)

For now it must be said that, after thousands of years, congregational song is as in as much danger now as it has ever been. This time it has not been banned, as has happened in the past; rather it is dying by accident, with little comment from the church which it has enlivened for so long. If this happens something precious will have been lost, not least the long, collective memory of the singing of Jesus himself, at supper with his friends.

Having told the story of congregational song, my next task is to develop methodologies and methods which allow the voice of the people, and their song, to be placed at the heart of further consideration of congregational song. My argument is that only the people who sing have the ability to express the meaning of their song. I will also seek to listen carefully to this song, and to be part of its expression. Placing the people at the heart of a theology of congregational song seems never to have been done before.

# Chapter Two: The Theory and Practice of my Congregational Study

In Chapter One I told the story of congregational song from the pages of the Hebrew Scriptures to the present day. This revealed the long history of song, its persistence, sometimes against the odds, and its current vulnerability. This story is usually hidden by the story of choral music, and by a focus on words rather than on song itself. Further invisibility is brought by a focus in written, rather than performed music and by the views of professional musicians without reference to the experiences of singing congregations.

In this chapter I will set out the principles underlying the design of the next stage of this thesis, showing how I arrived at a plan for undertaking my research. I will describe the process of bringing a singing congregation into the heart of my study. This is central to my intention of enabling a theology of congregational song to emerge from the song of the people and from their thoughts on this song. On a personal level this is important because it arises from my liberationist commitments to attend to the voices of those who have not been heard. Liberation Theology, therefore, forms the *motivation* for my study. My methodologies will be more focussed on the subject of congregational song: ethnography and Ordinary Theology.

Following this I will set out my methods: participant observation, semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis. I will also discuss questions of research ethics, my choice of focusing on one congregation, and how I found the right congregation to study.

## Motivation

In this section I will set out the background ethos of my study, focussing on Liberation Theology which is the primary motivation for my research, and the foundation of my ministerial praxis. After a general discussion of Liberation Theology I will turn to four texts which are of particular relevance to this thesis. I will begin with Paulo Freire’s “Pedagogy of the Oppressed”[[203]](#footnote-204) and then turn to Leonardo Boff’s “Ecclesiogenesis”[[204]](#footnote-205), both of which informed my study. I will then refer briefly to Mary McClintock Fulkerson’s “Places of Redemption” [[205]](#footnote-206) before turning, again briefly, to Heidi Epstein’s “Melting the Venusberg”.[[206]](#footnote-207) This text I will be discussed more fully as a key text in Chapter Four

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### Liberation Theology

The practice of enabling the voiceless to speak, for that voice to be heard and for change to ensue, is important to me.[[207]](#footnote-208) Enabling members of a congregation to talk about their song was, for me, an exercise in Liberation Theology; it gave voice to people who sing, talking about something precious to them (congregational song) about which comparatively little has been written, and which is in danger of being lost. Another link with Liberation Theology emerged in my Literature Review in the strong relationship between singing and movements of liberation. For instance the struggles of the Civil Rights Movement in America, the Anti- Apartheid Movement in South Africa, the suffragette and feminist movements, and even a Singing Revolution in Latvia, all demonstrate a link between song and liberation.[[208]](#footnote-209)

Liberation Theology arose in Latin America in the 1970s as a response to the political and economic exploitation of the people, and has always sought to bring the experiences of people to the heart of the theological task.[[209]](#footnote-210) It asserts that right belief can arise only out of right action;[[210]](#footnote-211) a Liberation Theology perspective asserts that it would be unjust to write a practical theology of congregational song without listening to those who sing:

We will have an authentic theology of liberation only when the oppressed themselves can freely raise their voice and express themselves directly and creatively in society and in the heart of the people of God.[[211]](#footnote-212)

Liberation Theology emerged partly in response to the idea of “development” which arose from well intentioned aspirations for better conditions for people in what used to be known as the “Third World”. Gutiérrez analyses various approaches to development demonstrating that it easily assumes the wants and needs of the poor, without actually listening to what they have to say. Liberation, by contrast, expresses the aspirations of oppressed people.[[212]](#footnote-213) In terms of congregational song, the “development” approach is reflected in the 1922 Archbishops’ Commission on Music, which discusses the worthiness of hymns, whether they evoke sincerity and nobility, and the “virility and sternness of the Saviour”[[213]](#footnote-214) Whether these were the priorities of congregations, no-one asked. This study, by contrast, seeks to put the opinions and voices of congregational singers at the heart of a practical theology of congregational song.

In his book Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Paulo Freire, suggests a new relationship between teacher, student, and society. Arising from his experiences of teaching literacy to adults in his native Brazil, Freire identifies traditional methods of teaching as the “banking model” in which students were regarded as empty vessels ready to be filled with knowledge. Here, students listen, memorize and recite. In contrast, Freire developed a teaching method which came to be known as “conscientisation”, in which the student becomes the co-creator of knowledge. In this teaching method, dialogue and critical thinking are encouraged: people should be empowered through their education.[[214]](#footnote-215)

Freire's system was based on Marxist philosophy which argued that the banking model of education was one of the social structures which kept peasants enslaved to the status quo. Education, according to Freire's conscientisation method, became a tool of liberation: students would come to recognise their subjection to oppression, violence and exploitation. Proper education could prevent a repetition of the oppressor/oppressed cycle, in that concientised people would have sufficient understanding not to become oppressors should they move from slavery to oversight. His educational or pedagogical model first enabled students to recognise the social structures and myths which keep them oppressed, and then enabled a vision of a new order in which these myths were eliminated and permanent liberation could take place. Dialogue is central to the conscientisation model of education: posing problems and conversation expose reality. This is a transformative experience for both teacher and pupil. The example is given of a discussion with a group of tenement residents in Santiago:

The group discussed a scene showing a drunken man walking on the street and three young men conversing on the corner. The group participants commented that “the only one there who is productive and useful to his country is the souse who is returning home after working all day for low wages and who is worried about his family because he can’t take care of their needs. He is the only worker. He is a decent worker and a souse like us”.[[215]](#footnote-216)

Using this story, Freire discusses the students' illumination of the picture, thus enabling a discussion about their understanding of their place in society, their values and way of life. A moralistic lesson on the evils of alcohol would have failed because it would not have identified the social structures which gave rise to drunken behaviour. For Freire the only sound procedure is the conscientisation of the situation, which prepares people for the struggle against the obstacles to their humanization. This process is transformative both for oppressed and oppressors:

It is only the oppressed who, by freeing themselves, can free their oppressors. The latter, as an oppressive class, can free neither others nor themselves. It is therefore essential that the oppressed wage the struggle to resolve the contradiction in which they are caught; and the contradiction will be resolved by the appearance of the new man: neither oppressor nor oppressed, but man in the process of liberation.[[216]](#footnote-217)

For the purposes of this thesis, Freire’s work demonstrates that an understanding of the song of the people must arise from the people themselves: to write a practical theology of congregational song, without seeking the knowledge that congregational members already have, is likely to produce a theology which is unrecognisable and meaningless to them. For this theology to be used to bring awareness and deeper understanding of the value of congregational song, starting with the knowledge of those who sing is even more essential. Freire’s work also suggests that this project of learning about song will change and challenge me as the person undertaking research – I can expect my assumptions to be challenged.

I now move to a consideration of Leonardo Boff's “Ecclesiogenesis”, after which I will consider the importance of both these texts for my study of congregational song. Boff's work is a reconsideration of church structures in which he argues that each local congregation or base community is a full expression of the universal church. He argues equality between all Christians, rejecting a division between celebrants and onlookers, rulers and governed.[[217]](#footnote-218) Instead he proposes a new model of church in which the hierarchy of God > Christ >Apostles > Bishops >Priests > Faithful[[218]](#footnote-219) is replaced by a circular model in which the ministries of the church are held within, and serve, the local church communities.[[219]](#footnote-220) There is still a hierarchical movement from God via Christ/Spirit to the church community but this is mitigated by Christ/Spirit also being held within the local church community:

The recognition of the presence of the Spirit in the hearts of human beings leads one to conceptualize the church more from the foundation up than from the steeple down.[[220]](#footnote-221)

This represents a radical re-orientation of the church towards the laity. One of the central reasons for Boff’s argument is that the laity lives in the world whereas the church hierarchy has a tendency to live in an isolated church-as-society structure. Beginning with the laity therefore places the whole of the church in the secular sphere which is where the Kingdom of God dawns.[[221]](#footnote-222) This church-in-the-world was born at Pentecost – a creation of the Spirit, not, as traditionally understood as the direct creation of Jesus via the Apostles.[[222]](#footnote-223) The rupture between Christ and the church changes the focus from priestly to lay continuity.

Boff’s new understanding of church structures has a direct bearing on both existing church structures and its liturgy. In his model, the church is born at the grassroots.[[223]](#footnote-224) The active presence of the Holy Spirit is at the heart of church communities, enabling both the living of essential values without which there is no humanity, and openness to the Absolute, without whom there is no dignity or salvation.[[224]](#footnote-225)

The work of both Freire and Boff plays important foundations for this study. Freire demands that I, as a researcher have to be prepared both to listen to, and to be changed by, what I hear and learn. I have already noted the attitude of one of the Archbishop’s Commissions which passed judgement on the value of congregational song without any consultation of the laity (see above). In contrast, my research follows Freire’s pedagogy in that this part of my research involved both being with, and listening to a congregation. In terms of resistance, this thesis resists discussions of congregational song which fail to take the thoughts and experiences of congregational members into account. In other words, it resists a hierarchical, clerical (or elitist, musical) standpoint, and opts to listen to people whose discussion of their own song has not been heard.

Chapter Three will demonstrate that doing my research in this particular way brought insights that would not otherwise have been possible. Like the discussion about the drunken man cited above, I came to this study with assumptions that were proved misguided. I also came with the hope that my study would tell the story of the song of the people – this is close to the requirements of Freire’s teachers who have to be prepared to listen to the experiences of ordinary people.

Boff’s work feeds into this study in a different way. My action as a priest undertaking this piece of research was like stepping into one of Boff’s diagrams denoting his new church structures: I took a step into a lay community, listening to their stories and sharing in their experience of church. My research showed me ways in which song holds communities together. It also reflected Boff’s belief in a church of the people, born at Pentecost and living in the world; the congregation I studied had an eye on the world outside the church door, and on those who had come before and those who would come after them. Finally, the song of the people was found to be an important means of lay participation in the anamnesis process, blurring the lines between priest and congregation, celebrants and onlookers. Interestingly, my argument for the song of the people as part of the anamnesis of the church does make a link back to Christ, thus questioning Boff’s argument that the church was born of a rupture between Christ and the church.

The use of Liberation Theology in studies of congregations is well attested. A study Mary by McClintock Fulkerson is of particular interest.She argues for a practice-based approach to theology which includes the study of “situational elements such as teaching, liturgy, education, and pastoral care”,[[225]](#footnote-226) as opposed a theology deduced directly from doctrine or beliefs. In terms of method, this drove her in the direction of participant observation and away from interviews about belief concerning the theological rationale for inclusiveness.[[226]](#footnote-227) As a participant observer McClintock Fulkerson attended services, Bible studies, meetings and many kinds of church events and developed a “thick description” of the church's life.[[227]](#footnote-228) This realignment of focus reflects my own determination to investigate performative song rather than written music, the experience of hymn singing rather than abstract theologies of music.

The hermeneutical conversation between my interview data and academic theology in Chapter Four uncovers links between music and the human body. Heidi Epstein demonstrates a long lived discourse about music phrased in pejorative language about the female body.[[228]](#footnote-229) This brings a further link between my thesis and two specific theologies of liberation: Feminist and Body Theologies. Singing is a bodily activity, but, as was shown in Chapter One, the body has often been approached negatively in Christian theology. Specifically soul/body binaries have led to an understanding of the body as temporal, unspiritual and unclean. Because of their child-bearing role women have been associated with the earth and that which is corruptible, as opposed to men who have been associated with the mind and spirit. An extended argument along these lines is set out by Rosemary Radford Reuther in “Sexism and God Talk”.[[229]](#footnote-230) As will be seen, Body Theology offers a point of critique in my study as most of my interviewees did not recognise singing as a bodily activity.

## Methodologies

In this section I will introduce Ethnography and Ordinary Theology as my methodologies. Both reflect my intention to bring the song of the people to the heart of my research. There was the possibility of using Grounded Theory, but I decided against this on the grounds that it was too structured in its requirement of beginning with open-ended sampling strategy and then moving on to a refined and increasingly focussed sampling strategy: I preferred the more flexible, less structured approach of Ethnography in which the all data can speak for itself, especially as my data sample was small. In part this was because of time constraints, but it also reflects my determination to enable my interviewees to speak for themselves and for the inevitable interpretation to rise from their voices as much as possible.

### Ethnography

It would have been musically possible to conduct a study of hymn singing without involving a congregation at worship. In the manner of Begbie, examining the music of J.S. Bach,[[230]](#footnote-231) this chapter could have derived its theology directly from the musical scores of hymns and service settings. I witnessed such an approach at a conference on Congregational Music in August 2013.[[231]](#footnote-232) Swee Hong Lim of the University of Toronto undertook a musicological analysis of the popular worship song “My Jesus my Saviour”.[[232]](#footnote-233) In his unpublished paper,[[233]](#footnote-234) he argued that the low notes of the second phrase echo the groanings of Romans 8:22-23 and a dramatic leap of a major seventh convey a sense of power that liberates and transforms reality. In contrast, I am aiming for a practically based examination of congregational song using the methodological tool of ethnography, a form of qualitative research which uses interviews and observation in order to research aspects of social life.

Ethnography originated in anthropology during the colonial period of the British Empire, although there are deeper roots dating back to antiquity.[[234]](#footnote-235) Originally intended as a tool for the study of isolated cultures with no links to the “outside world”, ethnography has increasingly turned to the study of sub-cultures of the researcher’s own society, particularly where the researcher is not an anthropologist.[[235]](#footnote-236) A further strand, originating with the sociologists of the Chicago School brought a political element of sympathy for the powerless[[236]](#footnote-237) and the intention of seeing things from the perspective of those studied before stepping back to make a more detached assessment.[[237]](#footnote-238) This perspective sits well both with my motivation in Liberation Theology and my methodology of Ordinary Theology. An essential aspect of ethnography is that the research takes place in the real world rather than the library, the researcher becoming a part of the setting of the group being studied, albeit in a temporary capacity.[[238]](#footnote-239)

Gilbert describes the necessity of impression or “front management”, noting an inescapable element of deception. [[239]](#footnote-240) In my case the world of the congregation I studied and my own world had a large overlap: Church of England worship. The biggest step was “becoming” a member of a congregation, rather the person responsible for, and leading, the liturgy. Although sitting with the congregation, I was still a “priest in disguise” - I did not wear my clerical collar – this was, perhaps, my “deception”. I also came with preconceptions and perspectives derived from being a priest. However, the simple act of sitting where members of a congregation sat, and joining in the liturgy with them was an enlightening, interesting and, in the end, moving experience.

Ethnography may be covert or overt: Neil Fielding conducted an ethnographic study of the National Front, passing himself as a member and reflecting on the differences between his own political beliefs and those of National Front members. My study was much more overt, although my first visit was unannounced to the congregation: I made my approach through the Parochial Church Council and introduced myself to the main Sunday morning congregation. Nevertheless, “visitors” to some of the services would not have been aware of my role as a researcher – this may be construed as another act of deception.

My use of ethnography dictated the use of observation and interview, the two essential tools of ethnographic research. These will be discussed in more detail below in the “methods” section of this chapter.

### Ordinary Theology

Ordinary Theology, my second methodology has been chosen to ensure that the voice of the people, singing, and talking about their song, is heard. Ordinary Theology is defined as:

the theological beliefs and processes of believing that find expression in the God-talk of those believers who have received no scholarly theological education.[[240]](#footnote-241)

Astley describes the value of Ordinary Theology as twofold: first the Church needs to know about the beliefs, patterns and processes of its members: secondly, Ordinary Theology “works” for those who own it, giving meaning to life articulating faith and spirituality, and incorporating ways of believing through which salvation is found.[[241]](#footnote-242) For the purposes of this study, Ordinary Theology sits well with the activity of singing during worship: most of those interviewed were not able to read music, and, had no formal, theoretical musical education, although all had been taught to sing at school. In parallel with Astley’s Ordinary Theology, here was “Ordinary Song”.

All of those I interviewed were people of long-standing faith and church attendance, but none had undertaken any scholarly theological education. This musical and theological situation is true for most of those who sing hymns and service settings in Church. As with many aspects of the beliefs, processes and expressions of the faith of church members, their song has also been largely overlooked and ignored. It is this “ordinary” understanding of the experience of singing in church that this part of my study seeks to uncover. It became clear during the course of my interviews that hymn singing was, profoundly, a pathway to encountering God.

Christie expands the understanding of Ordinary Theology in her book, “Ordinary Christology”.[[242]](#footnote-243) Christie’s research uses empirical methods within a hermeneutical framework. She does not regard her research as praxis based; her concern is not with changing the situation although she agrees that the results of her study might have implications for mission and Christian education.[[243]](#footnote-244) Rather, Christie sees her study as descriptive and exploratory. She is not hypothesis testing, but uses an inductive (rather than deductive) method.[[244]](#footnote-245) To this end, Christie’s approach is hermeneutical and phenomenological: the phenomenological research tradition seeks to describe the phenomenon under study as accurately as possible giving a “thick description” of whatever is being studied. The aim is often described as “seeking the essence” of the phenomena. This requires the researcher to “bracket out” personal biases in order to see the phenomena from the point of view of the participant.[[245]](#footnote-246) This is recognised as not being entirely possible. The researcher needs to “declare their interest” and “bias”: Christie describes herself as white, middle class, middle aged, female and a life-long church-goer, influenced by evangelicalism.[[246]](#footnote-247)

Thus Christie’s approach is different to mine: hers was not praxis based and did not seek change or transformation, whilst mine sought change in terms of both the practice of congregational song and my own understanding and praxis. A further difference may be summarised as Christie’s study being theoretically and theologically/doctrinally based, whereas mine was practice-based: I was not asking people about matters of doctrine, but about their experiences. These experiences touched on matters of belief, but this was not my primary focus. There was, despite these differences, an overlap between Christie’s methods and mine in that we both used semi-structured interviews in order to gather data.[[247]](#footnote-248) Unlike me, Christie did not use participant-observation; again, this reflects her more theoretical/doctrinal study.

In Chapter Four I will bring Ordinary Theology and academic theology into hermeneutical conversation.[[248]](#footnote-249) Astley argues that, although academic theology has largely ignored Ordinary Theology there should not be a reverse situation where Ordinary Theology speaks without being challenged or allowing situations for its transformation.[[249]](#footnote-250) The key point is listening. In the process of enabling a hermeneutical conversation, I (the academic) will need to listen carefully to what is being said. This is consistent with my methods of participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and inductive thematic analysis.

## Methods

In order to put my methodologies of Ethnography and Ordinary Theology into practice I have chosen the three methods; Participant Observation, Semi-structured Interviews, and Inductive Thematic Analysis.

### Participant Observation

#### The Theory of Participant Observation

Although Participant Observation has its roots in Ethnography, Mason argues that it has become a data-gathering method in its own right.[[250]](#footnote-251) Participant Observation may be defined as the process of “establishing a place in some natural setting … in order to investigate, experience and represent the social life and social processes that occur”.[[251]](#footnote-252) It aims to gain familiarity with a chosen area of study – in my case a Church of England congregation. Participant observation originated in the fieldwork of social anthropologists and in the research into urban life of the Chicago School. It may involve a range of methods, including informal or semi-structured interviews, direct observation (either covert or overt), participation in the life of the group, collective discussions and the analysis of documents produced within the group.[[252]](#footnote-253) Thus, although Participant Observation is considered a qualitative approach, it may have quantitative dimensions.

The main problem of Participant Observation is the balancing of subjectivity and objectivity. It aims to enter the subjective worlds of those being studied, to see things from their point of view, but begs the question of how the researcher can know that the point of view of those being studied is being accurately represented. How can the researcher be certain that they are not simply imposing their own views upon the research subject? Conversely, a total identification with the views of those being studied runs the risk of the researcher “going native”. In this case the world of those being studied is only seen point of view of the research subject or subjects, in which case there is no critical reflection. Thus the researcher needs to maintain enough distance to be able to locate the subject's view in a wider theoretical and social context.[[253]](#footnote-254) DeWalt and DeWalt devote an entire chapter to different “shades” of participation from non-participation (pure observation) to complete participation, or peripheral member to full membership:[[254]](#footnote-255) They also note the commonly expressed oxymoronic nature of participant observation:

Participation involves emotional involvement; observation requires detachment. It is a strain to sympathise with others and at the same time strive for scientific objectivity.[[255]](#footnote-256)

I certainly felt this tension during my participant observation fieldwork, as will be seen below.

It would have been possible for me to use observations of my own congregation singing during worship. In this case, however, I would have been “at the front” in a position of leadership, I would have chosen the hymns and service setting, and would have been involved in other decisions which could have impacted on the people’s song. My belief was that this would colour my experience in ways which may have obscured important truths and clouded my judgement. I decided that I needed to become a member of a congregation and to sit in their midst – as far as possible to become one of them. Here my observations would still be subjective, but this space was less problematic than observing my own congregation from the front. The desire to listen to, and be part of, the song of the people is a further example of putting congregational song at the heart of this study. This served as a reminder of the embodied nature of participant observation:

Our engagement with the field is both intellectual and physical. We cannot divorce our scholarly endeavours from the bodily reality of being in the field.[[256]](#footnote-257)

Mason talks of an epistemological position which suggests that knowledge of the social world can be generated by observing it or participating in it.[[257]](#footnote-258) As I approached the exercise I felt that this exercise alone would not reveal all I needed to know about song: its interpretation would be too reliant on my own analytical perspective. This was because what can be observed is external – how people look, what they are doing and, in this case, how their song sounded. While these things can reflect inner meaning, I felt that there may be disjunctions between song as performed and the inner meanings attributed to it: the song might not reveal the inner reasons, motives and feelings of the singers. Thus, while I felt that participant observation would enable me to experience congregational song from a different perspective, I also felt that it may not reveal everything I needed to know. This is why I also decided to undertake some interviews.

#### My use of Participant Observation

I undertook participant-observation in joining a selected congregation for worship. I attended a variety of different services, with a focus on the weekly Sunday morning service of Holy Communion which was the best attended service. My intention was to observe the congregation at worship, specifically to observe them singing the hymns and service setting, but also to observe how the singing fitted into worship and what it brought.

Initially I made four visits to the church to the main Sunday morning Eucharist, with the possibility of additional visits in order to study further any issues raised. During these visits I participated in the worship as best I could whilst also watching and listening carefully, experiencing something of the tensions mentioned above. Afterwards I spent time reflecting on my experience and writing these reflections in my learning journal. Further visits took place in order to observe particular issues that arose from the initial visits and the interviews.

My first, exploratory visit was to the 11 a.m. Eucharist. The church building was medieval at the heart of a small village in a rural setting. The congregation included people of all ages, mostly women but with a good number of men also. There was a small choir which rehearsed monthly in order to learn any new hymns and improve their knowledge of hymns already in use.

My second visit was more complex as my presence was announced: I was invited to speak about my research and I used the time after the service to recruit volunteers for the interviews. During my talk I described my research, asked for volunteers and made it known that I was seeking all sorts of singers, including those who felt they could not sing or had “a terrible voice”. As a result a number of people were keen to talk to me after the service.

I attended the morning Eucharist initially on two further occasions. For all visits I sat midway down the nave placing myself away from the aisle so that I was still in the midst of the worship but not too conspicuous. I had a good vantage point and found I could observe and make notes without being a distraction, but remaining in the midst of the singing.

Material from the interviews raised issues of singing at the much smaller service of Evening Prayer and at Baptism services which take place during the Sunday morning eleven o'clock Eucharist. Thus, two further visits were made, to an evening service and a Baptism. I also attended a Christingle service. This enabled me to encounter worship outside normal Sunday cycle, involving people who were not regular members. Many of the interviewees spoke of their love of familiar hymns sung at the major festivals, so attending a Christingle service offered a possible encounter with Christmas carols.

#### My Experience of Participant Observation

The participative aspect of this fieldwork was mixed: I found it impossible to join in with the worship fully, but did so partially. My experience was both of listening to the singing and noticing the difficulties involved whilst also sharing in the difficulties, (This is a common experience in Participant Observation, as discussed above.) For instance some hymns were too high for most people to sing the top notes, and sometimes the tune was unfamiliar: in these aspects I was noticing “from the outside” whilst participating in attempting to sing high notes and unfamiliar tunes. I also listened to, the qualities of the sound of the song, and shared in tussles over its pace and the effect of the accompaniment. Because I knew the shape of the liturgy well, having deliberately chosen a church of my own denomination, I felt there was a level of participation that was unlikely to have taken place had I studied a church of another tradition.[[258]](#footnote-259)

A longer term exercise in participant observation, such as that undertaken by McClintock Fulkerson[[259]](#footnote-260) would have enabled the participant part of the exercise to develop more fully. However, despite the problems of participation, the observation of a congregation at song was worthwhile; I learned things that would otherwise have been left unnoticed.

My experience of Participant Observation reflected the concerns of Ordinary Theology; I was there as a researcher, and was not involved in the congregation long enough to be a true participant. I was there as a musician with perfect pitch and musical knowledge which was not likely to reflect the knowledge of most people in the congregation. The same is true of my role as a theologian. I found the key was to listen and pay great attention, using my skills to observe rather than to judge.

#### Conclusion

The data generated by my participant observation was interesting for a number of reasons; there was one significant disparity between what I heard as a participant observer and what was said in several interviews about the depth of feeling associated with hymn singing. This will be discussed in the next chapter. As described in several interviews, visitors to church (at the Baptism and Christingle Services) did not, on the whole, participate in the singing. At the Christingle service this was likely to be because the choice of hymns was rather obscure while, I suspect, most people had come expecting to sing carols. There will be further reflection on the data generated by my participant observation in Chapter Three.

### Interviews

In order to hear what members of a congregation thought and felt about the activity of singing during worship I conducted a number of interviews with congregational members. This added richness and depth to my participant observation and brought rich data to my study.

#### Interview Theory

Unstructured or semi-structured interviews are an established part of collecting data in qualitative research. The aim is to collect data which has rich, detailed, first-person accounts of experiences. The qualitative research interview has been described as “a conversation with a purpose.”[[260]](#footnote-261) Such interviews are thematic in that the interviewer has a set of “starting points” for discussion. However, this is not a complete, sequenced set of questions; the interviews are designed to have a fluid structure, allowing the researcher and the interviewee to develop unexpected themes.[[261]](#footnote-262) In my case I aimed to hear people talking about their experiences of singing during worship. This demonstrates an ontology which holds that the voices, experiences and views of people are meaningful constituents of reality.[[262]](#footnote-263)  I felt that, in conjunction with participant observation, qualitative interviewing was the best way to get the data I sought, combing outward appearance and inner perspectives. A questionnaire, for example, would have enabled me to get data from a greater number of people, but would have involved pre-determined categories and directions, and would not have allowed people to “digress”, which all my interviewees did, allowing themes to emerge which would not, otherwise, have emerged. These provided some of the most interesting data. From the liberationist position, and from the point of view of Ordinary Theology, the voice of the people is at the heart of the theological enterprise.

Galetta argues that attention is key to successful interviewing: the researcher needs to give full attention to the interviewees’ narrative as it is unfolding. This necessitates being “on your toes” so as to know when to interrupt or prompt and when to stay silent. Although, in later interviews, the researcher may see patterns and themes emerging and wish to investigate these in more detail, this strategy needs to be “kept in check” as it may bias the interview results and dull the researchers sensitivity to what is being said in the interview. [[263]](#footnote-264)

Galletta speaks of the reciprocity which develops during an interview: this is the mutual negotiation of meaning and power emerging from the “give and take” of an interview.[[264]](#footnote-265) This takes place in a “communicative space” where researcher and interviewee engage with each other. She also posits a “conceptual space” which is the meeting place of data and theory. A conversation or dialectic occurs in both these spaces: “both incite a dialectic between contrasting ideas, alternating explanation and multiple angles of vision.”[[265]](#footnote-266) Thus the interview process interacts and engages with participants and causes the interviewee to tussle with the framing concepts of the research.

A further field of engagement between researcher and interviewee is for the purpose of uncovering and clarifying meaning. Engaging interviewees in clarification takes the interview below the surface of words and metaphors to the meaning participants give to their narratives. Creating space for unpacking meaning contributes to a more accurate analysis if what is really being said.[[266]](#footnote-267)

A further level of engagement draws the interviewee into the reflexive process when the researcher invites critical engagement with dimensions of their narrated experience:

Involving your participant in critical reflection…is in keeping with the overarching purpose of critical theory. Is supports a view of knowledge as grounded in human experience, and it reflects tensions between human agency and structural condition.[[267]](#footnote-268)

This creates a space for participant and researcher to reflect together on the emerging narrative with its layers of complex meaning. This process owes much to the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire, thus forming a link between liberation theology and the process of semi-structured interviewing.[[268]](#footnote-269)

#### My Use of Semi-structured Interviews

This section will cover lessons I learned from a pilot interview, how I entered into the process of selecting interviewees, a description of how and where the interviews were conducted, how the interviews were constructed, and how the interviews were transcribed.

At a pilot interview, undertaken with one of my doctoral peer group, I failed to use the digital recorder correctly with the result that I had no recording of the interview. In the light of this I decided to use two pieces of equipment; a digital recorder and a cassette recorder. As well as this, after each interview I spent some time writing notes about what had stood out most, what was unusual and obvious similarities to and differences from the other interviews. Despite the setback I found the pilot interview helpful as it enabled me to feel much less anxious about the interview process. In the end I found the interviews engaging, interesting and enjoyable.

During my second visit, after the service, while refreshments were being served, ten members of the congregation enquired about being interviewed. I was pleased to find that, among those who volunteered were experienced singers, reluctant singers and non-singers. Each person expressing an interest was given an “Invitation to Participate” sheet to read. [[269]](#footnote-270) I took names and a contact details, undertaking to phone in a couple of weeks to book interviews if they were still willing after having digested the information provided.

Due to a double family bereavement it was several months before I was able to contact the volunteers again. The interviews began on April 24th, 2012. By this time three of the ten volunteers had become unavailable. I tried contacting them several times on the phone numbers they had provided, but got no response. Two of the interviewees (a couple) decided they wanted to be interviewed together. Thus my interviews consisted of six interviews with seven people, five women and two men from their mid-thirties upwards.

I met most the interviewees in their homes, although one asked to be interviewed at work at the end of her working day. Each interviewee was given two copies of a consent form to sign (one to be retained by the participant and one by me).[[270]](#footnote-271) The interviews all lasted between fifty and ninety minutes and were semi-structured in that I used the same set of questions with each interviewee,[[271]](#footnote-272) but stressed that these were only “starters” and that they were free to talk about things they considered to be of importance when considering singing in church. As Mason notes, the semi-structured interview requires interviewers to “think on their feet” in order to ensure the interview generates relevant data and to allow the interviewee to speak freely and openly.[[272]](#footnote-273)

All the interview recordings were transcribed for me by a member of my church. Parts of the interviews were impossible for her to decipher mainly due to people speaking quickly or two people speaking at once. I filled in these sections of the interviews myself during the process of checking the transcripts against the recording. I made some corrections to the transcripts at the same time.

The data generated by the interviews was rich and detailed, and offered good material for analysis and classification. The interviewees had, as I had hoped, gone beyond the prompts I gave in the form of some basic questions and had gone into detail about their experiences, feelings and memories of singing. There were also clear trends; for instance almost everyone started with their experiences of singing at school, and many talked about weddings and funerals.

#### My Experience of Semi-Structured Interviews

Reflecting on the interview process later, I realised what a privilege it had been to listen to people talking freely about their experiences of hymn singing, some of which were profound and connected to significant life-events. I was amazed by people’s openness and touched by the stories they told. Already a significant disparity was becoming evident; the singing in church sounded sweet but not particularly emotional; the interviews showed that appearances can be deceptive! The theme of memory was also clear, which took me back to work done in my initial Literature Review about the psychological connections between memory and singing. The outcomes of the semi-structured interviews will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

### Inductive Thematic Analysis

#### The Theory of Interview Analysis

All data, whether quantitative or qualitative, must be analysed in order to access and make sense of its content. Gilbert states that this is always based on comparisons, either between different groups of cases, between the same cases or between the same cases at different periods of time.[[273]](#footnote-274) It is possible to use computer software for data analysis, but, having considered this I decided against it. This is because my learning style necessitates an understanding of how things work: for instance, I find mathematical formulae difficult to apply because I have no understanding of how they work. Thus, I preferred to undertake the data analysis process manually in order to see how the data arose from the transcripts.

Mason identifies two broad approaches to interview analysis; cross-sectional analysis and inductive analysis[[274]](#footnote-275) Cross sectional analysis uses pre-determined categories and is appropriate where there are existing data sets on the topic being studied. The aim here would be to determine how your interviews are similar to, or different from, existing research findings.

Inductive analysis allows the categorisation to arise from the interview texts themselves. A lack of previous study on the subject of congregational song using my chosen methodologies meant that I had no choice but to analyse my interviews inductively, as there were no pre-existing categories to follow. Even if previous, relevant data had been available, I feel I would still have chosen this method, as it reflects the aims of ethnography and Ordinary Theology in allowing the study of the views and experiences the participants to be heard. During this process I tried to lay aside my previous research and focus on what was really being said in the interviews. However, as mentioned above, I found that many of the themes which emerged from my inductive analysis were also themes which had emerged either from my earlier Literature Review or from the historical research of Chapter One. The emergence of the theme of Memory, for instance, was an exciting moment as it began to draw the theoretical and practical parts of my study together.

Within the inductive approach, Mason distinguishes between literal and interpretative or reflexive analysis. Literal interpretation is most suitably used in linguistic studies of structure, words and language, and even then, Mason argues, some degree of interpretation and reflexivity is likely.[[275]](#footnote-276) Interpretative or reflexive data reading requires the researcher to construct or document a version of what the data means or represents, or what can be inferred from it; the researcher reads through or beyond the data to create an interpretation of the interviews as a whole, on which a theology is built.[[276]](#footnote-277) I chose this method of interpretative-reflexive analysis.

#### My use of Inductive Interpretative-Reflexive Analysis

After having transcribed the recorded interviews I analysed the resulting texts thematically using Mason’s interpretative-reflexive analysis [[277]](#footnote-278) I recognised that this is “not entirely a practical or technical task…cataloguing or indexing systems are not analytically neutral.”[[278]](#footnote-279) Despite the reflexivity of interpreting data, I did not come to the task with predetermined analytical categories. Rather, I allowed these to arise from the interview texts themselves.[[279]](#footnote-280) The analysis was conducted using serial indexing which allowed the possibility of one piece of text appearing under several data sets.[[280]](#footnote-281) After being transcribed the interviews were analysed as follows:

1) The transcripts were read and reread until I was familiar them and had a broad understanding of their content and meaning. At this stage I also attempted to identify places where my own ideas and beliefs impacted on the documented conversations. Reading the interviews carefully also gave opportunity to reflect on my role as interviewer within them. I noted that I had managed to adhere to my intention of asking “open” questions, but one interview showed how I had brought my own judgement into the narrative: this was the interview with the person who “could not sing” – my annoyance when this interviewee recounted occasions when he had been told to be quiet was visible in the interview transcript.

2) Next I read each interview separately to identify emerging themes. Although I tried to listen attentively to what the interviewee was saying, the themes did not necessarily rely on the exact words used; sometimes a meaning was inferred or implied. This is an act of interpretation, a departure from the voice of the interviewee, but an essential act which enables the data to be organised and used. The themes began to emerge - groups of ideas that were discussed or touched upon frequently, or moments where what was said seemed to be of great significance.

3) As each transcript was analysed, the themes were arranged and structured into a summary table with page and line numbers cited for easy reference. At this stage some themes were gathered together under “meta-headings”, for example memories of people, memory of words and memories of significant past occasions were gathered together under the “meta-heading” of “Memory”.

4) Finally themes from all the interviews were brought together and integrated in a table ordered by the frequency with which each theme arose.

#### My Experience of Inductive Interpretative-Reflexive Analysis

The process of interpreting the interview data was an experience of intense listening to what was being said, sometimes in words and sometimes by implication. It was also an experience of hearing what was not being said; this was particularly so in the absence from almost all the interviews of anything positive about the human body. It was a process that needed a great deal of concentration and an awful lot of bits of paper which covered my study floor and escaped out into the hall. It was also an exciting process as patterns and themes began to emerge.

## Practical Issues

There were a number of practical issues associated with practical aspects of my research which are covered below.

### Deciding Exactly What I Was Looking For

Clearly, the right choice of congregation and interviewees would be crucial to the success of my research. Thus, in making choices about how I would undertake my research, the following principles made most sense:

1. I am an Anglican priest and wanted my research to inform my practice and understanding of liturgy and worship in my own parish. However, I was aware that interviewing members of my own congregation was likely to produce material containing what people thought I might want to hear, and that people might find it particularly difficult to voice criticism. This was particularly so in the context of poverty, where many lack confidence. Thus, while it would have been much more convenient to study my own congregation, I decided to find another congregation to study. Choosing another Church of England congregation meant that I would know the liturgy and the shape of the worship. This would enable me more easily to focus on the singing. This choice proved beneficial in that I have been able to use the outcomes of my research to understand better the song of my own congregation and inform my own practice.

2) Jennifer Mason stresses the importance of finding a focus for qualitative research;[[281]](#footnote-282)congregational song provided this. In particular my earlier Literature Review revealed a tendency for writers on hymns to focus on the words rather than the music. This gave me an important point of clarification – my focus was primarily on the song; consideration of words would always be in their relation to the music.

1. Another point of focus arising from my earlier Literature Review was that almost all writing on church music is about choral music rather than congregational song. In order to maintain my focus on the song of the people I decided to seek a congregation without a large choir or music group.

 4)   Budget constraints, and the difficulty of finding cover for my own congregation on Sundays, meant that I was able to study only one congregation. I was happy with this choice as I felt it would enable greater clarity in the interview outcomes. I am aware that a comparative approach would make for interesting further research; this could compare differences in the song of the people in different denominations and traditions.

Before I started looking for a congregation, therefore, I had a clear understanding of what I was looking for and what I wanted to find out: what did congregational song mean to those congregational members (interviews), and how did it work in practice (participant observation)?

### Finding the Right Congregation to Study

The opportunity came to circulate a leaflet at a church music event in my diocese which took place in the autumn of 2010. Such an event offered the benefit of a focus on church music, and on congregational song. The event offered a diverse set of workshops: Taizé and Iona music, a workshop with Graham Kendrick, using instruments in worship, Eucharistic settings and how to learn and teach new music. It was attended by around two hundred people from a wide variety of traditions within the Diocese. This provided a good opportunity to try to find a suitable congregation.

Having obtained permission from the event organisers I designed a flyer outlining my research and describing clearly what sort of congregation I was looking for.[[282]](#footnote-283) The organisers circulated the flyer to all participants, including it in a folder of information given to each participant as they registered at the event. I received a response from a member of a church which appeared to meet my criteria exactly. This was a village church where there was an informal choir which practiced monthly but which did not sing in parts or perform separate choir items during the service. The liturgy was sung by the whole congregation rather than by the choir which gave the maximum possible congregational participation in singing. This fitted my criteria of seeking to engage with members of a congregation rather than professional musicians or accomplished choral singers. I contacted the Vicar who put my proposed research to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) which responded favourably to my request.

I was aware that there was an issue about “gate keeping” here. In the Church of England the correct procedure is to contact the Vicar initially. The Vicar takes requests such as this to the PCC (largely constituted of lay representatives) for discussion. In this case, because the Church was part of a team ministry in which a number of clergy rotate between several churches, the clergy were also asked to give their consent, which they did. Although this was, perhaps, not ideal, it has to be remembered that the initial contact came from a member of the congregation. The signs were that the clergy and laity worked together in a collaborative manner, as evidenced by a stand of prayer cards in the church which were taken out by clerical and lay Visitors to sick and housebound parishioners in order to demonstrate that “the church” had visited them. (This was an idea I subsequently suggested at my own church and is now working to good effect.)

 I undertook an initial visit to a service to make sure that this congregation was suitable for my study, and it appeared to be a good choice: it had sufficient people to volunteer as interviewees, was sufficiently near to my place of work to fit in with my work as a parish priest, but sufficiently removed from my context for me not to know people or become over-involved. This church provided a context uncomplicated by a dominating choir or music group which enabled me to focus on my research question about the song of the people.

### Ethics

All congregational studies and research interviews have ethical implications. I approached ethical considerations in the following ways:

#### Allowing Voices to be Heard

Given that the voices of congregational members have seldom been heard in the history of congregational song, it was important to me that their voices were heard clearly in my research. The methods and methodologies I chose, therefore, all aimed to allow these voices to be heard and to be a central focus of my study. The method of data analysis I chose expressed this well: the themes arose out of the words of my interviewees rather than reflecting pre-set categories.

#### Data Protection

The recordings made during the course of the interviews are all stored in a locked filing cabinet. They will be destroyed ten years after the completion of my doctorate. The interview transcripts were anonymised as were the name and location of the church. These are also kept in the locked filing cabinet and will, likewise, be destroyed after ten years. Details of data storage and the anonymity of the congregation were given to each interviewee and a copy of this information was sent to the person who transcribed the interviews.

#### Pastoral Care

The powerful links between song and memory meant that my interviewees were likely to revisit the past in ways that might be painful, particularly as hymns evoked memories of deceased loved ones in recollections of funerals and weddings. I was privileged to listen to the stories of people's lives, and to memories of deep personal significance. I am a parish priest, and therefore an experienced listener, although, structurally, I had no authority as I was working in someone else’s parish. Had the need arisen, I would have asked interviewees to talk with their parish priest. Confidentiality meant that this could only be a suggestion: I was not in a position to involve the local Vicar without the consent of the interviewees. In the event, the chance to talk about these things seemed, in each case, to be a positive experience requiring no follow-up. However these moments did require sensitivity and care.

#### Personal Safety

I was likely to be interviewing people in their own homes, and, although there was no obvious risk I always carried my mobile phone with me when conducting interviews, ensuring it fully charged. I also left details of the address to which I was travelling for my partner, along with an estimated time of return.

## Interview Findings

Out of this analysis four main themes emerged: Memory, Community, Praise and Lament, and Body. Most of the participants considered singing to be an essential and integral part of their faith. The first two themes – Memory and Community - were particularly rich in material and each contained several subheadings. A detailed description of themes is set out in the next chapter.

## Concluding Reflection

This practical theological enquiry into congregational song has, I believe, broken new ground, and produced interesting and rich data about the experience of members of a congregation as they sing together during worship. This process has been reflexive – I am inevitably there too in the data. The whole process was motivated by Liberation Theology, formed by my methodologies of ethnography and Ordinary Theology, and structured using methods which generated the data I was seeking. These are not neutral acts, but ones which reflect my choices and praxis. I believe that these have generated data which has allowed the voice of congregational singers to be heard. Having described the process of my research, the next chapter will be an examination of the emerging themes.

# Chapter Three: Findings and Analysis of Congregational Research

This chapter is about my participant-observation work at four morning Eucharists, and subsequent visits to Evening Prayer, a Baptism and a Christingle service, as described in Chapter Two. The intention is to bring the voices of those who sing to the heart of my study. There is no doubt, however, that this takes place through my interpretation. This is a facet of inductive interview analysis, particularly of interpretative/reflexive analysis. It also reflects Ordinary Theology’s hermeneutical conversation.[[283]](#footnote-284)

I have tried to be transparent, but am aware that this is never entirely possible. I therefore took it as a positive thing when my assumptions as a musician and priest were challenged by the congregation I studied. In this chapter the words of my interviewees are categorised inductively through a process of careful listening: the emerging four themes arise directly from the interviews rather than from pre-determined categories. After this I show my interview analysis, including some initial definitions and reflections on the arising categories.

## 

## Participant Observation Findings

### The First Four Visits

These visits were all to the main Sunday service: a Eucharistic service at eleven a.m. During my visits I listened carefully, using my musical knowledge to observe the pitching and vocal range of the hymns, the effect of the accompaniment and the ability of the congregation to participate in the singing.

On all my visits to the morning service, between fifty and ninety adults were in attendance, and up to twenty children. Most of the adults were elderly but there were younger and middle aged people too. There were more women than men and the congregation appeared to be European. Before the service there was a sense of busyness, with the bells ringing and the organ playing. On one occasion Mothers' Union members were busy setting up a cake stall. The Sunday school met at the back of church. By the time the service began, people were seated quietly in groups.

There were two organists; an elderly woman who had been a church organist for over sixty years, and a professional musician who was shared with another church. A choir of up to fifteen adults occupied the choir stalls. Although they did not sing in parts or perform anthems, I observed that they gave a strong lead to the singing, especially in lesser known hymns. They were less audible when the congregation was singing well**-**known hymns and “old favourites”. The hymn book was “Common Praise”.[[284]](#footnote-285) The service books were home-made with different booklets for differing services, seasons and festivals.

I observed that the sound during the singing was sweet and gentle and, generally, fairly confident, but not loud and rousing. I noticed that most people were singing, although some were not. The hymns were fairly traditional, with some more recent hymns such as “Make me a Channel of your Peace” and “Brother, Sister, Let Me Serve You”. Some of the lesser known hymns were not sung as confidently, and on these occasions I observed the choir taking a stronger lead, having rehearsed the hymns at their monthly practice.

The service setting was the Mass of St. Thomas by David Thorne.. I could hear the congregation struggling to reach some of the higher notes in the Gloria. During the repeated refrain the singing sounded more confident. The quality of sound also sounded better in the Sanctus and Agnus Dei. Some of the hymns were also rather high and sounded strained – again this observation was confirmed during the interviews. My ability to hear these changes in sound, particularly in relation to pitch, are second nature as a musician. I am probably more sensitive to them than most members of the congregation I studied, although difficulty in reaching high notes was mentioned by several interviewees. There are ways of managing high notes better, but these need to be taught – they do not come instinctively.

I noticed that, when the hymns were well known and at a manageable pitch, the congregation sang more confidently: the volume of sound dropped of markedly above top D. During Holy Communion the choir sang hymns but the congregation did not to participate – there was some quiet chattering in the pews. The choir sometimes seemed to rush ahead of the organist, giving a ragged feel. (During the interviews it emerged that there was a feeling that the elderly organist played too slowly and the choir was trying to hurry her along.) I found the effect unsettling.

The church has brass and woodwind players who accompany the singing occasionally. This added an extra dimension to the worship and seemed to support the singing, which became more confident – something confirmed in the interviews. These musicians sometimes played descants which seemed to lift the mood. Some interviewees spoke of their appreciation of these musicians.

Reflecting afterwards, I felt that this congregation enjoyed their singing and wondered if this would be confirmed in the interviews. This proved to be the case: the interviews revealed a deep love of the song which lay behind the quiet sound. Before my research I had no conception of how much a congregation could enjoy and love its song. This discovery has been an important outcome of my research.

In response to issues raised during the interviews I attended three further services; an 11a.m. Eucharist which included a Baptism, a service of Evening Prayer, and a Christingle Service.

### Subsequent Visits

#### The Baptism Service

Several interviewees expressed annoyance with the lack of participation during Baptism services, particularly in the singing of hymns. I attended one such service to observe. A large number of visitors were seated in various places around the church. The Baptism family and Godparents sat at the back of church near the font. Another group was seated near me at the front. I observed that many of the guests did not participate in the service, including the singing

I found joining in with the song more difficult during this service, and observed that the song sounded much less distinct. I thought this might be because the congregation was more scattered due to groups of visitors, although it could have had something to do with morale, or feeling outnumbered. In the interviews it was annoyance that was expressed, and there was a sense of the baptism visitors “took over”. I noticed one young woman amongst the guests who sang some of the more modern hymns. Afterwards she told me she had learned these at school and had enjoyed joining in with them. She was not familiar with the more traditional hymns.

#### The Evensong Service

One of my interviewees expressed regret about the decline of “Anglican Chant” so I attended an Evensong to observe what was happening. At this service the singing was largely inaudible, and very patchy – people joined in with some bits more than others. I felt that this was because there were only eight people in the congregation which meant that individual voices could be heard. (I was conscious of my own voice.) There were too few people to create a united mass of sound. I noticed that people, literally, kept their heads down and sang “to themselves” – this looked and sounded very different to the singing at the morning services. Even with the organ supporting the voice, I struggled to sing. This was quite stressful. The hymns seemed too high although the melodic range was similar to that of the morning hymns. As a contralto singer I know that it is more difficult to reach a top D or E when there a fewer voices unless you project your voice and “sing out”, but this requires confidence, and would have been out of balance amidst such quiet singing.

It appeared that no-one knew how to sing the chanted psalms and canticles: there was near silence during these. I felt that attempting to sing with so few people detracted from the service and was probably a mistake. A quiet, said service would have been less stressful. This experience of a struggling Evensong service emphasised some once-common skills which are being lost, as one interviewee pointed out. The optimum size of congregation to facilitate congregational song would be an interesting area of study.

#### The Christingle Service

This was another example of a service about which one of my interviewees expressed frustration regarding lack of singing from “visitors”. The Christingle was in mid December on a Sunday evening. The church was full and was beautifully lit by candlelight. The singing, however, was something of a disaster. There were several Advent hymns sung from a generic Christingle hymn sheet. These were liturgically correct for Advent, but most of the congregation appeared not to know them and didn’t join in. The Vicar tried to teach one new hymn before the service, in a way that left me feeling confused and not much wiser about the tune. Anything I had learned had been forgotten by the time the hymn was sung, mid way through the service. This hymn was soloistic in style and would have been difficult to sing together even if people had known it.[[285]](#footnote-286) I reflected that this genre might work with a music group with amplified soloists, but it didn’t work with an organ accompanying and no clear vocal lead, although some of the church’s instrumentalists could have provided support for the melody equivalent to an amplified soloist. I mused that it would have been better to have the choir leading the song at this service, rather than at the morning service which was much quieter than normal. I later learned that this was “political” – the choir refused to come to this service because it was full of people who didn’t sing. Here, a more overt recognition of the value of their own song might enable the regular congregation to develop a sense of enabling others to join in. I felt the Christingle congregation was not really given a chance to sing.

After the service, a member of the congregation sought me out and expressed anger at what had happened. Her children attended a big evangelical church nearby. She felt that modern worship songs would have been much better. I felt that, in this case, she was probably mistaken, although I kept quiet. My guess was that people had come to the service to sing traditional Christmas carols. No-one would have known modern worship songs and this church had no facilities to present modern worship songs well.[[286]](#footnote-287) In both the Christingle and Baptism services, more widely known hymns would have worked. Choice of hymns, then, can affect the ability of people to participate, particularly so for occasional visitors. There are theological and liturgical issues here about singing Christmas carols in Advent. Attendance at these extra services showed some of the difficulties associated with congregational song; as well as non-singers, a tension between old and new has already emerged – this issue will also be reinforced in the interview data. This tension can be more subtly expressed as a tension between dying skills, still held dear, and the glamour and apparent success of modern worship music.

### Summary

My participant observation has yielded interesting data. I learned that the size of the congregation makes a difference to the congregation’s ability to sing. Large numbers of occasional visitors had an impact on the song of the regular congregation. Sometimes aspirations did not match reality. A strong lead from the choir or instrumentalists strengthened the song. People appeared not to know how to chant psalms. Trying to learn a new hymn and then sing it during a service was stressful. There was a conflict of interests between liturgical correctness and the expectations of the congregation at the Christingle service. I was privileged to listen to a congregation who sang gently but with confidence. The material from the interviews will show some areas of overlap with the data from my participant observation, and some surprising contradictions.

## Interviews: A Description of the Themes Arising from the Interviews

Here I set out the results of the analysis of the interview texts. [[287]](#footnote-288) The main emergent themes are Memory, Community, Praise and Lament, and Body. I begin with an explanation of each theme and its subdivisions before demonstrating the interview material in each category.

### Memory/Memories

This theme emerged strongly, so has been subdivided into four groups labelled a-d: memories of school and childhood, memories of specific and significant events, remembering words, and memory and loss.

1. Memories of School and Childhood:

Many of the interviewees found the root of their love of singing in experiences of school and childhood. Singing in the school or church choir was the beginning of a love of singing, and the foundation of confidence in singing. Almost without exception the interviewees spoke about childhood experiences of singing as a “detour” from my first question where I asked people to choose words describing their experiences of singing – they all went back to memories of childhood:

I remember I had a very good choirmaster at [church] and a very good choir mistress at school and remember a lot I learned then and I do enjoy it. (Mary:10)

I think with having hymns at school where there was a hymn every morning I seem to know a lot of hymns and recognise tunes. (Joan:69)

Because as a youngster if you enjoy singing in the church, it keeps you there and it’s always with you. (Andrew/Alison:479)

I enjoy singing, always have done; to me, as I have always gone to church, you learn the words of familiar hymns and enjoy them so you sing them any time, any place, anywhere, so that’s my really my relationship to hymns in church. (Sam:8)

There was one important exception which was the interviewee who is a self-labelled “terrible singer”. His memories of school were much less encouraging:

Since 1949 when I was eleven years old and I was invited to join the school choir. We met every lunch time to practice to sing at presentation day, which came very shortly after the beginning of term and you could see three was something not quite right. I forget what we were singing. Three of us were selected and, because he had got the choir all lined up and didn’t want to spoil the arrangement, we were told to open our mouths but not let any words come out. After the presentation day we were told we were no longer required – thank you very much. (John:34)

However, this person learned hymns and songs at school and still sings them when no-one is listening:

One of things I *do* do is “Oh, for a Closer Walk with God”. Why do I sing that? Because that’s one we sang at school – a school hymn. I still remember that – perhaps not all the words. (John:179)

#### b) Memories of Specific Events

Several interviewees remembered the hymns at particular occasions. This is consistent with the importance of hymns in memory and teaching as noted by Rosalind Brown: “hymns carry the faith … and are significant markers of events and experiences.”[[288]](#footnote-289)

I remember once going to King George’s Hall and it was a men’s gathering and there must have been about two thousand people there. We were in the gallery. “Guide me O thou Great Redeemer” – that was the hymn we sang. And there was the bishop with a booming voice. He had the microphone in his hand – he didn’t really need a microphone. He led the people and those people there would have been moved by that. It was a powerful experience. (John: 283)

Before my mother died she said, “I don’t want “Abide With Me”, I want “Morning Has Broken” instead”. (Mary: 225)

My husband did choose [his] funeral hymns; one was “Fight the Good Fight” to encourage people you had to keep going. (Joan:34)

Sometimes, through a specific event, a whole season can be affected:

I was widowed in end of January/early February and Lent seems to go on a long time. (Sue:25)

#### c) Remembering Words

All the interviewees commented on their knowledge of hymn texts. This was ascribed both to having learned them in childhood, and to having sung them for many years. This is consistent with research, discussed in my Literature Review, demonstrating an increase in neural networks associated with words in song, showing right hemisphere mechanisms supporting fluency during singing.[[289]](#footnote-290)

I have always gone to church; you learn the words of familiar hymns and enjoy them. (Sam:8)

Why do I sing that, because that’s one we sang at school – a school hymn. I still remember that – perhaps not all the words. (John:179)

I know more hymns than any other music. I think you learn the words more when you are singing. (Mary: 159)

When you have familiar hymns you don’t have to look at the words, you just sing. You are singing, not following the book. (Sam:153)

One interviewee felt that significant words were more easily remembered:

Perhaps you remember the words because they mean something to you, whereas another verse you may have forgotten it because it’s not that [important]. (Sam:162)

#### d) Memory and Loss

Some memories were tinged with a sense of loss. Besides memories of hymns at funerals and at times of bereavement, there was also a sense of loss regarding the chanting of psalms and canticles at Morning and Evening Prayer:

I think it is also so sad that with the demise of Evening Prayer that you don’t do the singing at Evening Prayer so much and there were some very beautiful evening hymns and even the psalms and the chants that went with it. They were nice. (Sam:134)

At morning we used to sing the Magnificat and the Nunc Dimitis – but nowI can’t remember when I last used them, because now, more and more they are not sung but said in the services, which is a shame I think. (Sam: 14)

The interviews have produced important data on the theme of Memory. These concur with the findings of my earlier Literature Review which demonstrated connections between singing and memory. The interview data demonstrates subtle differentiations within the concept of memory; this is not just about remembering words, but about reliving life-experiences from schooldays to the deaths of loved ones.

### Community

“Community” also emerged strongly from the interviews. In this section I use a typology which arose from careful listening to the interviewees whose understanding of “community” was revealed as multiple and complex. The interviewees described their present church community, spoke of looking backwards and forwards in time to see past and potential future communities, and outwards to see a wider local community outside the doors of the church. This multi-dimensional typology was further enriched by the idea that their community was gathered and defined by song. It also held matters of inclusion and exclusion and perceived than custodianship of skills was also an aspect of community. The typology also carried concerns about the tensions between old and new communities, and matters of community presence and outreach. This very complex typology of community is set out below using five headings, a-e. Some aspects of the theme of community have links with themes emerging from my participant observation.

#### The Church Community Gathered and Defined by Song

There was a sense from most of the interviews that singing was part of the purpose of the gathered church:

Well it is praising God. I think that the more we all sing together and praise together, the better it is. There is not much else to say. (Mary:35)

Particularly when you are in church with other people in beautiful surroundings, you are in a place where you are calm and many of the words are beautiful, many of the hymns are beautiful. (Sam:16)

If it is a good rousing hymn, I join in with the crowd but I think it is painful and I quite enjoy it but it is painful for people on either side. But that doesn’t matter, if you are all together it’s O.K. (John.21)

Singing brings you back – it keeps you there. (Andrew/Alison:481)

I think music plays a key role in building and enhancing community. (Andrew/Alison:435)

There was also a feeling that singing together helped the community to “speak” communally:

Sometimes when saying prayers there is always someone behind or someone reads a bit more quickly whereas when you are singing it regularises. (Mary:144)

Music puts the phrasing in the correct places. Responsorial psalms – unless you have the text in front of you, you don't know where the response is going to come in and it all rolls over you. It’s not fluent and then you have to jump to join in. When the music is there the musician creates the phrasing. (Andrew/Alison:175)

For people at this church, then, singing is essential to their life. I had guessed, from my participant observation, that this congregation enjoyed its song, but I had completely misjudged the degree to which this was the case.

#### Community Inclusion/Exclusion

There was a concern about the inclusion of young people and children in the church community, and the implications of this for musical style:

We try to pick hymns, little songs that are meaningful to them, and if we can encourage the congregation to join in with what they have learned then that is help[ful] - that we have songs suitable for the children. (Sam:106)

There should be at least one hymn that the children can relate to - especially with a church school next door. (Andrew/Alison:127)

One thing about this organist is it is lively and you can have music suitable for children now. (John:82)

At somewhere like X[[290]](#footnote-291) it’s very difficult because it’s an ageing congregation although there are a lot of youngsters and young people coming through. It must be very difficult trying to get something that suits everybody. You've got to get the youngsters in and perhaps bring the youngsters in at Communion to sit in the choir stalls and sing the chorus type hymns – easy to learn – with the actions – it involves them in the service and brings the youth into what sometimes can be quite an old service. (Andrew/Alison:119)

This concern also extended to those who attend occasional offices such as baptisms and weddings, covering their ability to participate in worship and their potential memories of their experience:

What needs to happen.... is when you have those sort of services where there's an influx of people who aren't regular members, you need to have hymns that are lively, otherwise they go away remembering everything was dreary and think “I'm not going there again”. (Andrew/Alison:375)

It’s trying to keep it catchy so people want to join in, and away from the more traditional hymns. (Andrew/Alison:118)

There was some concern that a traditional choir, singing in four parts, might create a hierarchy of ability which might be seen to be exclusive:

I think there are one or two who would like it to go back to singing in four part harmony but they have to be very careful - if they force that, they will lose the core of people who [just] like to sing. (Andrew/Alison:316)

To say “we don't [sing in four part harmony]” at one level is not good. It does make it inclusive – you don't have to be a tenor or a bass – you just have to want to be a part of us and sing. That's more important. (Andrew/Alison:308)

If there is a concern for inclusion there are experiences of many different forms of exclusion:

My daughter comes to church with me and she says “Be quiet Dad”. (John:17)

They started off and they had some modern groups, guitars, amplifiers which deafened you and you couldn’t hear what they were saying. Not only that they did it again, repeated it again and they did it about three times. Now there is modern music and there’s modern music and these fellows on their guitars, plucking for all their worth and saying Arrhh! Alleluia, alleluia. Repeating the line again and again. Not for me and not for the large percentage of the people there, bearing in mind they were mostly elderly. (John:90)

Well I think an organ sometimes can be a disadvantage because it drowns everything else out and you can hear the organ but not the singing, and the singing is more important than the organ. (John:56)

I think I’m a handicapped person you see, because I haven’t got a good voice. (John:252)

A little while ago the previous Vicar ... got a choir together and we sang Fauré's “Requiem” and we worked very hard. We're just average singers really. It was a very good experience for me. [I am] amazed at what you can do with the human voice. I enjoyed doing it and we were just members of X Church – or so we thought – until the end. Then all these semi-professional singers arrived – suddenly we realised how good we weren't. I thought it was a shame because we'd put weeks and weeks of effort into it and people had overcome all sorts of barriers – some had had to learn how to read music as well as sing it because they weren't just singing the tune any more....I found it absolutely fantastic – till the end - when we sang it with the superstar singers – they were really good. What happened was that the next time there was a possibility of doing this for a special occasions they said “I don't want to be involved in it” which was a terrible shame. They all set off with the right intention but it came out as quite a failure. From a community building point of view it was a failure. (Andrew/Alison:269ff)

#### The past community

In almost all the interviews there was a sense of awareness of the past community associated with hymn singing in church. This included memories of past singing communities, composers and text writers, those associated with various hymns because of the inclusion of that hymn at occasional offices, and of services held at the church in the past which are no longer used.

Music we learned and chanting, although we don’t do that in X church because we have Communion every Sunday morning so we don’t sing the psalms, but if I go to an evening service it is still there, the phrasing and the rest of it that one learnt then, and the tune is still there. (Mary:15)

As you sing them each week, you say “this is a favourite” and it may be for the words rather than the tune they have chosen, and occasionally you come across a new hymn or you are asked to sing verses you have never sung before and you look at the words and you think “this is nice” and it’s quite interesting to think about when that hymn was written. (Sam:18)

I think with some of the hymns, some of the verses aren’t quite representative of modern life today because they were written so long ago but I think they still have that beautiful feeling about the words and the way they were written. It’s nice there is still a meaning there that you can pick up on, linking things. (John:86)

It’s nice, the continuity, the familiarity, the beauty of the words, the familiarity of the words and the way it’s put together. (Sam:28)

My husband did choose [his own] funeral hymns; one was “Fight the Good Fight” to encourage people you had to keep going. (Joan:39)

When I first starting coming to X it was my mother in law who persuaded me to join the church choir. I didn’t actually do it until after she passed away so she never saw me sing in the church choir. (Andrew/Alison:206)

Now you have touched on that, I think that in the Methodist church the men knew all the bass parts. When they are included it really does make a difference. Here I am waiting for someone to go “boom boom boom”. It makes it more whole. (Sue:100)

I think it is also so sad that with the demise of Evening Prayer that you don’t do the singing at Evening Prayer so much and there were some very beautiful evening hymns and even the psalms and the chants that went with it. They were nice. (Sam:134)

The power of song to evoke past community is important in this research because it parallels my argument that the memory of Jesus’ singing at the Last Supper must have been foundational in the song of the Early Church.[[291]](#footnote-292) Here it is clear that song bears memories of singers long ago. This will be explored in the hermeneutical conversation of Chapter Four.

#### Tension Between Old and New: Existing Versus Future Community

There was also a concern about the loss of old skills; the present community is the custodian of its inheritance, and that “now” is the ever-moving point of change. A rereading of the quotations above reveals regret and fear about the loss of skills alongside concerns to accommodate children, young people and visitors by making further changes in the customs and repertoire of hymn singing. There was a consistent sense of tension between much loved, traditional hymns sung by the existing church community, and more modern music which many felt would be popular with those who did not currently attend. This tension was heightened by experiences of worship in other churches which were often perceived as being much bigger and more successful.

My daughter goes to a New Life Church in Milton Keynes and they really put everything into it. I never know where I am because it is up on the screen and I don’t know the repeats. There are lots of coloured people there. There are no inhibitions there. (Sue:68)

A lot are songs and not hymns. Obviously over the years I have got to know them. It is not really my cup of tea. They can get young people in and they are very good – certainly giving their time to the church. (Sue:75)

Even at the Methodists there are hymns that I've never sung before but they’re right rousing tunes and I think, “I get can stuck into that” and that children can sing too. (Andrew/Alison:235)

I think it’s sad sometimes when perhaps there is a big congregation because perhaps there is a christening taking place, so you’ve got a lot of people who aren’t familiar with being in church and you expect a loud volume and you find you don’t get much because people are struggling because they are not familiar with it. (Sam:41)

I get very frustrated when it’s a christening in the service. Sometimes you get people who don't come to church almost taking over the church. They don't join in. They take over. (Andrew/Alison:368)

And if you choose to have your wedding in church sometimes people don’t go regularly and then they have to come and choose what they want to have for hymns and it is interesting what they select and why they select them. (Sam:320)

But isn’t it amazing that they choose “All Things Bright and Beautiful” because they remember singing that at school. (Sam:327)

The feeling that this community could be more attractive to outsiders is a recurring one. As has been noted, above, putting on lively music as a means of attracting new members is not necessarily the right way forward.

#### Community Presence/Outreach

Music was used in several outreach activities, carol singing, the village Gala Procession and the Mothers' Union Advent Presentation. These were all events at which the boundaries between the church and its context were blurred. The first two took place outside the church, and the third was an occasion when the wider community was consciously invited into the church. I observed a positive feel about these events, which stood in contrast to the criticism of people attending the baptism and Christingle services. Here is what my interviewees had to say:

In the village we do have a carol singing lot – a lot come from the church and they raise money and go out a lot and make about £1500 a year for a charity. (Mary:100)

They have quite a good band of carol singers from the church that go out at Christmas and every year they go to part of the hospital where there are a lot of people in wheelchairs and it’s very sad to go in there. We are told to just sing to them because that brings back their memory. (Sam:170)

We do have a float in the village festival at the beginning of June, which used to be more a more holy theme in a way. I know some of our older members sang “Diamonds are a Girl’s Best Friend”. And then we did “Sister Act”, dressed as nuns, which I suppose is a bit naughty. Anyway they are doing “Camelot” this year and I’m letting them. Anyway we did the “Yellow Brick Road” from “The Wizard of Oz” and it looked splendid. We came third which was the first time for ages. (Mary:214)

The Mothers’ Union has an Advent Presentation at the beginning of December every year and we practice for that for weeks beforehand. It was about Lydia last time, when she became a Christian. Members of the Mothers’ Union read. The elderly organist and a member prepare it all and choose the music and it is good. The school choir comes in to sing and the Sunday School so everyone comes together. We usually learn at least one new hymn. The Mothers’ Union has a choir for that. (Mary:70)

It was significant that the Church took singing out into the community. I didn’t attend any of these events, but it seemed likely that the Mothers’ Union would have been the only float at the gala with live singing, and that the church carol singers would be the only ones actually singing carols; (think of the Round Table with their amplified Christmas music). Here is a village church keeping song alive; this is another argument for the stated belief that the church community is one defined by song.

### Praise and Lament

Under a system of literal thematic analysis Praise and Lament would have emerged as joy and sadness as the sub-categories of the “emotion”. Interpretative-reflexive analysis has set these words in their theological context – joy and sadness are transformed into Praise and Lament. This is also a good example of the hermeneutical conversation between Ordinary and academic theologies expressed by Astley.[[292]](#footnote-293) Praise was expressed in terms of feeling uplifted, a sense of enjoyment of expression, directed towards God; Lament was an expression of sadness and loss which sometimes brought people to tears. The theme of Praise and Lament is divided into three subcategories of “praise”, “lament”, and “beauty of surroundings”.

#### Praise

The language used by people to describe their experiences of singing in church was buoyant, emotional language. The addition of trumpets and flutes along with the organ and the choir leading at the front served to emphasise this psalm-like sense of worship.

It is praising God. I think that the more we all sing together and praise together, the better it is. There is not much else to say. (Mary:35)

Soothing, enjoyable, a lovely way to express yourself. I enjoy singing, always have done; to me, as I have always gone to church, you learn the words of familiar hymns and enjoy them so you sing them any-time, any-place, anywhere, so that’s my really my relationship to hymns in church. (Sam:8)

When I said “enlivened”– if you say something and then sing it, I think you put more meaning to it when you sing it – there is more spirituality. Sam:148)

If I’m feeling slightly low the music is quite uplifting. I have given it some thought. I have never been a great one for poetry and yet the words of hymns are a sort of poetry. If you read the words properly they can be uplifting as well as the music and certainly at services one feels better afterwards. (Joan:19)

I feel cheated when I am not singing. The “Lamb of God” can be very flat if you have not got the music. Definitely music rounds it off, makes it more complete. (Joan:85)

Occasionally we have S. She plays various instruments and we also have a member of a brass band and it brings another dimension and it is good. (John:116)

#### Lament

Although some hymns clearly made people feel sad, none of the interviewees used the word “lament”; there seems to be no commonly used word to describe sadness directed towards God. I chose to use this word because it expressed the opposite of praise which is not “sadness” but “lament”. There is a degree of interpretation here, but, in choosing this word I feel I am being faithful to what was expressed. As I discovered during the hermeneutical conversation of Chapter Four, lament has long been out of favour, but there are strong arguments for its return. The sadness expressed by my interviewees, I believe to be lament.

Emotional, because the words of some songs you can’t sing without crying – “Abide With Me” – if you manage to get through the first verse – it’s a very emotional hymn and then if you get some brass to join in with that as well then I defy anyone not to collapse. (Sam:307)

There are some hymns where I get terribly upset and emotional. (Andrew/Alison:105)

There are certain hymns that I can cry at: “Finlandia”. We have practised it recently and I had to go home. (Joan:28)

As a widow singing ... hymns can upset you. It is a mistake to choose hymns [for a funeral] that you like and that are going to appear regularly. (Sue:12)

#### Beauty of Surroundings

My study took place in a medieval church with beautiful stained glass windows. Two interviewees specifically mentioned the importance of the building for their worship. Similar views were expressed sense about the organ. I was reminded of mentions of the Temple as the locus for the worship of God in the psalms:

“How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!

My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the Lord;

my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.” (Psalm 84:1-2)

This is reflected in words from my interviewees:

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You are singing between you and that beautiful window, you can look around the church or at the roof because you are not glued to your book and the words are coming from you so I suppose you are communicating directly – it’s you to the building to what you are there for. It’s God’s house without going via a book. (Sam:155)

Very often during the service I look for inspiration from the windows in the church. That's how I became confirmed. I had a bit of an experience in the service and at the end of the service I said to the Vicar “I want to be confirmed.” During the service I very often look at that window, the one I had my experience looking at – along with the hymns. When we turn to say the Creed I look at that face in the window. (Andrew/Alison:395)

In fact it is a hundred years old and people very are keen to say we have to look after this organ, it’s a hundred years old and part of our heritage and I’ll go along with that. (John:61)

### Body

Singing is a bodily activity. One of my questions asked whether singing was experienced as a physical, spiritual or emotional thing and most of the interviewees did not include “body” in their response. Thus, body was present in the interviews partly by its absence, although there were echoes of body-talk:

That is age; I sometimes can’t get the top note. When you are standing up you can sing better than when you are sitting down. (Mary:53)

It does lighten the service to stand up and sing. (Mary:138)

It is me getting older. I can’t reach them anymore. With “Jerusalem” there is that screech at the top. (Mary:51)

I think I’m a handicapped person you see, because I haven’t got a good voice. (John:252)

Having learned that I'm a tenor I think I need some sort of adjustment to my nether regions to sing hymns... Most blokes can't. (Andrew/Alison:357)

I'm not a happy-clappy Christian. When I see people raising their hands I do find it a bit unnerving. My father in law has started to do it – I don't know why. (Andrew/Alison:412)

We mentioned people raising their arms. I know I jiggle about sometimes – people sway to and fro. I feel quite comfortable doing that. (Andrew/Alison:548)

We've mentioned “Shine Jesus Shine” a few times. When we sing it, in the first verse there is a sort of silent clap, but by the last verse people have plucked up courage to clap. (Andrew/Alison:502)

When we sing that at the Methodist Church the clap is quite strong from the beginning, but at X you're lucky if it happens. That's the difference between the two, definitely. Perhaps it takes that first person – as my dad does when he raises his arms – it takes the first person to say “it’s not a problem to do that”. (Andrew/Alison:504)

Singing is an intensely bodily process and its demands in terms of breath control are much greater than for speech. The sound produced is made in the voice box, it is powered by our lungs with the diaphragm as the bellows. Thus the denial of the bodily nature of singing by almost all the interviewees took me by surprise. Interestingly, the one who regarded singing as a bodily activity was the person who felt he could not sing. Almost all the references to the body in the interviews were negative, emphasizing the limits of ageing, the struggle for high notes, and embarrassment about clapping or raising hands.

Chapter One demonstrated the church’s ambivalence about the body and music. In song, a bodily-musical act, these two separate streams of ambivalence coincide. A positive body theology, therefore, is essential part of a positive theology of congregational song.

## Reflection on the congregational study

My congregational study has provided rich data. Here I reflect on several points of interest: the apparent contradiction between the sound of the congregation’s song and the depth of feeling they ascribed to it; non-singers; repertoire; and pitch.

### A Surprise: the Contradiction Between the Sound of the Congregation and Their Depth of Feeling

There was a contradiction between the sound of the singing and the emotional intensity attributed to it. I observed that the singing was “sweet” rather than “rousing,” yet the interviews revealed the singing to be full emotion: happy memories, intense praise, a religious experience, and deep sadness. I feel my training as a singer is partly behind this perceived disparity: there is a more exaggerated expression of words and music in choral singing. In contrast to this, the song of the congregation was more even in expression. Perhaps I expected congregational song to be “jolly”, or “rousing”: in other words, I had a stereotype of congregational song in my mind. Listening to a real congregation singing revealed something more subtle. I felt humbled by the depth of emotion expressed.

There are times in Christian calendar where joy and sadness are more evident because of the nature of the season: for example, Pentecost or Christmas might bring a sense of joy while Good Friday, Lent or All Soul's-tide may evoke sadness. However, much of what was about the emotional intensity of singing was not tied to specific festivals but to normal Sunday worship. In a sense, the congregation has even “fooled itself”; there was a sense of inadequacy when comparing themselves to “livelier” churches. What has emerged is that the outward character of this congregation’s song carries within it intense depths of feeling.

### Non-singers

Non participation in singing occurred in several different forms. At the Sunday Eucharist, a number of people were not singing. One of these was among those I interviewed, and he gave clear reasons for his non-participation: early memories of being told he was a bad singer; the continued embarrassment of some family members who persist in asking him not to sing; his own embarrassment; the belief that he was sparing others by staying silent. John Bell's analysis demonstrates that this is a common story; thousands of children suffered the silencing of their song at school and this is carried into adulthood.[[293]](#footnote-294) As a frequent visitor to several schools in my parish, I know that some schools now allow all children to sing in their choirs. Hopefully the scars left by being told “you can’t sing” will soon become a thing of the past.

Many church communities are concerned to be places of inclusion,[[294]](#footnote-295) with policies for the inclusion of children, gay and disabled people, for instance, and words of welcome for people of other denominations to share in the Eucharist. The exclusion of people from the congregation’s song, however, is rarely addressed.

Other aspects of non-singing arose amongst visitors at the Baptism and Christingle Services. The interviews revealed irritation and bewilderment at this non-singing on the part of “visitors”. My suspicion is that this non-singing reflects the infrequency of singing in contemporary culture. This would make an interesting study in its own right.

### Repertoire

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The issue of repertoire seems, partly, to centre on singing in schools. The interviews demonstrated that songs learned at school stay with people for life, and yet the church pays little attention to the hymns and songs children learn at school today. My own experience is that the school repertoire has only a small overlap with church hymnody, even in church schools. Pupils in secular schools may know no hymns or songs commonly sung in churches. This issue has not been addressed in any of the Church of England commissions into church music. If this continues to be ignored it will be difficult to choose hymns and songs for occasions such as weddings and baptisms in the future.

The anxiety of the congregation I studied was focused on the need to sing more modern songs, especially when the church was full of visitors. There was a recurring worry about appearing boring and out of date. There was, however, no evidence that visitors to church knew any modern songs and, at the Christingle Service, my sense was that people had come to sing traditional carols. Several interviewees had been in situations where contemporary music had been sung but was not enjoyed for various reasons.

New songs and hymns have to be learned. I observed that this was not always done successfully. Sometimes the choir had practised new songs and was able give a strong lead, but the often congregation sounded less confident and their voice sometimes faded because they could not find the tune.

This tension between old and new is a recurring theme in the story of church choral music, so its emergence in congregational music is unsurprising. Chapter One noted that the new has always been treated with suspicion and the old is often “retired” with regret. New choral music has always tended to be introduced by churches with the resources to instigate new ideas, (resident composers, orchestras, choir schools and occasions for spectacular liturgies). In the world of contemporary worship music there are similar places of novelty and experiment. Much of this material will be transient, but the best finds its way into the repertoire of parish churches, often when it is sung on BBC’s “Songs of Praise” which was watched by most of the interviewees.

### Pitch

I noticed that the congregation began to struggle with any note above the D which is just over an octave above middle C. This was evident in the service setting and some hymns and was reflected in the interviews. Most thought this was age-related, although the pitch of voices also depends on physical build. Particularly in churches without part-singing there is no reason to continue pitching hymns to suit four part harmony and the needs of the congregation should prevail. This is sometimes inconvenient for organists who have played hymns in specific keys for many years. For churches with choirs, lowering the pitch of hymns causes difficulties, particularly for the altos and bases whose parts can then be low in the range of the voice. To enable congregational singing, there is a case for re-setting the harmony of hymns rather than simply transposing them to a lower key.

### Community

The complex typology of community arising from the interviews was very striking. Within their song, the church community I studied carried a complex understanding of community which encompassed past and future, skills, their own church community defined by song, the village community in which the church was situated, the potential community of those who did not yet belong to the church, and also outreach and matters of inclusion and exclusion. That so much concerning community can be carried by song suggests that further study, focused solely on the relationship between congregational song and community could be very fruitful, potentially bearing fruit in missiology and social understandings of faith.

## Conclusion

In this chapter the data gathered in my congregational study has been shown to be rich in material. The semi-structured interviews yielded rich data about Memory, Community, Praise and Lament, and Faith. My participant observations, when compared with the interview data, gave rise to an apparent contradiction between my perception of the congregation’s song and the depth of feeling disclosed by the interviewees. Further issues arising from both data sets were those of non-singers, repertoire and pitch. The data and reflections from this chapter will be used in the hermeneutical conversation in Chapter Four.

# Chapter Four: A Hermeneutical Conversation.

## Introduction

Having told the story of congregational song in Chapter One and thematised my data in Chapter Three, I now begin the task of using this data, in what Astley calls a “hermeneutical conversation”:

This process of “structuring a correlation” is frequently expressed in metaphors of juxtaposition. We bring our experience and our practice “alongside” the … reflections of other Christians “deliberately connecting our reflection on life to our religious heritage.” [[295]](#footnote-296)

In this process I hope that my data and academic theology will each enrich and challenge the other. The four main data categories arising from Chapter Three, (Memory, Community, Praise and Lament, and Body) are common areas of academic theological thought. In three of these (Memory, Community, and Body) mention of congregational song is infrequent. This is not so for the theme of Praise and Lament, although, as I showed in my Literature Review, theological reflection on hymns and songs tends to focus on words rather than on song. This chapter will maintain a focus on song itself.

Chapter Three demonstrated congregational song’s great significance to those who sing. In the sense that theology is “done”, as well as “written”, congregational song is already a practical expression of the theology of the church. As Pope Francis has demonstrated by washing of the feet of women, prisoners, and AIDS sufferers, “doing theology” can be powerful.[[296]](#footnote-297) In this chapter, therefore, I will be looking for ways in which a theology of congregational song can find expression in, and enrich academic theology: I will be looking for places where my data brings something new to existing academic theologies of Memory, Community, Praise and Lament, and Body. I will also be seeking to show what these theologies contribute to a practical theology of congregational song.

## Introduction to Chosen Texts

### Gittoes and Atkins with Thematic Input from Begbie and Davie

In the first two sections, taking the themes of Memory and Community, I will focus on the work of Gittoes,[[297]](#footnote-298) and Atkins,[[298]](#footnote-299) with inputs from Begbie,[[299]](#footnote-300) and Davie,[[300]](#footnote-301) to bring new ideas to the conversation.

Gittoes proposes a link between Memory and theological material on anamnesis. Although drawing on ecumenical texts, she has a clear Anglican focus. The idea that anamnesis “makes present”, however, is *not* held by all Christian denominations. Gittoes’ strength is her consideration of ecumenical texts on anamnesis along with ideas from wider, contemporary theology: I was particularly drawn to her observation of the dynamic, past-present-future nature of Memory, which I could see reflected in my data.

To compliment Gittoes I use Atkins who brings a psychological angle.[[301]](#footnote-302) Like Gittoes, Atkins describes memory in terms of its past-present-future dynamic. This dynamic will be a recurring theme in the hermeneutical conversation between my data and academic theology.

Continuing the past-present-future theme, I will refer to an aspect of Begbie’s work: the nature of the present moment. Although his explorations are abstract and complex, Begbie insists they are based on musical performance or experience, rather than written musical text. This fits with my ethnomgraphic approach.

Both Gittoes and Atkins demonstrate links between Memory and my second data category of Community: as a result, I realised that my first two data categories were related. For Community I therefore continue with Gittoes and Atkins, adding a thematic contribution from Davie. In her analysis of the decline in church attendance in Europe, Davie argues that the reality is not simple secularisation, but rather what she calls “believing not belonging”.[[302]](#footnote-303) The consequence of this detached system of belief is “Vicarious Memory”: memory of religious belief and practice is delegated to the practising, faithful minority.[[303]](#footnote-304)

This section will draw out theological themes regarding the nature of Christian community; the importance of corporate memory and ritual,[[304]](#footnote-305)the dynamic nature of community and threats to this dynamism, the role of community in praise and the importance of these community-held memories to a wider group than those present in church. This subsection brings me to consideration of the next data category: Praise and Lament.

### Brueggemann, Ramshaw with Thematic Input from McGilchrist

This third category of Praise and Lament made connections between song and emotions of joy and sadness generated by memories associated with particular hymns, although these were not necessarily hymns of praise or lament. There was an example of a sadness brought about by a particular tune. The emotions revealed in the interviews were invisible to me as an observer.

Brueggemann[[305]](#footnote-306) and Ramshaw[[306]](#footnote-307) are conversation partners for Praise and Lament. Brueggemann tracks the rediscovery of lament in the twentieth century and revisits its origins in the psalms. Ramshaw argues that the Eucharist itself constitutes dynamic and communal praise. She links praise and lament, community and memory, using “typology” suggesting a past-present-future dynamic for praise and lament. I then return to Brueggemann who outlines the preconditions for lament and the consequences of its absence. Again, I was drawn to the emerging past-present-future pattern, and to Brueggemann’s radical challenge to faith without lament. Finally I turn to McGilchrist who brings an added dimension, drawing on recent neurological research into ways in which the right and left hemispheres differ in their capacity to use new and subsequently learnt vocal sounds.[[307]](#footnote-308)

### Epstein and Holsinger with Thematic Input from Francis.

The last of my data-derived themes is that of Body. In the interviews, references to body were negative, and body was present mainly through its absence in the data. People were aware of bodily struggles for breath or reaching high notes, although singing was not regarded as a physical activity. To reflect on the theme of Body I turn to the work of Epstein[[308]](#footnote-309) and Holsinger.[[309]](#footnote-310) Epstein exposes frequent use of pejorative female body language to describe music. She argues a tendency to link music with body and words with soul. In the music and theology of Hildegard, she argues, the imagery is reversed: music is linked to the soul and words to the body.

Holsinger draws out links between eroticism and spiritual desire in Hildegard and others, forming positive links between music, body and soul. He explores Hildegard’s view of the body as an instrument, leading to her exposition of Mary’s womb as a place of celestial symphony and Christ as the Song of God. Here is a theological understanding of music as positive embodied practice. For Hildegard the absence of song is demonic – only the Devil has no song.

Francis describes the working of the lungs in the breathing process, conveying a sense of wonder about the body. This contrasts with negativity concerning the body in the interviewees, and the negative body theology established by Epstein. Having defined the content and direction of this chapter, I now move to my first data category.

## Memory

In this section I draw on the work of Gittoes, Atkins and Begbie.

Memory was the largest theme emerging from Chapter Three, where memory-laden song took the interviewees back to their childhoods, carried memories of life events, enabled the memorisation of words and brought memories of loss. Memory also arose in Chapter One where remembering the Last Supper was shown to be central to the Early Church. My Literature Review described established links between singing and memory.

Gittoes begins with the command, “do this in remembrance of me”. Rooted in Jesus’ commandment at the Last Supper, anamnesis has been at the heart of Eucharistic prayers since the second century.[[310]](#footnote-311) However, there is no single definition. Anamnesis has been understood, on the one hand as the subjective mental recollection of the Last Supper, and on the other Christ’s real presence in the Eucharist and of the repetition of his sacrifice on the cross.[[311]](#footnote-312)

Gittoes explores Anamnesis in the “Anglican - Roman Catholic International Commission” (ARCIC)[[312]](#footnote-313) and “Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry” (BEM)[[313]](#footnote-314)documents. ARCIC argues that the Eucharist is the means through which Christ’s atoning work is proclaimed and made effective, thus giving memory a key role in the church’s mission. It also confirmed the scriptural basis of anamnesis and its historical importance.[[314]](#footnote-315)

Gittoes notes the breadth of the BEM document, the concept of anamnesis being introduced in relation to meals in Jesus’ earthly ministry. He commanded his disciples to remember and encounter him in the sacramental meal, as the continuing people of God, until his return.[[315]](#footnote-316) The resulting understanding of anamnesis is retrospective and anticipatory, encompassing Jesus’ life, death and resurrection, the Church’s present mission in the world and the eschatological meal in the Kingdom. Gittoes argues that anamnesis makes it possible to hold past, present and future dynamics together in the transformation of the community for the world. Anamnesis binds the church to its source events and enables the implications of this to be effected in the world.[[316]](#footnote-317)

Thus Eucharistic anamnesis is not a static memory but a dynamic remembering of the past in the present with an eye to the future. This dynamic, past-present-future anamnesis is understood in various ways by different individuals and groups but Gittoes discerns this pattern in many of them and suggests this pattern as the basis for future discussion.[[317]](#footnote-318)

Gittoes’ dynamic anamnesis enabled me to recognise the same pattern in my data: the past-present dynamic is clear as song evokes memories of people and events of the past. The future dynamic was more subtle, expressing itself in an anxiety about how the song could be perpetuated. Bringing Gittoes thought alongside my data brings the suggestion that this anxiety was about more than the song itself, but was part of wider anxiety about handing on the faith, and also a sense of human loss tempered by hope - memories of people, places, events awaiting resolution and fulfilment. Thus, song is shown to be an important means of congregational participation in anamnesis.

I also argue that song must have acted as a catalyst of early anamnesis; the Memory data shows how powerfully song evoked memories. Jesus’ song would have been remembered as people partook in the table ministry of the early church. Their response, in song, would have continued to stir memories – a cycle of memory and song, bound by hope of Jesus’ promised heavenly banquet. As the problem of those who died before Jesus’ promised return began to emerge,[[318]](#footnote-319) this song would also have carried both memories of those who had died and of hope for a promised future.

Atkins’ analysis of the role of memory in the church’s liturgy is more functional. He shows how the brain works when it remembers, describing memory’s ability to make the remembered person or event real in the present; the brain makes connections with stored data about events, actions, words and physical features.[[319]](#footnote-320) The memory of Jesus remained in the Early Church through shared meals, which evoked meals shared with Jesus, the feeding of the five thousand and the Last Supper being the most central.[[320]](#footnote-321) Sharing memories as they shared food enabled the disciples to refresh their memories, explore their significance, and to correct and reinterpret them. “Gaps in the memory of the individual could be filled in by the group’s memory.”[[321]](#footnote-322)

Atkins describes the “increasing circles of memory”which the shared meals of the first Christians must have evoked, refreshing memories and serving as the sign of the presence of Christ:

The bread is the means whereby we form a link in the mind with the Jesus known to us from the data and the feelings we experience in our relationship with him. Memory can easily recreate for us all that makes the person “real” for us. We hear the voice; we see the face; we feel the touch; we are moved by the words; we are empowered by the inspiration of whatever makes the relationship significant for us. [[322]](#footnote-323)

In his exploration of the role of memory in the Early Church, Atkins misses the importance of song. This is surprising for a psychological approach, given that song is known to have psychologically significant connections with memory.[[323]](#footnote-324) Atkins notes that we “hear the voice”, but does not mention that this voice sang. Although the bread and wine were the physical reminders of Christ’s presence, the song of those first Christians, with its connection to Jesus’ own song, must have played a part in these first memories. This is borne out by my research which evidences song’s memory-laden nature. There exists here an inconsistency; song enables memory for those who sing but its ephemeral nature means it is easily overlooked.

Like Gittoes, Atkins argues that memory is past-present-future oriented. He has already argued for the past-present dynamic: memory makes events and feelings of the past alive for the present.[[324]](#footnote-325) He goes on to argue that memories can be released from their particular time and place to gain lasting significance and power long outside the original context, “it is right to claim that memory holds the past and the future together in the present.”[[325]](#footnote-326)

In future oriented memory, Atkins argues that memory works with imagination to fill out human experience and create new patterns of thinking. [[326]](#footnote-327) For Atkins, the art of worship stimulates the imaginative function of the brain, enhancing our creative abilities; he finds a strong connection between Christian worship, art, music, and architecture and the life and witness of the Church. It is by these creative means that the imagination is enabled to project current experience forward to its completion.[[327]](#footnote-328) These forward projections are like the continuation of a pattern, or line of thought, based on previous experience or parallel situations.[[328]](#footnote-329) The “high art” of church choral music is never far from discussion but I argue that the song of the people is part of this creative process. My data demonstrated the connection between the song of the people and the beauty of their surroundings: the stained glass windows and the ancient nature of the place seemed to work with song to make for powerful emotional experiences. This seems close to Atkins’s arguments about forward projection and hope.

Atkins’ understanding of the future orientation of memory serves to confirm the subtle future orientation of my data; creativity and memory work together so that memories of deceased loved ones, for example, carry hopes for the future.

In this hermeneutical conversation Gittoes and Atkins have enabled an understanding of Memory that is dynamically past-present-future oriented. My data brings to academic theology the suggestion that the song of the people has a role in anamnesis. Now I turn to Begbie who enriches what we understand by “present”, arguing that music offers an “interwoven” present.[[329]](#footnote-330)

Begbie argues for music’s temporality, refuting suggestions that its theological worth is through its ability to “extract us from temporality”.[[330]](#footnote-331) However, the nature of music’s time is not straightforward. Through the interconnectedness of rhythm and meter,[[331]](#footnote-332) melody and key,[[332]](#footnote-333)music is experienced as a constant ebb and flow of tension and resolution in each moment. Music’s temporality is rich, consisting of social and cultural, intellectual and bodily temporalities, as well as that of the physical world: it is, therefore, “thoroughly this-worldly”. [[333]](#footnote-334) Music’s performative and internal transience challenges our resistance to our own mortality, and suggests that past-present-future time is interwoven, rather than simply linear. Music has the ability to make past and future “present in the present”: it challenges the idea that past events are irretrievably distant, or that future events simply “have their moment” before receding into the past.[[334]](#footnote-335)

In music, Begbie argues, although there is what we might call a “past past” and a “future future”, past and future are both present in a richly interwoven present. This offers an interesting theory about the known relationship between music and memory. Begbie argues an “internal” dynamic, held within the music itself as notes phrases and themes emerge and die away.[[335]](#footnote-336) He also argues an external dynamic of social and cultural, intellectual, bodily and physical temporalities of music.[[336]](#footnote-337) These are reflected in my research in the memories of people, events and places which may now be understood as aspects of this interwoven present. Although hymns do not have the rhythmic and melodic complexities of a symphony, the same dynamics are present. It may be that the simplicity of hymns and service settings make music’s interwoven “present” more accessible: this would be an interesting area for further research.

Begbie’s interwoven present offers an interpretation of the high level of emotional intensity revealed in my data. What was, outwardly, just people singing hymns was, in reality, a dynamic, highly charged experience holding deep significance for those talking part.

Important ideas have arisen during the conversation between Gittoes, Atkins, Begbie and my data. I have demonstrated links between song and anamnesis in the practice of the Early Church. The Memory data arising from Chapter Three has been illuminated in its past-present-future dynamism as suggested by Gittoes’ anamnesis. Song has been shown to be a catalyst and enabler of, and a means of congregational participation in, dynamic anamnesis. The song of the people has been viewed in its rightful place as part of the creative activity of the church. Song can be seen to be part of the increasing circles of memory holding memories within and bringing singers to reflect on who will sing next. Song has been shown to be a reflective activity which enables singers to give meaning to memories held within the song. There is a reminder that, although song is memory rich, it is easily overlooked and forgotten because of its ephemeral nature. Begbie shows us that, though ephemeral, song is firmly temporal, holding past and future within a richly interwoven present. It can already be seen that the song of the people holds a vital place in the worship of the church. Without it, the process of anamnesis may never have begun and the participation of the people in the living liturgy of the church would be hampered.

Gittoes and Atkins challenge the data themes in Chapter Three: both argue a link between Community and Memory. This caused a re-examination of my data, where it became clear that Memory and Community are closely linked. Memories are often of people or groups of people, held in common with other people, and are aspects of a common heritage – a faith community spanning past, present and future. Thus, this section, originally intended as an exploration of Community, has become an examination of “Memory and Community”.

## Memory and Community

In this section I draw on Gittoes, Atkins and Davie.

I begin with Atkins’ writing on corporate memory before moving on the look at Gittoes’ examination of memory and community. Finally, I examine Davie’s idea of Vicarious Memory, which broadens the identity of community beyond those present at worship.

Atkinsdemonstrates the workings of corporate memory, arguing that all individual memories are formed within a greater, corporate, memory. Modern society values the individual so highly that the role of the corporate is often overlooked.[[337]](#footnote-338) The memory of individuals relies on group memory through sharing, observation, teaching, shared rituals and participation in the corporate songs and sayings of a community.[[338]](#footnote-339) In the church, liturgy keeps the corporate memory alive by telling the story of Christ’s life, sharing in corporate rituals and teaching about the nature of God and the faith of the church.[[339]](#footnote-340)

For liturgy, retained in the memory, repetition is essential but there must also be a weighing of significance which in turn depends on a sense of application (how is this relevant to me?) and of belonging to the group. Frequency of repetition is also important. Infrequent repetition results in loss of participation in corporate memory – an individualised story, departing from the corporate memory of the group, is the result. Lack of repetition, or insufficient frequency, weakens both the corporate memory of the church community.[[340]](#footnote-341)

Considering “significance”, Atkins notes that context always evolves alongside liturgical repetition. Thus memory is stretched to fit each new context. Religion’s primary focus on relationships, rather than on material circumstances, means that the survival of corporate memory depends more on the quality of relationships within the community than on the material circumstances of either individuals or the community.[[341]](#footnote-342) This seems to represent a false dichotomy between communities (or individuals) and their material circumstances, and posits a church detached from context; the opposite of incarnational religion. A community whose current identity is stretched by hardship, poverty and injustice finds strength to counter these realities in its existence as a community, as well as hope in their corporate story of the triumph of life over death. The importance of song in such communities of resistance has been noted in my earlier Literature Review; for instance Elyiana Adler describes the function of songs as a means of resistance during the Holocaust,[[342]](#footnote-343) and song also played an important part in the American Civil Rights Movement.[[343]](#footnote-344)

Atkins goes on to consider the role of corporate memory in the formation of identity:

... corporate memory enfolds us as we take our place as a member of this church. We learn to speak of our ancestors as our own ...We tell the story of the Church as our story, our history, our successes and our failures. We learn to relate to this holy place where prayer has hallowed the walls with the presence of God, and where people have found new strength for the journey through life.[[344]](#footnote-345)

This corporate memory is maintained by the telling and retelling of its story. In the church this is achieved both in the cycle of the liturgical year and in the sacraments. The corporate memory of God’s actions in Christ enables the church community to hear the story of hope, and to enact that message in the present.[[345]](#footnote-346) The story holds memories of hurt and pain, and acknowledgement of hurt is an essential part of the retelling of the story. The Passion of Christ forms a key part of the corporate memory, bringing hope but reminding us of the hurts humans inflict on each other.[[346]](#footnote-347)

Thus Atkins argues the centrality of corporate memory in the development of individual memories: “without the wisdom of the group we are unable to respond to life situations.”[[347]](#footnote-348) Atkins includes song, along with teaching, stories and ritual, in the list of “tools” which enable and strengthen corporate memory.[[348]](#footnote-349)

Atkins’ work on corporate memory is a useful reminder of the essential existence of collective memories for the survival of the group and for individual development. The story which we tell, and by which we live, impacts on our individual lives and on wider society in turn. Atkins alludes to the role of song in the building of this corporate memory, although he underestimates its power as a memory and community building tool.

The role of song in movements of resistance and change has already been noted; here, song plays a well documented role in bonding group identity and enabling courage and hope. The weekly song of the people in churches is usually overlooked and seems unremarkable, but, in the light of Atkins it can be seen as a key part of building community – even communities of resistance.

The repertoire of hymns also plays its part in the cycle of the church’s year. Familiar Lenten, Easter and Harvest hymns and Christmas carols, are anticipated and loved by congregations and are often known by heart.[[349]](#footnote-350) Seasonal hymns and carols are essential in evoking a sense of the seasons, and in marking their passing. In the case of harvest hymns the context has changed for many, but in towns and cities people seem still to love singing about ploughing fields, scattering seed, and harvesting crops. This is often regarded as sentimentalism, but Atkins suggests that this can be seen to be part of the church’s corporate memory – part of the continuing story of the past, present and future church.

Hymns are one of the few parts of the liturgy where the whole congregation is involved in “speaking”. For the congregation, hymns are a central means of participating in the liturgy and building the collective memory. For new members, becoming familiar with the repertoire of songs is an important way of becoming part of the community. As seen in my data, enabling new or future members to participate in the song of the people is a matter of concern. This recurring theme in my data is brought into focus by Atkins: song is central in perpetuating community, adding to the collective memory and maintaining the past-present-future dynamic.

I now turn to Gittoes who notes the collective nature of worship[[350]](#footnote-351) defined by the concept of the church as a community of redeemed sinners,[[351]](#footnote-352) and as the body of Christ attentive to past action and future service.[[352]](#footnote-353) She reflects on the Parish Communion Movement, for whom religion was not merely about individual piety but participation in common life including social cohesion and purpose in wider society.[[353]](#footnote-354) My data showed that singing together was seen as an important expression of the congregation’s identity:

Well it is praising God. I think that the more we all sing together and praise together, the better it is. There is not much else to say. (Mary:35)

Singing brings you back – it keeps you there. (Andrew/Alison:481)

I think music plays a key role in building and enhancing community. (Andrew/Alison:435)

Just as anamnesis was a dynamic past-present-future concept, so the church’s community has a dynamic nature; the church is called into “continued critical engagement in the social and political affairs of the world.”[[354]](#footnote-355) This outward-looking community begins with the offertory; the bread and wine become expressions of the people’s will to offer themselves to God. The bread and wine are given back to us transformed, becoming the transforming pattern for the gathered church as it goes outward into the world.[[355]](#footnote-356) To this I add the offering of the church’s song, the “sacrifice of praise”, which may also be returned transformed.

In Chapter Three I noted a perceived mismatch between the song’s sound and the meaning attributed to it by the singers. Might the transformation be located in how the song is heard by God, who hears not just the sound but also what might be called “the song of the heart” – not just the song but what it signifies to those who sing? This renders the song of those who “cannot sing” as valid as the song of those with confident voices. As a singer, I would always prefer for the church’s song to be bold and for people to learn to project their voices, enabling them to sing out. A theology of song- returned-transformed, however, suggests that this is not essential.

By building and supporting community, song has a part to play in enabling the church to be the body of Christ on earth. I do not wish to diminish the significance of the bread and wine within the Eucharist, but argue that song enables people to share in the Eucharist because of its community-building and memory-enhancing nature. This suggests that song plays a role in the nourishment of God’s people.

Gittoes examines the Church of England report “Believing in the Church”,[[356]](#footnote-357) noting the idea that orthodoxy is not about passive assent or the suppression of criticism, but about relating to the collective memory which gives the Christian community its identity. This provides a framework in which personal faith exists and is seen the “horizontal dimension” of public behaviour, which, alongside the vertical dimension of response to God, constitutes individual faith. A stable background of repetition is a prerequisite for this communal dimension of faith.[[357]](#footnote-358) It is easy to see that the participative song of the people plays and important part in this community-building repetition. Although my focus is on song rather than words, it can be seen that hymn texts offer a creative opportunity for reflecting on faith and developing a nuanced means of assent, while the song itself enables a sense of belonging. Thus, singing of texts and of melody are creative ways of “doing theology”. In terms of the memories of the world which is wider than the church, hymn singing can be a reflective exercise – a space for personal reflection on the relationship between faith and life. In song, these reflections are brought into a memory-rich collective arena, which is a place of offering to God.

Gittoes often draws on David Ford including his assertion that “participation is crucial to learning the way of living in the Christian community, by sharing in its thinking, language and behaviour.”[[358]](#footnote-359) Memory is bound up with participation in the sacramental retelling of the Christian story, maintaining faithful connections to the past in the present context, and stimulating prophetic witness in the future.[[359]](#footnote-360) Singing is one of the most important ways in which congregations participate in the liturgy of the church. This links well with Ford’s theology of worship which is a “face to face community of praise”.[[360]](#footnote-361) Here, Eucharistic worship enables the church to be Christ’s body and reminds it of that connection across time. The communal space of worship is Ford’s “inclusive, uncrowded space of song”.[[361]](#footnote-362) Thus remembering becomes the bond of community:

Anamnesis is a profound concept at the heart of Eucharistic theology, shaping Christian belief and practice. It unites the past, present and future and also presents a demand to the participants, as they too are taken, blessed, broken and given. It is Anamnesis that forms the bonds of connection with the life and death anticipated by the source event of the Last Supper, which enables receptive transformation through the corporate practice of memory.[[362]](#footnote-363)

Ford (with McFayden) has also written on “Praise” in “God in the City”.[[363]](#footnote-364) The praise of God is seen as the ultimate realism, enabling a vision of a transformed world beyond evil, through the resurrection. This realism is not simply envisaging a better world, but something “concrete” which occurs through the formation of a community.[[364]](#footnote-365) ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­Thus the springboard for transformation is praise and the outcome of praise is community:

[Praise is] an activity that orientates the community towards the future – showing how present conditions are in opposition to God’s will; energising commitment to a different future; helping to set out an agenda for change. The starting point is to imagine things differently in the light of God’s decisive and abundant reality.[[365]](#footnote-366)

Here the emphasis is interpersonal; there is a concern for the church’s engagement with wider social and political issues because of its face-to-face encounter with Christ – “a dangerous memory”.[[366]](#footnote-367)

There are strong ideas here to relate to my Memory and Community data. The theme of participation arises again, as does the community building nature of song. Ford has described a “face to face community of praise”, and an “inclusive, uncrowded space of song”. Who is face to face with whom? In their song, members of a congregation are face to face with each other in God’s presence. This suggests both community and honesty. Personal memories invoked by song enable singers to understand that others too are voicing memories. These memories are brought into the collective space, brimming with memories, and yet this is an uncrowded space, containing past, present and future in each moment. Because the song is offered in God’s presence, it returns transformed. In singing, the body of Christ sings the song of Christ who initiated the church’s song at the Last Supper, who is present now, and who offers hope and fulfilment in the future. This is a song for all of time, overflowing with many memories. Ordinary Theology is at work here as lay communities play their part in the conversation which keeps the memory of Jesus alive. Congregational song enables and holds a constantly moving memory which makes relevant the memory of Jesus in today’s world. The song of the people is a way of “doing theology”.

Another point of contact between my Community data and Gittoes’ ideas about the community aspects of anamnesis lies in her description of Welker’s idea of “hot” and “cold” memory: cold memory is stable and stabilising, working against community transformation, while hot memory enables communities to convert “the remembered” into a process of becoming, empowering development and change. These stabilising and dynamic qualities are not mutually exclusive - both are important in creating societies with both stable identities and developing perspectives.[[367]](#footnote-368)

The song of the people can play a part in both “hot” and “cold” memories. As my data shows, congregational song bears fruit in memories evoked by “old favourites” – Welker’s “cold” memory. However, in the ever-changing world of music, congregational song exists in a constant tension between old and new –Welker’s “hot” memory. This is clear in my data, and, as indicated in Chapter One, has been a recurring pattern in the history of the church’s music. My data shows that song brings back memories so powerfully that it produces a desire amongst current worshippers for future worshippers to be able to have their own memories which will evoked by hymns not yet in the church’s repertoire. Thus the anxiety about hymn singing which emerged from the interviews has a purpose as a meeting place of past and future in the present song of the people.

In summary, song has an essential role in the collective memory of the church, and in the (re)telling of the story of Jesus Christ. Repetition is essential: hymns offer a means of achieving this. In singing, church members have opportunity to reflect on the significance of hymns and songs for their life and faith. Sung communally, hymns hold individual identity within communal identity. They also serve as a marker of the seasons. Song is an important means of the participation of the church community in the liturgy and in their life together. The memory-enhancing and community-building nature of song enables participation in the reception of bread and wine, and therefore has a part to play in driving the community outwards into God’s world. The song of the people is a valid part of the sacrifice of praise, offered and then returned transformed Anamnesis is played out in the Eucharistic celebration, and song helps in this process, creating communal identity and carrying many memories, including the memory of Jesus’ own song at supper with his friends. Through song, the community is linked to the community of the Disciples who were themselves driven out into the world. Thus, memory, facilitated by song can be seen to be at the heart of the community-driven mission of the church. The place of song at the heart of anamnesis-inspired community action is at the heart of an emerging practical theology of congregational song.

Davie brings an added dimension to these ideas. As noted at the end of Chapter One, the song of the people is at risk, which means an important means of maintaining the “chains of memory” could be lost. Davie’s idea of Vicarious Memory suggests that this would not a loss to the church only, but to wider society. Davie first developed the idea of “believing not belonging”: observing the persistence of “the sacred” in contemporary society against the backdrop of the sharp decline in churchgoing, Building on this idea, Davie developed the idea of Vicarious Memory: churches are still significant players within society, performing a moral, spiritual and social role on behalf of the population.[[368]](#footnote-369) Davie argues that belonging to a chain of memory enables individuals to be members of a community. Modern European societies are increasingly less capable of maintaining the memories at the heart of their religious existence.[[369]](#footnote-370) This task is left to a relatively small number of people who “look after” the memory on behalf of others.[[370]](#footnote-371) She identifies the maintenance and proper practice of the liturgy as essential to the task of Vicarious Memory. Although Davie argues that not everyone has to be able to articulate the Vicarious Memory, she believes the non-attending majority have to have some idea of what the practising minority does. The majority demonstrates vigilance, rather than indifference, to both the “guardians of the faith” and church buildings.[[371]](#footnote-372) Vicarious Memory is drawn upon by the majority on special occasions: the articulation of grief after the death of Princess Diana, for example.[[372]](#footnote-373) The church is called upon more regularly for weddings, funerals and baptisms:[[373]](#footnote-374) “it is these which provide the liturgies which frame so much of human living.”[[374]](#footnote-375)

Davie also notes that this Vicarious Memory is a “Precarious Memory,” – inevitably so, as it is held by someone else. She notes changes in educational practice which offer information *about* religion rather than models based on catechesis.[[375]](#footnote-376) Severed chains of religious memory can sometimes reassert themselves: in Judaism, extinguished communities have become part of the chains of memory still maintained by those who remain. [[376]](#footnote-377)

Davie’s Vicarious Memory has been critiqued, not least by Bruce and Voas, who argue that examples of Vicarious Religion are not as common as Davie suggests.[[377]](#footnote-378) However, they agree that “Vicarious Religion is an important element of the religious life of societies in which common religion pervades the worldview.”[[378]](#footnote-379)

Within the current project, Davie’s Vicarious Memory suggests the importance of the collective memory of the church for those who are not present or participating in worship. Those who *do* participate maintain the chains of memory for a much wider group. Those held in memory are, therefore, a wider group than I had considered in the analysis of my data. The song of the people plays a role in the Vicarious, and Precarious, memory of wider communities and societies, not just the communities of those who gather to sing. Begbie’s interwoven present becomes an even more richly interwoven place, carrying past and future time and the wide space of the world that carries on its business as congregations gather to sing.

Having considered Memory and its relationship to Community, I now move to my third data category: Praise and Lament.

## Praise and Lament

In this section I will draw on the work of Brueggemann, Ramshaw and McGilchrist.

In the interviews of Chapter Three, there was a sense that singing (rather than saying) brought a sense of praise, and lifted the spirits bringing joy in times of sadness. Equally, singing particular hymns brought feelings of sadness: there was evidence that some tunes made people cry. Some hymns brought memories of people who had died; often this was the case with hymns which had been sung at funerals and weddings. There was a sense that singing in a beautiful church enabled praise. The range of emotions described in the interviewees was striking. The singing I heard had betrayed nothing to me of the emotions which it carried.

Lament arose in Chapter One, where it was noted as a feature of the song of the Hebrew Scriptures where. A “limping rhythm” created a sense of discomfort which mirrored the words. Ramshaw has written of the relationship between praise and lament[[379]](#footnote-380) arguing that the Eucharist is the source of praise.[[380]](#footnote-381) She uses the idea of “typology”[[381]](#footnote-382) as the basis for her understanding of the working of praise and lament in the context of the Eucharist.

Brueggemann has written on praise and lament, detailing both the “costly loss of lament”[[382]](#footnote-383) and the necessary conditions for its return.[[383]](#footnote-384) Drawing on Westermann, he tells of the rediscovery of lament, of understandings of its original meaning in Psalms,[[384]](#footnote-385) and argues his own understanding of what happens in lament and what this means in today’s context.

Ramshaw argues that “the Eucharist *is* thanksgiving;” this has arisen from a purposeful ecumenical liturgical concern to reintroduce a tone of thanksgiving into Eucharistic worship:

Our study of Hebraic praise formulas, our return to the Psalms, our cleansing the Eucharist of lugubrious medieval penance, our recognition of “sacrifice” as metaphoric speech, our rediscovery of meal, our replacing the private with the corporate, our search for the lively arts in worship, our reorienting liturgical spaces, our renewed paschal piety: these all attest to our hope that the root of Christian Eucharist, thanksgiving, be celebrated again among us.[[385]](#footnote-386)

This thanksgiving is not the same as happiness, but rather exists despite individual pain and social disorder. Born of ability to bring these sorrows to the foot of the cross, Eucharistic praise transfigures pain by the communal hope expressed by those gathered to share at God’s table. [[386]](#footnote-387) Ramshaw argues that “praise in the face of sorrow” exists because the Eucharist uses “typology” to gather worshippers into praise. She defines this as “the recurring formula in biblical speech which sees human life saved by a pattern of God’s grace.”[[387]](#footnote-388) She draws on Northrop Frye[[388]](#footnote-389) who sees this typology existing in a past-present-future pattern, implying that history has “some meaning or point” which is not necessarily clear to us at the moment, but which will be revealed:

Our modern confidence in historical process, our belief that despite apparent confusion, even chaos, in human events, nevertheless those events are going somewhere and indicating something, is probably a legacy of biblical typology.[[389]](#footnote-390)

Ramshaw gives examples of this biblical typology from the harshness of slavery in Egypt to entry into the Promised Land, the childlessness of Sarah being transformed into motherhood achieved by faith, and the thirsty woman at the well being given living water. These and other stories are the basis of Eucharistic hope which results in praise and thanksgiving. The Eucharistic Prayer itself shows the same typology with its emphasis on community, the gift of food and the promise of continued life; no matter how bad the situation, God’s grace is promised and perpetuated.[[390]](#footnote-391) It is within this context of praise and thanksgiving that lament finds its place; within the appropriation of grace at the Eucharist, present suffering is linked to the history of human suffering, as know by the stories of faith. This means that, “even in our pain we rest assured in the salvation of God.”[[391]](#footnote-392)

Ramshaw acknowledges that attempts to rid worship of “the pervasive character of private penance” can lead to extremes of praise which turn the Eucharist into a liturgical “happy hour”.[[392]](#footnote-393) In such circumstances, human lament is drowned out by happy songs. She notes that, even at funerals, we are not good at expressing our sadness and despair. Her argument is that, although typology offers a movement from despair to hope, we have a tendency to omit the despair, ignoring both the echoes of pain from the familiar stories of our faith, and current despair, public or private. For praise to be genuine, lament needs to be given voice. My research shows that lament could still be taking place at funerals, hidden in seemingly happy songs. In these, memory works to bring an unseen, personal form of lament:

As a widow singing ... hymns can upset you. It is a mistake to choose hymns [for a funeral] that you like and that are going to appear regularly. (Sue:12)

When looking for places within the Eucharist where lament might be given voice, Ramshaw suggests intercessions and Kyrie responses; to these I add congregational song. It was clear from my interview data that song expresses praise and lament, even when songs are not intended as laments. It is memory that transforms songs into lament or praise. Formal lament was not an outward feature of the services I attended, but it was there beneath the surface; there was no evidence of communal lament for the suffering of the world, but personal, unseen lament was “held” within the praise of the people. It seems at least possible that Ramshaw's “typology” was at work, with sorrow being measured against the hope of God’s grace, but we can see from Westermann that something was missing: he clearly distinguishes individual lament from the collective lament of the people.[[393]](#footnote-394) A further investigation into the personal working of lament hidden within non-lament hymns and songs would be a good area for further research.

My research shows that personal lament has survived, but it is clear that there is still a need for public and communal lament. She notes:

while lamenting is about past events, it also has present and future dimensions. It acknowledges the brokenness of the present because of injustice ... [and] it instinctively creates a link between healing and mourning that makes new just relationships possible in the future.[[394]](#footnote-395)

Because unseen, individual lament has survived in the song of the people, this song would be an excellent place for the re-introduction of a wider, collective lament. This would enable a clearer role for questioning, doubt and sorrow in the collective memory of the church. This would enable a more radical and robust theological debate, as will be seen in consideration of Brueggemann.[[395]](#footnote-396)

Brueggemann locates the death of lament in the Enlightenment, rather earlier than suggested by Ramshaw: “the new self-confidence...rooted in the reasonable capacity of the autonomous self...needed no such voice and, indeed, rendered such a voice nonsensical.”[[396]](#footnote-397) Unlike Ramshaw, his primary focus is the psalms rather than the Eucharist. Brueggemann outlines the story of the rediscovery of lament, beginning with Westermann who did his work on the psalms as a Russian prisoner of war during the Second World War; Brueggemann argues that Westermann’s savage experiences gave impetus to his work. It was Westermann who first noted that the psalms of lament characteristically moved from lament, or plea, to praise.[[397]](#footnote-398) This idea of lament to praise is consistent with Ramshaw's “typology”, and is considered by Brueggemann to be the most important theological insight in the discussion of lament.

Brueggemann details the theological debate about the “sitz in leben” of psalms of lament, concluding that their use was neither formal and distinct from real life, nor metaphorical - in imitation of the juridical system. Rather, he sees the lament psalms as genuine pastoral activities linked to small communities or religious gatherings, where the community expressed sorrow and re-enacted hope.[[398]](#footnote-399)

The effects of the loss of lament are described by Brueggemann in terms of triumphalism and a belief in self sufficiency.[[399]](#footnote-400) The return of lament to the liturgy of the church has lagged behind academic scholarship. The Pastoral Care Movement of the 1970s first noticed that the scripts of lament were congruent with therapeutic practice. In the 1980s there was a growing understanding that lament was as much to do with the holiness of God as it was to human complaint, and that a “thin therapeutic mode of catharsis” was an insufficient understanding of the nature and purpose of lament.[[400]](#footnote-401) However, the traumatic events of “9/11” and after still found the church with no real use of lament. For Brueggemann, 9/11 was a turning point, where the affluent West suddenly recognised its vulnerability.[[401]](#footnote-402) The awakening of the church to lament which he predicted, however, appears not to have happened, or at least seems not to have reached the United Kingdom in any noticeable way.

Brueggemann notes the preconditions needed for lament to find its place in church liturgy again: vulnerability, an engagement with God and a questioning of why God appears to be “unfaithful” to the people to whom he has promised fidelity. This in turn requires people to be “fully present” to themselves, in order that dysfunction and hurt can be recognised and named in communities.[[402]](#footnote-403) Brueggemann also notes the bodily language of lament: psalmic lament is often expressed in terms of bodily “diminishment”.[[403]](#footnote-404) There is a link here to the fourth data category of Body: does the denial of bodily nature of song further disable the expression of lament, and prevent a full outpouring? This is another topic that would make an interesting area of study.

Like Ramshaw, Brueggemann sees the importance of memories of better times, both in Psalms of Lament, and for those who lament today.[[404]](#footnote-405) This pouring out of bodily lament is the opposite of stoic silence;

Israel’s characteristic way is loud, shrill insistence against every mannered control. Israel’s speech after silence is profoundly regressive and hyperbolic, flailing out at many enemies, spilling over in rage and lust for vengeance.... more unsettling is the daring mouth of Israel that addresses YHWH in huge demanding imperatives: Listen, Hear, Save, Rescue, Rise Up![[405]](#footnote-406)

This raging, outrageous pleading reveals to Brueggemann how much we have “trivialised prayer”, in contrast to the cry of lament which, like the prophets, speaks to power in imperatives.[[406]](#footnote-407) The cry of lament creates a tension between the one who pledges fidelity and the “dangerously voiced” speaker who notices that this promise has not been kept and wants to know why.[[407]](#footnote-408) Brueggemann also notes lament’s communal context, Israel being the original and prime example, having never been “narcoticised away” from suffering and joy.[[408]](#footnote-409) The Passover Meal rehearses the lament-praise pattern, and the lament leaves no room for doubt that the times of suffering must never be forgotten, lest they should return without resistance and struggle.[[409]](#footnote-410)

They knew that the regular performance of the drama kept them free. And while they loved the conclusion of praise, they knew each time they had to begin again in moan and groan, keeping their bodies in touch with the travail they preferred to silent submissiveness. As a consequence, it was a matter of course that communal cadences came to their lips for personal matters and for public matters, for war and disease and drought.[[410]](#footnote-411)

There are clear links here to the themes Memory and Community, and the communal nature of lament blurs the boundaries between my themes of Memory, Community and Lament. The questioning nature of lament, along with its remembrance of suffering, adds to the past-present-future dynamic which is central to the idea of anamnesis. The vigorous contestation of lament requires a community which does not “fudge on truth telling in order to protect our mannered sensibilities or to protect the character and reputation of God.”[[411]](#footnote-412)

ForBrueggemann the consequence of the loss of lament is what he calls a “theological monopoly” creating docility and submissiveness: “where lament is absent, covenant comes into being only as a celebration of joy and well-being.”[[412]](#footnote-413) In social practice, this consolidates the monopoly of the political and economic status quo and the people become “yes men and women” who never raise their voices in dissent.[[413]](#footnote-414) For Brueggemann, lament is the place where people develop over and against God, as they would a human parent.[[414]](#footnote-415)

Lament’s absence also brings an inadequate recognition of theodicy. Lament allows people to raise questions of suffering and injustice: “lament occurs when the dysfunction reaches an unacceptable level, when the injustice is intolerable and change is insisted upon.”[[415]](#footnote-416) Failure to question, failure to lament, is likened to a failure to carry on our part of the conversation, which, in turn leads to anxiety and despair because God’s vulnerability and passion are forgotten.[[416]](#footnote-417) Brueggemann suggests that the God who evokes and responds to lament “is not omnipotent in any conventional sense.”[[417]](#footnote-418)

Despite the quietness of the lament in my data, there is still a sense of bringing sadness and despair to God. It is significant that hymns continue to allow people express these unspoken emotions in their collective song. It is not clear how much questioning of God’s reputation is taking place, but the need for lament, personal and private still exists. This would be better catered for in more open hymns of lament, and in a way that enables expression of collective lament over national and global issues. The limping rhythm of Lamentations could be used, musically, to reflect the intensity of the feeling expressed in the words.[[418]](#footnote-419)

A publication of the Joint Liturgical Group, offering resources for times of public grief, suggests readings and prayers for memorial services, some of which contain lament, but no suggestions for hymns. This omission reflects the overlooking of congregational song demonstrated by my research. Lament seems to be expressed at some formal, national services: the service at Westminster Abbey for the hundredth anniversary of the beginning of the First World War is full of lament, in Bible readings, poetry and choral music. There is a discernable pattern of movement from lament to hope: the service ends with the reading of the Prologue to John’s Gospel. There is only one hymn, “Jesus Lover of my Soul”; my research shows that lack of congregational song is likely to diminish congregation’s ability to express lament. The chosen hymn does contain elements of lament in which the music (in a minor key) is likely to play a significant part;[[419]](#footnote-420) as my interviews demonstrate, lament can be carried by music alone.[[420]](#footnote-421)

The service for the twenty fifth anniversary of the Lockerbie disaster shows little evidence of lament at first glance. However, the two congregational hymns, “The Lord’s my Shepherd” and “O Little Town of Bethlehem” are likely to “carry” lament through memories of funeral services and Christmas carols: (the Lockerbie plane crash occurred on December 21st, 1988).[[421]](#footnote-422) The conflict between Christmas carols, normally associated with happiness, and the memories of loss associated with the Lockerbie disaster, reflect Brueggemann’s “dysfunction” and are a good example of the possibility of lament occurring in a non-lament hymn.[[422]](#footnote-423)

For an extra dimension in my consideration of Lament, I turn to McGilchrist[[423]](#footnote-424) who writes of the connections between music and the right brain hemisphere: melody, tone, timbre and pitch are all mediated via the right hemisphere.[[424]](#footnote-425) McGilchrist suggests that, from an evolutionary point of view, singing preceded language. He discusses the importance of sung noises, with or without words, as carriers of memory.[[425]](#footnote-426)

Rhythm is more complex: basic, metrical rhythm is processed in the left brain while more complex rhythms and those deviating from the standard patterns are all processed by the right hemisphere.[[426]](#footnote-427) McGilchrist argues that music is intrinsically sad, and that even joyful music “appears to be joy torn from the teeth of sadness, a sort of holiday of the minor key.”[[427]](#footnote-428) This is what should be expected from the “emotional timbre” of the right hemisphere. McGilchrist explores different experiences of sadness in different pieces of music, finding the “lexicon” available to describe these different modes of sadness frustratingly limited.[[428]](#footnote-429)

He goes on to describe music’s roll in a kind of “knowing” equated with “kennen” rather than “wissen”: the former is the knowledge found in relationship, the latter is more like theoretical “knowledge about” something. Thus, music does not *symbolise* emotional meaning (which would require interpretation - wissen), but “carries it over” directly into our unconscious minds - kennen. Similarly, music conveys, rather than symbolises, human qualities:

such living creations are seen as being essentially human in nature... can be understood only if we appreciate that they are more like people than texts, concepts or things.[[429]](#footnote-430)

This is reflected in my data:

There are some hymns where I get terribly upset and emotional. (Andrew/Alison:105)

There are certain hymns that I can cry at: “Finlandia”. We have practised it recently and I had to go home. (Joan:28)

McGilchrist notes a shift in the understanding of the left side of the body in the Renaissance: traditionally regarded as “sinister”, attitudes to the left body softened at this time, giving way to an intuitive sense of its positive qualities. It came to be seen as the more beautiful side with qualities of gentleness, truthfulness and an ability to be more in touch with feeling.[[430]](#footnote-431) He notes the simultaneous flowering of polyphony with its complex harmonies, suspensions and false relations. Although much Renaissance music is joyful, he argues its greatest achievements are its great works of melancholy – Requiems, Passiontide music and madrigals which celebrate “love that is only occasionally requited.”[[431]](#footnote-432) Thus, McGilchrist associates Renaissance melancholy with a period of right brain dominance.[[432]](#footnote-433)

McGilchrist’s work demonstrates the intimate connections between music and lament; music’s ability to make accessible the right brain; its ability to carry emotion directly into our minds without the need for interpretation; its conveying of humanity. Music is likely to have preceded speech, and has its roots in primitive communication of emotion: the deep emotional effects of music suggest that its ancient origins, predating spoken language.[[433]](#footnote-434) Music’s ability to stir the emotions, then, taps into the ancient past of humankind, expressing that which is beyond words.

Interestingly, the right brain tendency of music is more accessible to amateur than professional musicians: highly trained musicians appear to use the left hemisphere to a much greater extent in their musical praxis. This is likely to be a result of a more theoretically based and consciously learned approach.[[434]](#footnote-435) McGilchrist’s work suggests that sung lament is a potentially potent means of expression, and one in which the people’s song would be able to find expression in a more direct way.

My research has shown that lament has survived in church worship, but on an unseen private level, through hymns which evoke memories of past times and people but are not, outwardly, laments. It is clear that a more participative expression of lament, would allow lament to be voiced more fully and collectively in response to the tragedies, disasters and fears which dominate the news. Although lament can be expressed “by association,” there is a need for hymns which address lament more directly. This is true for the recognition of personal loss (funeral and memorial hymns) and for bigger, national events and occurrences. Again, this would add to the collective memory, which binds and enriches community. It is worth remembering that music itself, not just words, can carry lament. Open expression of lament has not yet found a voice: indices of hymn books list pages of hymns of praise, but few have an entry for lament. Personal experience shows that, even at funerals, people avoid lament in favour of “celebration of life”, although, as discussed above, apparently cheerful songs, may carry a hidden, privatised lament. A full, collective lament would be more powerful.

Brueggemann and Ramshaw have described the consequences of the omission of collective lament; complacency and lack of questioning; a lack of thought about injustice and suffering, the loss of public outrage and consequential demand for change. McGilchrist has demonstrated that, in song, lament could be extremely powerful. Properly conducted, lament has the potential to reinforce the worship’s past-present-future dynamic, and to allow deeper reflection on the relationship between suffering and faith.

## Body

Having thought about praise and lament, we l now move on to the fourth category arising from my data – that of Body. In this section I draw on Epstein, Holsinger, and Francis.

The Body was the fourth theme arising from Chapter Three where it was regarded almost entirely in negative terms. Singing was not recognised as a bodily activity, but as a spiritual and emotional practice. Given that song *is* a bodily activity, the lack of “body talk” suggests that the body is there largely in its absence.

Despite the doctrine of the incarnation, Christian theology has often regarded the body as deformed by sin and in need of punishing discipline; embodiment has been regarded as limiting and there has been an often expressed yearning for the soul to be freed from the body. Fleshly pleasure and sexual desire have been particularly linked with human sinfulness; it is only in recent years that more positive body theologies, including feminist body theology, have been developed. These positive body theologies argue that denigration of the body is the source of violence against particular bodies stigmatised for their race, gender or sexual orientation.[[435]](#footnote-436) The task of undoing past condemnation of bodily pleasure, and correcting errors about the role of the human body in creation is still ongoing.[[436]](#footnote-437)

Epstein reminds us that wonder has not, generally, featured in theologies of body or music; music has often been described in pejorative language about the female body. She goes on to develop a positive embodied theology of music, particularly through the writings of Hildegard of Bingen. Epstein is not writing either on song or the song of the people. However, the broader examination of music and negative body theology makes Epstein a good starting place. With specific regard to song, Epstein exposes the recurring linguistic theme of music as “body” and words as “soul” in which music must be “contained” or “bridled” by the words.[[437]](#footnote-438) She demonstrates the idea of the primacy of the text[[438]](#footnote-439) from the Church Fathers, to Luther[[439]](#footnote-440) and Rousseau.[[440]](#footnote-441) The words of Bernard of Clairvaux[[441]](#footnote-442) typify this idea:

Not a little spiritual profit is lost when minds are distracted from the sense of the words by frivolity of the melody.[[442]](#footnote-443)

Within the widely used body/soul binary, music/body is repeatedly categorised pejoratively as female, in sexual terms. For example, Epstein notes that Augustine talks of music’s seductive power in similar language to that used in lamenting his sexual sins.[[443]](#footnote-444) Boethius[[444]](#footnote-445) described music as having lost her virginity:

Music was indeed chaste and modest when it was performed on simple instruments. But since it has been squandered in various promiscuous ways, it has lost its measure of dignity and virtue, having almost fallen into a state of disgrace; it preserves nothing of its ancient splendor.[[445]](#footnote-446)

Arnobius[[446]](#footnote-447) described women singing and playing instruments as harlots.[[447]](#footnote-448) Archbishop Giovanni Artuso [[448]](#footnote-449) described the music of the Seconda Prattica (including that of Monteverdi) as a “painted whore” because of its innovative madrigalisms.[[449]](#footnote-450) Describing the blurring of the sacred/secular music boundary one Bishop of Exeter, described the process as “robbing the playhouse, only to dress up the Spouse of Christ in the attire of a harlot.”[[450]](#footnote-451)

Lucian of Samosata[[451]](#footnote-452) deplored the emasculating effects of pantomime and women’s love songs[[452]](#footnote-453) and Clement of Alexandria warned of the effeminising dangers of pleasures such as flutes and other musical instruments.[[453]](#footnote-454) Gendered language about music was particularly strong in Elizabethan England, where effeminacy in boys and whorishness in girls were considered great hazards for both musical performers and listeners.[[454]](#footnote-455) Madrigals were considered especially effeminate and effeminising because of their descriptions, in word and song, of the delights of love.[[455]](#footnote-456)

The music of the church sometimes fared better than secular music; Epstein demonstrates that “wanton Pagan music”, as opposed to chaste Christian music, is often couched in terms of emasculation or effeminisation, following precedents set by Plato and others.[[456]](#footnote-457) The Tridentine reformers of the sixteenth century used similar language about the stylistic embellishment of church music,[[457]](#footnote-458) reminding us that the new in music is often not well received.

Epstein evidences a different strand of writing which idealises music, paralleling the alternative idealisation of woman as chaste virgin. These ideas began with the Greek philosophers and their understanding of mathematical music as the music of the spheres. Epstein demonstrates that it is always the music of the past which is idealised and to which divine characteristics are attributed.[[458]](#footnote-459) From this state of divine perfection music, Eve-like, falls when she succumbs to new ideas and idioms, pagan rituals or worldly pursuits. It is to this language of the ideal, the perfect, the transcendent to which recent writers resort; for instance Barth and Kung on Mozart, and Pelikan on Bach.[[459]](#footnote-460) This echoes Wren’s observations about new forms of church music. He argues that there has always been some cross-fertilisation between church and popular music at least from the middle ages onwards,[[460]](#footnote-461) and that the newest music always appears to be denounced by the church as ungodly or even satanic.[[461]](#footnote-462) He notes an inconsistency:

Theologically we preach acceptance and inclusiveness. Musically, we proclaim rejection and exclusion on the culturally conditioned belief that “good taste” is more pleasing to God than bad taste.[[462]](#footnote-463)

Epstein’s demonstration of negative music-body imagery suggests that a positive theology of congregational song needs a positive body theology as its foundation. The negativity of my data towards the body, and the denial of the bodily nature of song, suggest that centuries of negative body theology have been taken to heart. It may even be behind the surprising difference between the sound of the song and the meanings ascribed to it, almost as if the congregation’s song was inhibited by negative body theology.

Having outlined this negative theology of body and music, Epstein begins a positive theology with examination Hildegard of Bingen’s theology of music, rooted in embodied mystical experiences. Hildegard’s theology of music arose partly from her struggle with the prelates at Mainz who silenced the singing of her community. Hildegard saw humans as musical beings, even musical instruments, through whom God breathes to produce sound, or across whose strings God’s fingers strum. Adam is characterised by Hildegard as the incarnation of heavenly music whose pre-fall voice was full of heavenly harmony and sweetness.[[463]](#footnote-464)

Epstein quotes Holsinger, who draws out the erotic nature of spiritual desire in music and song in the lives of medieval women mystics from Margery Kempe to Chaucer’s Prioress.[[464]](#footnote-465) He counters the enduring scholarly assumption that the importance of medieval religious music lay in its cerebral, ordered nature, reflecting its place as a mathematical art expressing number and proportion.[[465]](#footnote-466) Rather, he argues, most medieval musicians would have experienced music in a much more bodily way. Quoting Boethius and a tenth century nun, Hrosvit of Gandersheim, Holsinger finds an alternative strand of medieval thought which makes connections between music, body and soul. He turns to Hildegard’s theology to demonstrate this: its beginnings in a bodily mystical experience,[[466]](#footnote-467)a developing theology of the female body’s special place in musical expression,[[467]](#footnote-468) an exploration of Hildegard’s violation of contemporary conventions of plain-chant composition in her use of a wide melodic range and musical leaps[[468]](#footnote-469) and an examination of the affinity between Hildegard’s musical compositions and female devotion and sexuality.

Hildegard’s theology, contrary to the words/soul – music/body binary noted above, regarded words as symbolic of body and jubilant music as symbolic of the spirit; celestial harmony shows divinity, and words reflect the humanity of the Christ.[[469]](#footnote-470) Her invocation of the humanity of Christ brings a subtle twist to an unconventional dualism. She is known for her depiction of the human body as an instrument – sometimes a stringed instrument, sometimes a trumpet.[[470]](#footnote-471) This is particularly true of the Virgin Mary: Hildegard describes Mary’s womb as the source of all celestial “symphonia”.[[471]](#footnote-472) In Hildegard’s setting of words expressing Mary’s celestial music, there is a musical leap of an octave and a sixth. This musical “disjunct motion” is rare in medieval music and seems to express, with great vividness, the joy and rapture associated with the music emanating from Mary’s womb.[[472]](#footnote-473) Hildegard’s composition comes from a time when plainchant was subject to a theoretical and modal system which limited melodies to a small melodic range (mostly within a seventh or an octave, and often a fifth or sixth).[[473]](#footnote-474) Holsinger regards this as an attempt to regulate and discipline singing bodies, bringing then into line with the proprieties of monastic life. Hildegard’s music stands in profound contrast to this:

For Hildegard, as for Margery Kempe... it is music, the music echoing in and resonating from the Virgin’s womb that fills the female body with gaudium, the joys, delights, and pleasures of devotion.[[474]](#footnote-475)

Holsinger argues a connection between voice and sexuality; Hildegard’s music was an expression of spirituality which centered on the human body and female homosocial and homoerotic desire:

Hildegard gave flesh to the voice and voice to the flesh not for aesthetic gratification but for the affirmation of femininity and the sonorous expression of body, sexuality and devotional desire. [[475]](#footnote-476)

Epstein concurs that it is not possible to look at Hildegard’s reconstructions of her visions, to read her words or listen to her music and ignore the erotic undertow. She argues that Hildegard’s music “contains seeds for a contemporary theology of music that enunciates music as an embodied practice and as an engagement of human sexuality”.[[476]](#footnote-477)

The demanding nature of Hildegard’s chant would have made its performance absorbing. In an enclosed, all female community, participation in this song must have made for intense spiritual and physical experience. This seems far from my study of congregational song, which is barely acknowledged as physical, let alone sexual. The task of enabling singers to become conscious of their bodies, and acknowledge the physical nature of song appears to be an enormous task after centuries of body-negativism. Ideas of eroticism and desire as facets of congregational song seem to be beyond reach, although a friend who attended worship in an evangelical mega-church described the music as “auto-erotic”. For most small churches, rediscovering the joys of song, and learning to see song as embodied practice and ourselves as instruments in God’s orchestra, are more attainable. What Hildegard’s theology of song discloses is the intensely bodily nature of song; it is something which can involve our entire bodily nature. It is interesting that my interviewees faced the bodily nature of song only when their bodies let them down in some way: inability to reach high notes or running out of breath. It seems that the acknowledgement of positive bodily experiences during song is still proscribed. The person who felt he couldn’t sing tacitly recognised that participation in song positively:

I think I’m a handicapped person you see, because I haven’t got a good voice. (John:252)

A further aspect of Hildegard’s music theology, relevant to the development of a practical theology of congregational song, is her naming of song’s absence as demonic: the devil can only speak. In her musical play “Ordo Virtuum” Satan is the only character who does not sing,[[477]](#footnote-478) evidence of her belief that the silencing of song was evil. Her point was not that those who felt they couldn’t sing were evil: rather, this lay with those who imposed the silence. The idea of song’s absence as demonic speaks powerfully at a time when congregational song is under threat, and reminds us of the damage caused to those who have been told that they should not sing. It echoes Wren’s assertion that the question is not “do you have a voice” but do you have a song?”[[478]](#footnote-479) To forbid people to sing, or to silence congregational song by drowning its sound, is profoundly wrong.

Hildegard’s theology brings another significant idea into the development of a practical theology of congregational song; Jesus as the Song of God. Found earlier in the work of Clement of Alexandria,[[479]](#footnote-480) this idea is echoed in Hildegard in her songs to Mary who embodied the redemptive Song of God. She has Mary sing:

O Son beloved

whom I bore in my womb

by the might of the circling wheel of the holy

God who created me

and formed my whole frame

and set in my womb

all manner of music

in all blossoms of melody...[[480]](#footnote-481)

Epstein finds here a new musical Christology; “Jesus, the incarnate Song of God, celebrates and redeems human embodiment ... in Christ’s body, the player, the instrument, and its music become one.”[[481]](#footnote-482)

Epstein ties the idea of Jesus as the Song of God to the Song of Mary, the Magnificat, noting that scripture does not stipulate song (there is no verb at this point in the text) but that music’s powers have irrevocably shaped our reception of Mary’s words. “Christians making music imitates Mary by embracing the living Song of God.”[[482]](#footnote-483) In Epstein’s theology, collective memory allows participation in Christ, who is the Son/g of God. In song we remember Christ, we sing of and to Christ, and we participate in Christ in our song. Those who sing are instruments through which the spirit of God creates music. [[483]](#footnote-484) I feel this image would be of great encouragement to the singers I interviewed: in song, you are a musical instrument played by God.

Epstein goes on to draw on Julia Kristeva in developing the idea of the Abject in music. The Abject is that which is radically excluded (from the body), negatively mirroring the subject thus allowing the construction of meaning arising from the connection between the Subject and the Abject. In terms of the “flesh”, for example, this is demonstrated by flesh being both the cause of sin and the source of salvation.[[484]](#footnote-485) In developing her feminist theology of music, Epstein uses Sister Rosetta Tharpe and Diamanda Galas as examples of women musicians who have become Abject, and who are, therefore, sources of musical redemption.[[485]](#footnote-486) To these I add the song of lament: lament, barely surviving has the potential to be a place of redemption for bodily song. The song of the people itself, overlooked and dismissed, is also a place of redemption; a place where the bodily struggles of singers joined together in praise can be acknowledged and affirmed. Finally, the voices of those who have been told to be quiet become the most important of all: once included these voices become living models of the church’s commitment to inclusivity and welcome.

Drawing together Hildegard’s theology of Jesus as the incarnate Son/g of God and Epstein’s theology of Abjection brings us to the ultimate “outside place”, the place of complete Abjection which is the cross. Here we find the crucified Son/g of God silenced; the place of unthinkable bodily degradation and humiliation is the place where the Son/g fades and dies. The one with no song seems to have triumphed.[[486]](#footnote-487) In the Crucified Son/g all humankind is redeemed and shown to be worthy of God's love. The body/soul, words/music binaries are brought to resolution.[[487]](#footnote-488) Hildegard's theology, containing the seeds of a theology of music as embodied practice, begins to spring to life. For Hildegard, the human body was the ultimate musical instrument; humans were designed to sing. Song becomes a sign of life itself as the Son/g conquers death itself.[[488]](#footnote-489)

The idea of the song of the people as Abject sits well with Liberation Theology. The liberation of the song of the people is made possible because the course of history has been changed through Jesus' intervention and can thus be changed by our intervention. Liberation Theology brings a strong praxis based approach; the case for the liberation of the song of the people has to begin with the real song of real people. This is why the interviews of Chapter Three were essential. Practical issues such as playing congregational music at a manageable pitch and enabling the congregation to sing by giving them the opportunity to learn the tune become matters of great importance. In this context, the anxiety of the congregation about learning to use new songs is a sign of a church which is alive and ready to face the future. That which has been ignored, overlooked and undervalued will be shown to be of enormous significance to the church in whose hands the Ordinary Song of its people has been so overlooked. I now turn to Francis who offers further material for the building of a positive body theology.

Francis describes the lungs and their role in breathing. His is not a scholarly text, but I have selected it because of the sense of wonder with which it describes the human body - wonder which has been lost in Christian theology. He describes listening to the sounds of the lungs, the absence of this sound being one of the indicators of death. With a stethoscope, the flow of air across the lungs sounds like the rustle of leaves in a light breeze.[[489]](#footnote-490) Lungs are the least dense bodily organ, composed almost entirely of air. In the traditional medicine of several cultures, air carried invisible spirits.[[490]](#footnote-491) Thus, from the lungs, our bodies are bathed in spirit, and become the interface between the spiritual and physical worlds. The tissue of the lungs is extremely thin and delicate, the membranes are arranged to maximise exposure to air. Stretched flat, the lungs would occupy over one thousand square feet.[[491]](#footnote-492)

When doctors listen to the breath, that’s what they want to hear; and openness connecting breath to the sky – lightness and the free motion of air.[[492]](#footnote-493)

Later, Francis writes of the different feelings of breath entering and leaving the body through the mouth or nose; dry, moist, warm or cool. He describes the Renaissance belief that the soul is attached to the body at the lips - the place where the breath of life enters and leaves the body.[[493]](#footnote-494)

The wonders of song, of our lungs, of the breath which signifies life, need to be recaptured and celebrated in theology as praxis and as formal thought. Francis notes almost forgotten theologies of breathing, which connect breath with spirit. Above all, breath is life. Breathing is clearly essential for song. Trained singers learn how to breathe well, breathing in from the diaphragm and out without wasting breath. They become aware of their breathing, learning how to sing long phrases in a single breath, how to inhale quietly and quickly, and when best to breathe. Song and breath, then, are closely linked. Song demands more of the breathing process than simple speech, and makes singers aware of breath, negatively (“not enough puff”) or positively (“how can I use my breath to sing this phrase well”?) Breathing, as well as being a sign of life, links the body with the outer world in the constant inhaling and exhaling process. It is a place where two worlds meet, or even merge, but which goes unnoticed most of the time. Significantly, theology has most to say when breathing stops and physical life ends.

A theology of song needs to celebrate breath, breathing and lungs as miracles of life, meeting places of inner and outer life: body and spirit, human life and the planet which gives us air to breathe. Breath is also a meeting space between humanity and the divine Spirit, who was breathed into us at the beginning to give life.[[494]](#footnote-495) Breathing is in-spired, God-given life. The use of the breath in song brings the singer to a place of meeting; a meeting between the self and the outer world; a meeting between self and the divine, between body and spirit. When this is recognised, song becomes a precious, sanctified and unitive activity. Here, in the study of the Abject Body, we find the sacred nature of song.

(Here, the thinking, writing, reading need to stop for a few seconds in order to experience to wonder of breath, the miracle of bodily life.)

In this section on Body, there has been a contrast between looking at body with wonder, as exemplified by Francis, and the pejorative imagery described by Epstein. Hildegard’s theology echoes that of Francis, naming song as a physical, even erotic, activity. The image of Jesus as the Song of God offers a powerful metaphor of the sacred nature of song, and leads us to the place of Abjection where the Song is silenced. The silencing of song is seen as demonic, but abject song is also the place of redemption. That which has been disparaged and ignored becomes the place of resurrection: the song of the people.

## Conclusion

This chapter has set out a number of key themes arising from my chosen texts.

The theme of Memory, arising from my interview data has been shown to be a rich area in its own right, but one which encompasses the theme of Community, and which has links to the themes of Praise and Lament. Through “anamnesis”, memory is shown to be dynamic, relating past, present and future to each other. Eucharistic anamnesis links song to the Last Supper and the memory early Christians memories of Jesus breaking bread. The strong links between song and memory, suggest that this remembering must include the memory of the song of Jesus himself.

Memory has been shown to be essential in the building of communities. The collective memory is maintained by the church’s ritual and liturgy and memory-laden song is important in this process. Individual memories are held within the collective memory, making community vital for the processing of personal memories. Without community, personal memory has no context. Maintaining the “chains of memory”, then, becomes an important task of the community. Memory-laden song is central here and could be seen at work in my data as memories of loved ones, unknown composers and writers were all remembered in the present.

Community is also shown to be a dynamic force which recalls its roots and imagines a better future as its members gather in the present. This outward looking and future oriented community was a common theme in my examination of theologies of community. Finally, community is the place of future oriented praise.

My consideration of Praise and Lament demonstrated that these two opposites belong together, deriving from the lament psalms which move from lament to praise. From an understanding of the Eucharist as praise, the significance of the lament’s demise was considered; its absence leads to both an absence of questioning and to rootless, trivial praise. Although lament is returning to the liturgical agenda, it has not yet made significant inroads into Sunday worship and hymnody. My data, however, demonstrated that it is still there, in an unseen, privatised form, through the medium of song. There is a long way to go, however, before this privatised lament can be given full voice by communities of worshippers. Brueggemann and Ramshaw both suggest than lament’s presence will deepen and strengthen praise.

The themes of the body/soul binary and of the use of music’s description in terms of pejorative female imagery underline the need for a theology of congregational song which encompasses a positive body theology. The idea of the body as a musical instrument of praise is significant, as is that of Jesus as the musical expression or Song of God. There is the need to recover a sense of wonder at the body. Francis’ description of the lungs and the breath suggests the language we need to borrow.[[495]](#footnote-496) Song’s absence has sinister implications – “only the devil has no song”. With this theology the silencing of congregations (sometimes by choirs or music groups, or by new liturgical ideas in which song plays no part) and of individuals (“you have a terrible voice”) become inadmissible. The theological concept of Abjection suggests that the overlooked, ignored and undervalued song of the people, together with the silence of those who have been told to be quiet, are the places of redemption. In the place of ultimate Abjection the Son and the Song perished together. In the gift of new life the Son and the Song, the body and the spirit are unities rather than dualities. The bodily gift of song needs to be celebrated and set free from negative body language. In particular, the Son/g growing in Mary’s womb suggests that the liberation of women’s bodies from the shackles of negative body theology can be a place where the song of the people finds new life.

# CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusion and Summary

This chapter summarises and concludes my research which has been a critical theological study of congregational song in the practice of a congregation, and in the theology of the church. Reflecting my theological roots in Liberation Theology, this thesis has set the praxis of a congregation at the heart of my study, and has chosen methodologies and methods which have ensured that their voice is heard. I have also pieced together the story of song from its roots in the Hebrew Scriptures to today, demonstrating that congregational song is often vulnerable, and currently exists precariously. Nevertheless, this song is important to those who sing and would be a great loss to the church if it fell silent. Later in this chapter I will summarise my work. First, however, I offer a reflection on my thesis.

## Reflection

This study of congregational song has been unusual for a number of reasons; it has focussed on the music of hymns rather than the words; it has focussed on the song of the people rather than on choral music; it has used methodologies which put the experiences of members of a congregation at its heart; it took an ethnographic approach focussing on the practice of singing rather than on written music. I believe these approaches have brought new ideas to light. These are at the heart of the resulting material, used to propose a practical theology of congregational song.

The congregational study at the heart of this thesis was difficult to achieve because I am a Church of England Vicar and am therefore busy on Sundays. In my particular context it, is not easy finding others to cover services. Ideally the congregational study could have been larger scale, both in terms of services attended and observed, and in the number of people interviewed. A double family bereavement after my first two visits left a gap of several months before interviews took place. I lost several volunteers in this gap. Despite this, the participant observation and interviews produced good data which uncovered aspects of congregational song which would otherwise have remained hidden.

In the interests of simplicity, and because of my limited availability, I decided to study one Church of England congregation. Further, comparative study would expand areas covered by this study and bring fresh insights. This could involve different denominations and differing worship styles. For instance, how does Memory work in churches with no theology of anamnesis? A study of congregational song in different sizes of congregation would bring useful insights: at what point does the size (large or small) of a congregation impact on the effectiveness of song in terms of gathering memories and building community? My thinking about Lament would, undoubtedly, have been different in churches with roots in African culture where sorrow and anguish are more openly expressed. Churches with large choirs would bring their own insights, particularly about the potential of participation by listening.

The theological conversation of Chapter Four could have been several times longer than space allowed: all my conversation partners could have been studied alone to write theologies of congregational song. The approach taken in this study has meant that I have been occupied in opening up wide areas of study. It is encouraging to know that a practical theology of congregational song is one that could be expanded by others.

As I have read and reread the material from the interviews, I have become aware of the honesty and integrity of the interviewees. They shared pain, personal experiences of faith and doubt, and demonstrated their concern that the future church should be able to continue their song. I found this a hopeful experience: the song of the people is treasured by those who sing, and they are eager for others to join the song.

## A Summary of my Findings

### Congregational Song has been Part of the Church’s Life from the Earliest Times

The story of the song of the people has its roots in the song of the Old Testament; in domestic rituals, on national occasions and in the music of the Temple. Importantly, Jesus himself sang with his disciples at the Last Supper. The shared meals of the table ministry of the Early Church would have stirred memories of this song, and prompted participants to sing themselves. This singing would, in turn, have awakened memories of the Last Supper and kept these memories alive. This song would have been an important part of the anamnesis of the Early Church, and continues today in the Eucharist, made dynamic by the people's song. By this song-held remembering, we are connected with Jesus himself.

### The Song of the People is Easily Overlooked

Congregational Song is easily overlooked and forgotten, partly because of its ephemeral nature. It also tends to fall through theological gaps: theologies of church music often focus on the choir, and theologies of hymns often focus on the words. My study has demonstrated the importance of singing to congregational members, and the significance of their song for the practice of the church. This song is already a way of doing theology but its engagement in a hermeneutical conversation with academic theology may enable it to take its rightful place in, and to challenge (and be challenged by), academic theology.

### The Song of the People is Easily Silenced

Congregational song has been the victim of a suspicion about music, rooted in theological distrust of the body. It has, therefore, sometimes been silenced. As soon as opportunity allows, it re-emerges – an expression of its importance to congregations. It is easy to imagine people singing, silently, to themselves, or quietly behind closed doors, keeping the song alive. Today, congregational song could be killed off by popular soloistic musical styles, or electronic discouragement.[[496]](#footnote-497) It can be silenced by the volume of the accompaniment - organ or amplified music group, as well as by wrongly set pitch. Electronic projection of words can leave people “lost”, not knowing their whereabouts in their song. The repertoire of assembly songs in schools is departing from that of the church, leaving a gap which may be hard to negotiate in the future. Dispersed, fluid communities give song no place to take root.[[497]](#footnote-498) New hymns, badly taught, can easily silence a congregation.[[498]](#footnote-499) The selection of little-known hymns at services where large numbers of non-regular worshippers are expected can also render the congregation silent. Some contemporary styles of worship have no place for song at all. Congregations are anxious about the future of the hymns that hold precious memories for them, and ask “who will sing after us, and what will they sing? Who will keep the song alive?” Church musicians of disparate traditions need to be made aware of the effects of their actions on the song of the people –this is a task for those who oversee worship and teach best practice.

Within the silencing of communal song lies the silencing of individual singers. Usually this process begins in schooldays, but its effects are long lasting. My research found that some are still being asked to be quiet. All need to be welcomed to participate in the song of the people, and this needs to be made clear. “Dad’s embarrassing voice” needs to be celebrated, perhaps smiled at, but never silenced. Bookmarks for hymnbooks making this clear would be a simple way of conveying this.

The silence imposed by the hierarchy on her community’s song, gave Hildegard of Bingen cause to reflect on song’s absence. Kristeva’s theology of abjection suggests that those whose voices have been scorned and despised, are the most precious, and the place in which salvation is born. Their inclusion in what we might call God’s orchestra, the song of God’s people, is testament to the inclusivity of both the congregation and of God’s love. There is no voice despised by God because of its sound, although there may be voices which bring despair because of the words they utter. Once more, we can see that music has a significance of its own, apart from words.

As noted above, the song of the people as a whole is also easily silenced. Abjection suggests that song is the place where new life and hope are located. Congregational song needs to be noticed and respected as something which has an honourable tradition, a rich present and a future of hope - so long as it is allowed to flourish and develop.

### Congregational Song is Memory-Laden.

My research has shown that congregational song is memory-laden: even *talking* about song evoked strong memories. Congregational song has been valued in the past because it enables the memorisation of words. Links between song and memory are, however, much wider than this: song has been shown to be overflowing with memories of people and events. The song of the people is dynamic, bringing past and future into a richly interwoven present:[[499]](#footnote-500) memories of childhood, schooldays, deceased loved ones and family and community events, were all evoked by song, as well as anxieties about song’s future. Singers also pondered those who had composed the words and music of hymns. In this sense, congregational song brought an awareness of the Communion of Saints – the total number of people remembered during the singing of a hymn must have been considerable. These links enabled a sense of belonging to a church which was much wider than those gathered at a particular time and place. There is an echo of Davie’s Vicarious Memory: those who regularly attend worship hold the collective memory for those who “believe but not belong”.[[500]](#footnote-501)

### Song is an Important Aspect of Anamnesis

As noted, above, the song of the people was an important way of remembering Jesus’ own song, as the first Christians gathered around tables to share food in his memory. I argue that we sing now because Jesus sang then. The chains of memory, enabling Christ’s presence, are partly chains of song. This is particularly important for the congregations because their song is the primary communal participation of the people of God in the liturgy which remembers Christ and enables his presence; anamnesis. This needs to be more widely understood and celebrated.

### Congregational Song is a Place of Turmoil

Memories evoked by song lead to questions about its continuation and enabling others to participate. These questions were about new versus traditional hymns, adults’ versus children’s hymns and songs, and about what is sung now versus what will be sung in the future. Behind this series of binaries lies a deep sense of anxiety about what should be sung. This anxiety suggests song’s centrality to the life of the church: the future of song was close to the future of the church and of faith itself. For example:

Well it is praising God. I think that the more we all sing together and praise together, the better it is. There is not much else to say. (Mary:35)

Singing brings you back – it keeps you there. (Andrew/Alison:481)

The story of congregational song in Chapter One was shown to be one of constant evolution and change. Begbie’s idea of a musical interwoven present[[501]](#footnote-502) is full of tension and resolution “internal” to the music as notes and phrases arise and die away. The song of the people evidenced an “external” form this pattern, relating to the evolution of hymnody. Here, old favourites are put to rest, sometimes with regret, and new songs are learned. This causes anxiety: a restlessness which arises from concern about the future of song and of faith itself. In the church I studied there was a good mix of old and new and a willingness to learn new things in order to accommodate children and newcomers. The congregation’s interwoven and anxious musical present is the place where song is kept alive, and where the collective memory is “stretched” to fit its new context.

This interwoven present can value the old as well as seek the new, partly because it holds the Vicarious Memory for a wider group than those present. The idea that new-comers would necessarily be attracted by an entirely new repertoire appears mistaken. There is value in cherishing the old, and room for the challenge of the new, lest faith become over-sentimental. This underlines the importance of teaching new songs well, in order to enable participation

### The Intense Meaning of Song is Hidden

Song lives in an intensely interwoven present, holding many memories and with an anxiety about the future which came to light in conversations *about* singing. However this was not made evident by song itself. It is important to understand that the meaning of song is not necessarily reflected in its volume: a great deal is held in gentle, apparently unemotional, singing. Even in hearty song, its meaning could still be hidden. It could be that the song is quiet precisely because it is so intensely reflective. Alternatively, negative body theology could be restraining a more overtly meaningful song. Whichever is true, song holds a deeper inner meaning than its outer sound evidences. Its value is hidden. Unless this is understood by those who lead worship, its significance is likely to be overlooked and song itself put at risk.

### Song Builds and Maintains Community

Song’s effect on memory enables the building and maintenance of community, including that of the church. Through sharing, observation, teaching, shared rituals and repetition, individual memories are taken into the collective memory. This process changes both: individual memories are given meaning, and interpretation is facilitated: the collective memory is changed to encompass, and enable, interpretation of the present. The song of the people plays a vital role in this liturgical meaning-making and change.[[502]](#footnote-503) Their shared song brings congregation together, “face to face”,[[503]](#footnote-504) sharing memories and hopes together in God’s presence. The dynamic, interwoven present of song is an “inclusive, uncrowded space of song:”[[504]](#footnote-505)

Well it is praising God. I think that the more we all sing together and praise together, the better it is. There is not much else to say.

Singing old hymns is part of the stabilising (cold) memory[[505]](#footnote-506) giving congregations their identity, binding them together, enabling survival and restoring vision.[[506]](#footnote-507) Song’s role in telling the stories of the corporate memory is important:[[507]](#footnote-508) the seasonal songs of Easter, Harvest and Christmas are still significant though their words may seem outmoded.

The song of the people exists in a place of anxiety about inclusivity and change. This anxiety makes the community boundaries permeable, letting others in: it is part of the “hot” memory which enables change.[[508]](#footnote-509)The extent to which members are aware of these concerns in other members is not clear, but my interviews revealed that their song brought both stability and instability, a love of today’s songs, and worries about tomorrow’s.[[509]](#footnote-510) The role of congregational song in the mission and outreach of the church is an area which could be studied in more depth.

### Congregational Song Holds both Praise and Lament

The song of the people as an expression of praise is commonly understood:

Well it is praising God. I think that the more we all sing together and praise together, the better it is. There is not much else to say. (Mary:35)

This hymn of praise is enabled by song’s memory-laden nature, and by the community which holds, and is held by, the song. The interwoven present of song is a place of thanksgiving and hope, through personal and shared memories. As well as this obvious sense of praise, my research uncovered a well-hidden continuance of lament. This has survived, despite the dearth of hymns and songs of lament, in hymns which carry memories of loss. This is something to be brought to people’s awareness and treasured.

Even favourite hymns can become laments. This can be seen in national remembrance services - “O Little Town of Bethlehem” at an anniversary service for the Lockerbie air disaster, for instance. Here a Christmas carol creates a dissonance between the happiness of Christmas and the grief of those who lost loved ones at Christmastime. Lament can also be carried by music alone in melodies which can bring people to tears quite separately from the words: this was evidenced by the interviewee who was brought to tears by “Finlandia”. McGilchrist argues that this is because of music’s ability to carry emotion directly, rather than simply representing it. It is also known that sounds preceded words as a means of the expression of emotion.[[510]](#footnote-511)

There are two problems with this “hidden lament”. First, in failing to follow the biblical pattern of lament to praise, or despair to hope, it is possible that there is no resolution to grief. (Resolution *may* brought typologically by the service in which the hymn is situated, but this is not clear from my data).[[511]](#footnote-512) Secondly, the context of horror in which lament was rediscovered is still apparent in the world, but there are few hymns which enable whole congregations to express hopelessness, direct anger at a God whose name is (supposed to be) Love, or to ask “why?” There is a need for congregations to lament together. These much needed laments need melodies as well as words: both wordsmiths and composers have roles to play here, as do those who set the direction and tone of worship nationally and locally.

The expression of lament gives hope its context; thus our current communal praise is in danger of becoming empty[[512]](#footnote-513) Lament also challenges faith, causing congregations to reflect on the nature of God, and to hold God to account.[[513]](#footnote-514) The known role of song in empowering communities and holding them together in times of trouble, suggests that “a good loud lament”[[514]](#footnote-515) would further strengthen congregations and enable them to become more humane and active “face to face” communities of praise. The amateur musician’s use of the right brain could strengthen the effect of songs of lament in congregations.[[515]](#footnote-516) The hardness of heart which seems, so often, to be the response of western nations to the pain of others suggests that the enabling of open, collective lament is urgent.

### Song is a Bodily Activity and a Means of Doing Body Theology

Those interviewed for this study demonstrated that the bodily nature of song was not recognised: it was acknowledged only in terms of struggle and frailty. The person who seemed most aware of his body was the one who felt he couldn’t sing:

I think I’m a handicapped person you see, because I haven’t got a good voice (John:252)

Epstein has shown that music and negative body theology have gone been bedfellows for hundreds of years. This negativity has been associated largely with the female body, itself labelled as sinful, weak, dangerous and to be despised.[[516]](#footnote-517) Yet there are possibilities for positive links between body and song within the Christian tradition. Hildegard of Bingen offers a positive theology of body and music. She saw humans as musical instruments, played by God, to produce beautiful music.[[517]](#footnote-518) Jesus, the new Adam, set in Mary’s womb as she sang, was seen as both the Son and the Song of God. In the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, music is redeemed, along with humankind.

Singers need to be allowed to rejoice in their bodies, and to experience the bodily demands and delights of song. In turn, song is a place where positive body theology can be learned and expressed. Congregations need to be taught how to breathe deeply, to appreciate the miracle of the lungs which enable breath, that breath sustains our bodily life, and that this is a matter for rejoicing. In song, body and spirit (breath) are noticeably one, as are the body and the “outer world” into which song goes forth. In the unity of song, in which all are enabled to participate, there is a physical union with those gathered to sing together. The body denial and negativity of my interviewees suggests that learning about the “doing of body theology” in song, is important and urgent. A start could be made at days about church music, such as the one where I found the congregation I studied. Professional church musicians have a role in enabling congregations to recognise the bodily value of their song.

### The Church Community is Defined by its Song

There were suggestions by my interviews that song is “who we are and what we do”:

Well it is praising God. I think that the more we all sing together and praise together, the better it is. There is not much else to say. (Mary:35)

Singing brings you back – it keeps you there. (Andrew/Alison:481)

As a cleric, I found this surprising. As a result of my research and reflecting upon the voices of a congregation I now appreciate that song is the main means of congregational participation in the liturgy. In turn, this participation in song is a means of participating in the process of anamnesis making Christ real in the present and enabling living links with the past and the future. I hope my study will enable others to understand the central importance of the song of the people in the church.

### Conclusion

This study has argues that the song of the people is something to be treasured and valued after the neglect it has suffered for so long. This way of doing theology has riches to offer the wider theology of the church, and recent developments in Body Theology offer ways in which the song of the people can, itself, be enriched. It is my hope that this study will enable further study in the field of congregational song.

# Appendix 1: Flyer

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **HELP NEEDED!** | |
| WHO AM I?  My name is Anne Morris .I am a Vicar in the Deanery of Blackburn with Darwen in the Blackburn Diocese. A long time ago I was a violin teacher. I am a keen amateur singer. | WHAT I NEED HELP WITH  I am studying for a Professional Doctorate (D.Prof) in practical theology at the University of Chester. I am looking at congregational singing; hymns and songs. I am looking for a church to help me with my research. Specifically I am looking for a church where the congregation enjoys singing, and where there is no large choir or music group. Could this be your church? |
| WHAT’S INVOLVED?  I aim to conduct one to one interviews with 5-10 people. Each interview will last 30-45 minutes. I would also like to join the congregation for a few services as a participant-observer. After a period of reflection on the data gathered I would like to return to the church to offer feedback and listen to responses. | WHAT’S IN IT FOR YOU?  There is no financial incentive! The main incentive is to chance to be involved in cutting-edge research. It is my hope that my work will make a contribution towards future debate on music in worship, will enable the church to consider the importance of congregational song and how it can be enabled and developed. |
| INTERESTED?  Please contact me at rev\_anne\_morris@gn.apc.org, or leave a message on my voicemail at 01254698321. | |

# APPENDIX 2: Invitation to Participate Letter

Dear X,

This letter is an invitation to ask you to consider taking part in a research project which I am conducting as part of a Doctorate in Practical Theology at the University of Chester. The area I am studying is that of congregational song - the experiences of members of the congregation as they sing hymns and songs during worship.

I am a parish priest in the Diocese of Blackburn. I have a BA (Hons) and an MA in theology, both from the University of Manchester.

I am hoping to recruit 5-10 people from one church who are each prepared to spend an hour with me talking about their experiences of singing in church - good and bad. These interviews will be transcribed and then analysed in order to find common issues/ideas upon which I will reflect in my thesis.

As well as these interviews I hope to attend the selected church for several services in order to observe the role of the singing of the congregation in relation to the rest of the liturgy and to the church (gathered people).

With the permission of the Vicar and PCC I will offer feedback and an account of my findings either during a service or at a separate meeting, and enable the interviewees and others at the church to reflect on what I have found, and to offer their opinions.

Confidentiality will be observed in the following ways:

Neither the participants nor the church will be named in the thesis.

I will not allow anyone to become recognisable in my writing or feedback.

I will not be able to ensure the anonymity of participants within the selected church. The Vicar and PCC will know the identity of the participants, and it is likely that any interviewee will get to know who the other interviewees are.

Although there is no individual incentive to take part, it is hoped that the thesis will be publicised in a way which will enable a better understanding of the importance of congregational singing, and that church members will be encouraged and their song enabled.

I would be delighted to hear from you if you would like to take part in this research. Please contact me by e-mail at annemorris@gn.apc.org, or by leaving a message on my voicemail at 01254698321

Sincerely yours,

Anne Morris

# APPENDIX 3: Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

**What is the purpose of the study?**

Although church is one of the few places where singing is a commonplace activity, there is little written about the positive contribution of congregational singing to the life of the church. Yet modern scholarship has demonstrated that singing is a beneficial activity in all sorts of ways. The aim of my study is to bring these two things together in order to develop a new practical theology of congregational singing. Hopefully this will encourage debate about and continuing practice of congregational singing.

**Why have I been chosen?**

You are part a church where the singing of the congregation was not dominated by a big choir or music group, and where it was felt that there was a general enjoyment of singing.

**Do I have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part, will not affect the standard of care you receive in any way.

**What will happen to me if I take part?**

If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and asked to sign the consent form. This will give your consent for me to interview you about your experiences of and feelings about singing in church worship. There will be 5-9 other church members taking part in interviews. Each interview will last 30-45 minutes. The interviews will be audio recorded and then transcribed to paper.

In addition to these interviews I aim to attend worship at your church on four occasions and watch/listen to what is happening when people are singing.

When I have finished analysing and reflecting upon the interviews observations, I will return to church to give feedback. No-one will be identifiable in the feedback or the final report.

**What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

There are no disadvantages or risks foreseen in taking part in the study.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

You may welcome this opportunity to talk about your experiences of singing during worship. I hope my reflections may help your church, as a whole to reflect upon singing during worship.

**What if something goes wrong?**

If you wish to complain or have any concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please contact:

*Dean of Faculty*

*Professor Rob Warner*

*Department of Theology and Religious Studies,*

*University of Chester*

*Chester CH1 4BJ*

*Tel. 01244 511980*

If you are harmed by taking part in this research project, there are no special compensation arrangements. If you are harmed due to someone’s negligence (but not otherwise), then you may have grounds for legal action, but you may have to pay for this.

**Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?**

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential so that only the researcher carrying out the research will have access to such information.

**What will happen to the results of the research study?**

The results will be written up in my thesis. It is hoped that the findings will stimulate debate about singing in worship.

**Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research is being conducted as part of a Professional Doctorate in Theology at the University of Chester. Bursaries have been received from St. Luke’s College Foundation, Ecclesiastical Insurance and the Women’s CME Bursary Fund.

**Who may I contact for further information?**

If you would like more information about the research before you decide whether or not

*Rev Anne Morris, Tel 01254 698321 or rev\_anne\_morris@gn.apc.org*

**Thank you for your interest in this research**

**Title of Project:**

A Practical Theology of Congregational Song: Developing a Wholesome “Song of the People”.

**Name of Researcher:**

Rev. Anne Morris

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the

participant information sheet, dated ………….,

for the above study and have had the opportunity

to ask questions.

1. I understand that my participation is voluntary

and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without

giving any reason and without my care or legal rights

being affected.

1. I agree to take part in the above study.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Participant Date Signature

Name of Person taking consent Date Signature

(if different from researcher)

Researcher Date Signature

# APPENDIX 4: Interview Questions

1) I would like you to choose some words which describe your experiences of singing in Church

2) Do you think singing affects your faith in any way?

3) Why do you think we sing rather than say – what does singing have that saying just does not have, do you think?

4) I want you to think out loud about things which can affect the singing in Church. What makes it good, what makes it better, what makes it worse, what makes it easy for you and what makes it difficult?

5) Do you sing anywhere else, apart from in Church?

6) When you sing, do you experience it as a spiritual thing, or an emotional thing or a combination?

7) Is there anything else you would like to say about singing?

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107 Paul Westermeyer, 'The Future of Congregational Song', *The Hymn,* 46 (1995), 4-9.

108 ———, *Te Deum: The Church and Music* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998).

109 Rowan Williams, *The Edge of Words: God and the Habits of Language,* (London: Continuum, 2014).

110 Brian A. Wren, *Praying Twice: The Music and Words of Congregational Song,* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminister John Knox Press, 2000).

1. Zwingli, for instance banned singing in Geneva for almost fifty years. Oliver Cromwell banned the singing of Christmas Carols. See Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe’s House Divided, 1490-1700,* (London: Penguin, 2004), p.146, and Paul Westermeyer, *Te Deum: the Church and Music*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), p.170. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Edward Foley, Foundations of Christian Music: the Music of Pre-Constantinian Christianity, (Nottingham: Grove Books, 1992), ch.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Foley, p.21. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Foley, p.25. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Joachim Braun, “Music, Musical Instruments”, in Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible, ed. David Noel Freedman, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000), pp.927-930. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. See, for example, Peter T. Daniels, “[The Music of the Bible Revealed: The Deciphering of a Millenary Notation”](http://www.jstor.org.voyager.chester.ac.uk/stable/603095) *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 112:3 (1992), p.499. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. John R. Kohlenberger III “sing”, “singer/s”, “song/s”, in *The Concise Concordance to the New Revised Standard Version*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press , 1993). No page numbers. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Numbers 21:17-18. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship,* Vol.2, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2004), p.83. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Exodus 15:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Exodus 15:20-21 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. I Samuel 29:5 (Italics mine) [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Ezra 3:10-11 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Numbers 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. Lucetta Mowry, “Music and Musical Instruments” in *The Oxford Dictionary of Ideas and Issues in the Bible*, ed. Bruce Metzger and Michael Doogan, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) pp.363-366. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Foley, p.32. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. Foley, p.33. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. There is, for instance, no entry for “Lament” in *The New SCM Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, ed. Paul Bradshaw, (London: SCM, 2002). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship,* Vol.1. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2004), pp.193 and Mowinckel, Vol.2, p.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. Psalms 12, 14, 44, 58, 60, 74, 79, 80, 89, and 144. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Mowinckel, Vol.2. pp.1-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. Mowinckel, Vol.1, p.195. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. Gwendoline Mary Knight, “Frameworks, Cries and Imagery in Lamentations 1-5: Working towards a Cross-cultural Hermeneutic” (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Liverpool, 2011), p.9. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. Knight, p.12. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. Mowinckel, Vol.2, pp.8-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. I will return to Lament later in this thesis; it arises as a theme from my interview findings in Chapter Three, and then as a subject for theological reflection in Chapters Four and Five. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. Mark 14:26 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. Acts 16:25 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. Colossians 3:16, Ephesians 5:19-20 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. Luke 1:68-79 [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. Luke 2:29-32 [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. 25 Revelation 15:3-4 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. Mowry, p.366. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. Revelation 15:3-4 [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. Revelation 16:5-7 [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. Revelation 19:2-3, 5-8 [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. Mowry, p.366. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
38. Philippians 2:6-11 [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
39. Colossians 1:15-20 [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
40. John 1:1-18 [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
41. Mowry, p.366. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
42. Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy,* (Cambridge: A&C Black, 2015), p.39. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
43. Mowry, p.365. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
44. . A. Smith, “The Ancient Synagogue, the Early Church and Singing”, *Music & Letters, 65:1* (1984), 1-16, (p.2). [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
45. Smith, p.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
46. Smith, p.5. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
47. Mowinckel, Vol.1, p.4. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
48. Smith, p.8. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
49. Foley, p.36. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
50. Smith, p.16. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
51. David M. Freidenreich, “Food and Table Fellowship”, in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament,* ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zwi Brettler, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2011, p.38. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
52. Dix, 2015, p.50. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
53. Ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zwi Brettler, *The Jewish Annotated New Testament,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2011, p.38 (footnote to v.9). [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
54. The modern Seder was developed in the time after the destruction of the Temple in CE 70: Solomon warns that it is “absurd” to imagine that Jesus’ Last Supper a Seder in the current style. See Norman Solomon, “Seder”, in *Historical Dictionary of Judaism*, ed. Norman Solomon, (Blue Ridge Summit, PA, USA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), p.408. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
55. Foley, p.51. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
56. Dix, p. 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
57. Foley, p.51. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
58. See pp.11-12 of my Literature Review, for example. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
59. Mark 14:26 [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
60. 61 Norman Solomon, “Music and Worship”, in *Historical Dictionary of Judaism*, p.328. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
61. Foley, pp.53-54. cf. Ephesians 5:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
62. David W. Music, *Hymnology: a Collection of Source Readings,* (London: The Scarecrow Press, 1996), p.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
63. Hengel, Martin, *Studies in Early Christology,* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), p.266. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
64. 1 Corinthians 14:26-27 [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
65. William Flynn, “Liturgical Music”, in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship,* ed. G. Wainwright and K.B. Westerfield Tucker, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 769-792, p.770. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
66. “Eusibius” in *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church,* ed. F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)pp.565-575, (p.575). [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
67. Foley, p.56. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
68. Foley, p.59. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
69. Foley, p.64. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
70. Foley, p.65. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
71. Foley, p.68. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
72. 313 CE. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
73. Paul. F. Bradshaw, *Reconstructing Early Christian Worship,* (London: SPCK,2009), ch.8. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
74. Foley, p.74. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
75. Foley, p.75. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
76. Bradshaw, p.126. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
77. c. CE 150 – c. CE 215. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
78. David Baker and Joan Welsby, *Hymns and Hymn Singing: a Popular Guide*, (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 1993), p.25. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
79. Died c. CE 311. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
80. “Phos Hilaron”, in ed. F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, p.1283. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
81. c. CE 375 - c. CE 413. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
82. CE 340-397. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
83. “Hymns” in ed. Cross and Livingstone*,* pp.809-812, (p.811). [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
84. Flynn, p.770. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
85. “Hymns”, in ed. F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone*,* p.810. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
86. CE 563. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
87. CE 633. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
88. “Hymns”, in ed. Cross and Livingstone*,* p.810. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
89. Bradshaw, pp.125-126. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
90. Flynn, ch.30. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
91. Flynn, p.770. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
92. Flynn, p.770. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
93. Flynn, p.771. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
94. Flynn, p.771. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
95. Flynn, p.772. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
96. CE 354-430. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
97. Henry Chadwick, *Augustine,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.45. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
98. Carol Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in the Thought of St. Augustine*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.30. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
99. Jordan, p.126. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
100. Jordan, p.127. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
101. Chadwick, p.45. The idea of music’s transcendence will be discussed further in Chapter Four. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
102. Heidi Epstein, Melting the Venusberg: a Feminist Theology of Music, (London/New York: Continuum, 2004), p.18. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
103. This was discussed in my initial literature review. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
104. Westermeyer, *Te Deum,* p.128. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
105. Richard Rastell, Music in Early English Religious Drama: The Heaven Singing, (Cambridge: DS Brewer, 1991) and Music in Early English Religious Drama: Minstrels Playing, (Cambridge: DS Brewer, 2001). [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
106. Jeremy Begbie, *Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), p.99. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
107. Diarmaid MacCulloch, p.146. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
108. See Jeremy Begbie, *Resounding Truth*, pp.105-112. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
109. S.T. Kimbrough, “Hymns are Theology”, *Theology Today,* 42:1 (1985) pp. 59-68. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
110. See <http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/.../ec-called-to-love-and-praise240908.doc> p.25 [accessed 09.03.15] [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
111. Kimburgh p.66. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
112. See, for example ed. A. Richardson and J. Bowdon, *A Dictionary of Christian Theology,* (London: SCM, 1983) p.465. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
113. CE 1545-1563, thus still partly within the Reformation era. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
114. Westermeyer, *Te Deum,* p.163. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
115. This subject was covered in more depth in my initial Literature Review. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
116. CE 1369–1415. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
117. Explorations of music in the Reformation can be found in Begbie*, Resounding Truth*, ch. 4 and Westermeyer, *Te Deum,* chs.10-12. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
118. Westermeyer, *Te Deum,* p.167. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
119. Westermeyer, *Te Deum,* p.169. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
120. CE 1505-1585. Tallis lived through the reigns of Henry V11, Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Mary I. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
121. Westermeyer, *Te Deum*, p.170. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
122. Routley, The Music of Christian Hymnody, p.52. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
123. CE 1674 – 1748. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
124. Erik Routley, Hymns and Human Life, (London: Butler and Tanner, 1959), p.63. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
125. Westermeyer, Te Deum, p.205. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
126. This is not to underestimate Watts’ importance, as he introduced both New Testament theology and a wonder for nature into the hymn singing of the church. It does illustrate, however, an area in which care must be taken - that when hymn writers are referred to, it should be made clear whether theirs is a musical or literary contribution. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
127. John Wesley CE 1703 – 1791. Charles Wesley CE 1707 – 1788. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
128. Routley, *Hymns and Human Life*, p.70. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
129. Routley, *Hymns and Human Life*, p.71. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
130. Westermeyer, *Te Deum,* p.213. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
131. Routley, *The Music of Christian Hymnody*, p.95. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
132. Routley, *The Music of Christian Hymnody*, pp.92-93. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
133. Erik Routley, *The Musical Wesleys,* (London: Jenkins, 1968), pp.22-23. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
134. Doreen Rosman, *The Evolution of the English* *Churches* *1500-2000,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.235. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
135. “Under the Greenwood Tree” in *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, ed. Margaret Drabble, 5th edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
136. CE 1779-1823. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
137. Rosman, pp.235-236. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
138. William Henry Monk, Henry Williams Baker and F. A. Gore Ouseley, *Hymns Ancient and Modern,* (London: Novello and Co, 1861). [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
139. CE 1801-1851. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
140. CE 1812-1884. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
141. “Mainzer”, in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17814> and ‘Hullah’, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14112> [ accessed 14.03.15]. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
142. Routley, *The Music of Christian Hymnody,* pp.109-114. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
143. CE 1840 –1908. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
144. CE 1837 –1899. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
145. CE 1818-1895. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
146. CE 1820-1915. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
147. CE1817-1878. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
148. CE 1881-1965. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
149. CE 1836-1879. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
150. CE 1817-1877. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
151. CE 1901-1953. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
152. Born 1957. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
153. Born 1929. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
154. Born 1951. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
155. June Boyce Tillman, *In Tune with Heaven or Not: Women in Christian Liturgical Music,* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
156. CE 1848 –1918. [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
157. CE 1852 – 1924. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
158. CE 1859 –1949. [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
159. CE 1869 –1941. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
160. CE 1872 –1958. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
161. Ralph Vaughan Williams, *The English Hymnal with Tunes*, 1st edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1906). [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
162. Percy Dearmer and others, *Songs of Praise*, 1st edn (S.I.: Oxford University Press, 1925). [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
163. This is the hymn book I remember, with great pleasure, from my junior school days. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
164. CE 1847 –1918. [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
165. CE 1819 –1875. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
166. CE 1844 – 1930. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
167. CE 1867 –1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
168. Routley, *The Music of Christian Hymnody*, pp.137-139. [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
169. CE 1962-1965. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
170. CE 1915-2005. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
171. Born 1949. [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
172. Born 1958. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
173. John Bell and Graham Maule, *Songs of the World Church: Many* *and Great*, (Glasgow: Wild Goose, 1998) and *Songs of the World Church: Sent by the Lord* (Glasgow: Wild Goose, 1991). [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
174. < <http://iona.org.uk/resources/wild-goose-resource-group>> [accessed 29.03.15]. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
175. Roland Fudge, *Mission England Praise*, (UK: Marshall, 1983). [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
176. Peter Horrobin and Greg Leavers, *Mission Praise: Thirtieth Anniversary Edition*, (UK: Collins, 2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
177. <<https://www.missionpraise.com/home>> [accessed 29.03.15]. [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
178. Westermeyer, *Te Deum,* p.313. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
179. Westermeyer, *Te Deum,* pp.313-314. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
180. Westermeyer, *Te Deum,* pp.311-315. [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
181. Those of 1922, 1948 and 1992. [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
182. A Fresh Expression of Church is a new gathering or network that engages mainly with people who have never been to church. There is no single model, but the emphasis is on starting something which is appropriate to its context, rather than cloning something that works elsewhere. In 2015 of these new forms of church now exist in almost every denomination and tradition in the UK. [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
183. “Grace” a Fresh Expression Church in London uses music which is broadcast to individual ‘worshippers’ through headphones, or from CD players scattered around the church, playing sounds from crying babies to shouts and silence. See Steve Collins, “God in your iPod: alternative worship” in *Church Music Quarterly* (June 2007), pp.22-23. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
184. The National Curriculum began in 1998. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
185. For example Fischy Music< <http://www.fischy.com>> [ accessed 29.03.15] [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
186. This was an issue raised by several people in my congregational research. See ch.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
187. Brian Wren, *Praying twice: the Music and Words of Congregational Song* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), p.52. [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
188. <<http://www.lifechurchhome.com/store/music/life-worship.html>> [accessed 29.03.15] [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
189. Westermeyer, *Te Deum,* p.194. [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
190. Westermeyer, *Te Deum,* p.194. [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
191. Westermeyer, *Te Deum,* p.195. [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
192. Wren, pp.58-59. [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
193. Wren, p.61. [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
194. Westermeyer, “3”, *The Hymn 46:1,* (1995), pp. 4-9, (p.7). [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
195. Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening,* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1998). [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
196. Small p.39. [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
197. Small p.40. [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
198. Small, p.42. [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
199. Small, p.45 [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
200. Small, p.48. [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
201. Small p. 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
202. Monique Ingalls, Carolyn Landau and Tom Wagner, Christian *Congregational Music: Performance, Identity and Experience,* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
203. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* [https://selforganizedseminar.files.wordpress.com/.../freire\_pedagogy\_oppresed1.pdf accessed06.06.2015](https://selforganizedseminar.files.wordpress.com/.../freire_pedagogy_oppresed1.pdf%20accessed06.06.2015). (There are no page numbers in this online version. In references I will cite the relevant chapter.) [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
204. Leonardo Boff, *Ecclesiogenesis: The Base Communities Re-Invent the Church*, (New York: Orbis, 1986). [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
205. Mary McClintock Fulkerson, Places of Redemption: Theology for a Worldly Church, (Oxford University Press: New York, 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
206. Heidi Epstein, Melting the Venusberg: a Feminist Theology of Music, (London/New York: Continuum, 2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
207. See, for instance, Laurie Green, Power to the Powerless: Theology Brought to Life, (Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1987), which has been an important source of inspiration. [↑](#footnote-ref-208)
208. See my earlier Literature Review p.31. [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
209. “Liberation Theology” in *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology,* ed. Alan Richardson and John Bowden, (London: SCM, 1983). [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
210. “Liberation Theology”, in ed. Cross and Livingstone, pp.978-979. [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
211. Gustavo Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation, (New York: Orbis, 1973), p.174. [↑](#footnote-ref-212)
212. Gutiérrez, p.24. [↑](#footnote-ref-213)
213. Archbishops’ Committee, Music in Worship, (London: unspecified publisher, 1923), ch.6. [↑](#footnote-ref-214)
214. Freire, Ch.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-215)
215. Freire, Ch.3. No page numbers.

     . [↑](#footnote-ref-216)
216. Freire, Ch.1. No page numbers. [↑](#footnote-ref-217)
217. Boff, p.24. [↑](#footnote-ref-218)
218. Boff, p25. [↑](#footnote-ref-219)
219. Boff, p.29. [↑](#footnote-ref-220)
220. Boff, p.25. [↑](#footnote-ref-221)
221. Boff, pp.49-51. [↑](#footnote-ref-222)
222. Boff, p.49. [↑](#footnote-ref-223)
223. Boff, p.23. [↑](#footnote-ref-224)
224. Boff, p.24. [↑](#footnote-ref-225)
225. McClintock Fulkerson, p.10. [↑](#footnote-ref-226)
226. McClintock Fulkerson, p.10. [↑](#footnote-ref-227)
227. McClintock Fulkerson, p.11. [↑](#footnote-ref-228)
228. Epstein, 2004. [↑](#footnote-ref-229)
229. Rosemary Radford Reuther, *Sexism and God Talk: Towards a Feminist Theology,* (London: SCM, 1983), ch.6. [↑](#footnote-ref-230)
230. Begbie, *Resounding Truth*, pp.124-130. [↑](#footnote-ref-231)
231. Christian Congregational Music: Local and Global Perspectives, Ripon College Cuddesdon, 1-3 August 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-232)
232. Words and music Darlene Zschech and published by Hillsong Music. [↑](#footnote-ref-233)
233. Swee Hong Lim, “The Limits of Song Lyric as Theological Text: Music as Theology in Contemporary Worship Song” (unpublished paper presented at the Christian Congregational Music: Local and Global Perspectives Conference, Ripon College Cuddesdon, Oxford, United Kingdom, 1 - 3 August 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-234)
234. Nigel Gilbert, *Researching Social Life*, 3rd edn (London: Sage, 2008) p.267. [↑](#footnote-ref-235)
235. David Silverman, *Doing Qualitative Research,* 3rd edn (London: Sage, 2010), p.49. [↑](#footnote-ref-236)
236. Gilbert, p.269. [↑](#footnote-ref-237)
237. Gilbert, p. 269. [↑](#footnote-ref-238)
238. Gibert, pp.269-270. [↑](#footnote-ref-239)
239. Gilbert, p.271. [↑](#footnote-ref-240)
240. Astley and Francis, p.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-241)
241. Astley and Francis, p.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-242)
242. Ann Christie: *Ordinary Christology: Who Do You Say I Am? Answers from the Pews,* (Ashgate: Farnham Surrey, 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-243)
243. Christie, p.11. [↑](#footnote-ref-244)
244. Christie, p.12. [↑](#footnote-ref-245)
245. Christie p.13. [↑](#footnote-ref-246)
246. Christie, pp.15-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-247)
247. Christie pp.19-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-248)
248. Jeff Astley, “Ordinary Theology and the Learning Conversation with Academic Theology” *in Exploring Ordinary Theology: Everyday Christian Believing and the Church,* ed by Jeff Astley and Leslie J. Francis, (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2013) pp.45-54 (p.52). [↑](#footnote-ref-249)
249. Jeff Astley, “Ordinary Theology and the Learning Conversation with Academic Theology”, p.47. [↑](#footnote-ref-250)
250. Mason, p.84. [↑](#footnote-ref-251)
251. Robert M Emerson, Rachel I Fretz & Linda L Shaw, ‘Participant Observation and Fieldnotes’ in *Handbook of Ethnography,* ed. by Paul Atkinson (Sage: London, 2007) p.352. [↑](#footnote-ref-252)
252. Participant Observation in ed. John Scott, ‘A Dictionary of Sociology’ Oxford University Press, <<http://www.oxfordreference.com.voyager.chester.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780199683581.001.0001/acref-9780199683581-e-1678>> accessed 06.06.2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-253)
253. Ed. John Scott, Participant Observation. No page numbers. [↑](#footnote-ref-254)
254. Kathleen M. DeWalt and Billie R. DeWalt, *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers,* (Alta Mira Press: Plymouth, 2011) pp.22-25. [↑](#footnote-ref-255)
255. DeWalt and DeWalt, p. 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-256)
256. Mason, p.87. [↑](#footnote-ref-257)
257. Mason, p.85. [↑](#footnote-ref-258)
258. Mason, p.88. [↑](#footnote-ref-259)
259. See above. [↑](#footnote-ref-260)
260. Mason, p.62. [↑](#footnote-ref-261)
261. Mason, p.62. [↑](#footnote-ref-262)
262. Mason, p.63. [↑](#footnote-ref-263)
263. Anne Galletta, *Qualitative Studies in Psychology: Mastering the Semi-Structured Interview and Beyond,* (NYU Press: New York, 2013), pp.76-77. [↑](#footnote-ref-264)
264. Galletta, p.77. [↑](#footnote-ref-265)
265. Galletta, p.78. [↑](#footnote-ref-266)
266. Galletta, p.84. [↑](#footnote-ref-267)
267. Galletta, p.93. [↑](#footnote-ref-268)
268. Galletta, p.94. [↑](#footnote-ref-269)
269. See Appendix 2 for Invitation to Participate Sheet. [↑](#footnote-ref-270)
270. See Appendix 3 for Consent Form. [↑](#footnote-ref-271)
271. See Appendix 4 for Questions. [↑](#footnote-ref-272)
272. Mason, p.67. [↑](#footnote-ref-273)
273. Gilbert, p.325. [↑](#footnote-ref-274)
274. Mason, p.147. [↑](#footnote-ref-275)
275. Mason, p.149. [↑](#footnote-ref-276)
276. Mason, p.149. [↑](#footnote-ref-277)
277. Mason, p.166. [↑](#footnote-ref-278)
278. Mason, p.148. [↑](#footnote-ref-279)
279. Mason, p.156. [↑](#footnote-ref-280)
280. Mason, p.157. [↑](#footnote-ref-281)
281. Jennifer Mason, Qualitative Researching, 2nd edn (Los Angeles: Sage, 2002), ch.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-282)
282. See Appendix 1 for a copy of the flyer. [↑](#footnote-ref-283)
283. See Mason, p.149 and See Jeff Astley, “Ordinary Theology and the Learning Conversation with Academic Theology” pp.45-54. [↑](#footnote-ref-284)
284. *Common Praise*, 2nd edn (Canterbury: Canterbury Press, 2002). [↑](#footnote-ref-285)
285. *“Jesus is the name we know”,* Philip Lawson Johnston, (Thankyou Music, 1991). [↑](#footnote-ref-286)
286. Reflecting on this several years later, it is now much more common for Christingle Services to be the main service of Christmas Eve, which solves the “no Christmas Carols in Advent” problem. [↑](#footnote-ref-287)
287. See Chapter Two. [↑](#footnote-ref-288)
288. Rosalind Brown, *How Hymns Shape our Lives,* (Cambridge, Grove 2001), p.12. [↑](#footnote-ref-289)
289. K.J. Jeffries, K.B Fritz, A.R. Brown, “Words in Melody: an H2150 PET study of brain activation during singing and speaking”, *Neuroreport* 14:5(2003), pp.749-754. [↑](#footnote-ref-290)
290. In all cases X refers to the church in which the study was conducted. [↑](#footnote-ref-291)
291. See Chapter One. [↑](#footnote-ref-292)
292. See Jeff Astley, “Ordinary Theology and the Learning Conversation with Academic Theology” p.52. [↑](#footnote-ref-293)
293. John L. Bell, *The Singing Thing, (*Glasgow: Wild Goose, 2000), pp.95-112. [↑](#footnote-ref-294)
294. See <<http://inclusive-church.org.uk>> [accessed 14.10.15] [↑](#footnote-ref-295)
295. Astley, Ordinary Theology and the Conversation with Academic Theology, p.45. [↑](#footnote-ref-296)
296. Maundy Thursday in CE 2013-2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-297)
297. Julie Gittoes, Anamnesis and the Eucharist: Contemporary Anglican Approaches, (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-298)
298. Peter Atkins, Memory and Liturgy: the Place of Memory and Practice of Liturgy, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-299)
299. Jeremy Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). [↑](#footnote-ref-300)
300. Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging,* Oxford: Blackwell, 1994) and *Religion in modern Europe: a Memory Mutates*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). [↑](#footnote-ref-301)
301. Atkins will be used selectively as I covered a similar psychological approach to song in my initial literature review, although using different texts. [↑](#footnote-ref-302)
302. Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain,* Ch. 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-303)
303. Davie, Religion in Modern Europe, p.59. [↑](#footnote-ref-304)
304. Atkins uses “corporate” frequently. It is not a word I would choose because of its association with “corporate culture”, signifying bland uniformity. However, in discussing Atkins, I will reflect his language, so “corporate” remains. [↑](#footnote-ref-305)
305. Walter Brueggemann, “The Costly Loss of Lament”, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament,* 36 (1986), pp.57-71 and “Necessary Conditions of a Good Loud Lament”, *Horizons in Biblical Theology,* 2003,25:1, pp.19-43. [↑](#footnote-ref-306)
306. Gail Ramshaw, “The Place of Lament within Praise: Theses for Discussion”, *Worship,* 61:4, (July 1981), pp.317-322. [↑](#footnote-ref-307)
307. Iain McGilchrist, *The Master and his Emissary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009),pp.106-110. [↑](#footnote-ref-308)
308. Epstein, 2004. [↑](#footnote-ref-309)
309. Bruce Wood Holsinger, “The Flesh of the Voice: Embodiment and the Homoerotics of Devotion in the Music of Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)”, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 19/1 (1993), pp.92-123. [↑](#footnote-ref-310)
310. ARCIC, “The Final Report” in *Anglicans and Roman Catholics: The Search for Unity* ed. C. Hill and E. Yarnold, (London: SPCK, 1994) p.20. [↑](#footnote-ref-311)
311. Gittoes, p.9. [↑](#footnote-ref-312)
312. 1967 – current. ARCIC seeks to make ecumenical progress between the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches. [↑](#footnote-ref-313)
313. World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*: *Faith and Order Paper III* (Geneva: WCC, 1982). [↑](#footnote-ref-314)
314. Gittoes, p.15. [↑](#footnote-ref-315)
315. WCC, p 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-316)
316. Gittoes, p.23. [↑](#footnote-ref-317)
317. Baptism, Eucharist and Memory, also suggests this past-present-future dynamic, noting, for example, the “present efficacy of God’s work when it is celebrated by God’s people in a liturgy,” and “the (Eucharistic) vision of the divine rule which has been promised as the final renewal of creation, and is a foretaste of it.” Although not as clearly stated as in Gittoes the past-present-future dynamic is present throughout. It is a widely expressed idea in Christian theology: see, for instance, Brent Peterson Eucharistic Ecclesiology: A Community of Joyful brokenness, p.6. <http%3A%2F%2Fdidache.nazarene.org%2Findex.php%2Fvolume-5-2%2F720-didache-5-2-eucharist&usg=AFQjCNGYClNtZ65pb6HKGW7hKq0IrT5tjg&bvm=bv.102022582,d.ZGU&cad=rja> [↑](#footnote-ref-318)
318. 1Thessalonians 4:13-18 [↑](#footnote-ref-319)
319. Atkins, p.55. [↑](#footnote-ref-320)
320. Atkins, pp.57-61. [↑](#footnote-ref-321)
321. Atkins, p.58. [↑](#footnote-ref-322)
322. Atkins, pp.61-62. [↑](#footnote-ref-323)
323. This was covered in my initial Literature Review. [↑](#footnote-ref-324)
324. Atkins, p.64. [↑](#footnote-ref-325)
325. Atkins, p.64. [↑](#footnote-ref-326)
326. Atkins, ch.10. [↑](#footnote-ref-327)
327. Atkins, p.127. [↑](#footnote-ref-328)
328. Atkins, p.125. [↑](#footnote-ref-329)
329. Begbie, Theology, Music and Time, p. 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-330)
330. Begbie, Theology, Music and Time, p. 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-331)
331. Begbie, Theology, Music and Time, pp.39-44. [↑](#footnote-ref-332)
332. Begbie, Theology, Music and Time, pp.45-51. [↑](#footnote-ref-333)
333. Begbie, Theology, Music and Time, p.55. [↑](#footnote-ref-334)
334. Begbie, Theology, Music and Time, pp.60-62. [↑](#footnote-ref-335)
335. Begbie, Theology, Music and Time, pp.34-35, for example. [↑](#footnote-ref-336)
336. Begbie, Theology, Music and Time, p.55. [↑](#footnote-ref-337)
337. Atkins, p.69. [↑](#footnote-ref-338)
338. Atkins, pp.69-70. The mention of the importance of song is unusual, although here Atkins is not talking specifically about the church. [↑](#footnote-ref-339)
339. Atkins, p.71. [↑](#footnote-ref-340)
340. Atkins, p.72. [↑](#footnote-ref-341)
341. Atkins, p.73. [↑](#footnote-ref-342)
342. Eliyana R. Adler, "No Raisins, No Almonds: Singing as Spiritual Resistance to the Holocaust." *Shofar,* 24.4 (2006): 50-66. [↑](#footnote-ref-343)
343. T.V. Reed, “Singing Civil Rights: the Freedom Song Tradition” in *The Art of Protest*, T.V. Reed, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 1-39. [↑](#footnote-ref-344)
344. Atkins, pp.74-75. [↑](#footnote-ref-345)
345. Atkins, p.75. [↑](#footnote-ref-346)
346. Atkins, pp.77-78. [↑](#footnote-ref-347)
347. Atkins, p.82. [↑](#footnote-ref-348)
348. Atkins, p.82. [↑](#footnote-ref-349)
349. This is something I have observed in the church where I serve. Christmas and Harvest Hymns seem to be held in particular affection. [↑](#footnote-ref-350)
350. Gittoes, p.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-351)
351. Gittoes, p.45. [↑](#footnote-ref-352)
352. Gittoes, p.45. [↑](#footnote-ref-353)
353. Gittoes, p.46. [↑](#footnote-ref-354)
354. Gittoes, p.46. [↑](#footnote-ref-355)
355. Gittoes, p.46. [↑](#footnote-ref-356)
356. Doctrine Commission of the Church of England, *Believing in the Church: The Corporate Nature of Faith*, (London: SPCK, 1981). [↑](#footnote-ref-357)
357. Doctrine Commission, p.53. [↑](#footnote-ref-358)
358. David Ford, “System, Story, Performance: A Proposal about the Role of Narrative in Systematic Theology”, in *Why narrative?: Readings in Narrative Theology, ed. Stanley Hauerwas and Gregory Jones,* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1989), pp 191-215, (p.215). [↑](#footnote-ref-359)
359. Gittoes, p.53. [↑](#footnote-ref-360)
360. David Ford, *Self and Salvation: Being Transformed, (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.117. [↑](#footnote-ref-361)
361. David Ford, *Self and Salvation,* p.121 [↑](#footnote-ref-362)
362. Gittoes, p.64. [↑](#footnote-ref-363)
363. David Ford and Alistair McFayden, “Praise” in *God in the City: Essays and reflections from the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Urban Theology Group*, ed. P. Sedgwick (London: Mowbray 1995), 95-105. [↑](#footnote-ref-364)
364. Ford and McFayden, “Praise”, p.97. [↑](#footnote-ref-365)
365. Ford and McFayden, “Praise”, p.98. [↑](#footnote-ref-366)
366. Ford and McFayden, “Praise”, p.99-200. [↑](#footnote-ref-367)
367. Michael Welker, *What happens in Holy Communion?,* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000), p. 128. [↑](#footnote-ref-368)
368. Grace Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe: a Memory Mutates,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp.33 and 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-369)
369. Davie, Religion in Modern Europe, p.30. [↑](#footnote-ref-370)
370. Davie, Religion in Modern Europe, p.177. [↑](#footnote-ref-371)
371. Davie, Religion in Modern Europe, p.179. [↑](#footnote-ref-372)
372. 334 Davie, Religion in Modern Europe, pp.61-62. [↑](#footnote-ref-373)
373. Davie, Religion in Modern Europe, pp.71-78. [↑](#footnote-ref-374)
374. Davie, Religion in Modern Europe, p.81. [↑](#footnote-ref-375)
375. Davie, Religion in Modern Europe, p.180. [↑](#footnote-ref-376)
376. Davie, Religion in Modern Europe, p.182. [↑](#footnote-ref-377)
377. Steve Bruce and David Voas, “Vicarious Religion: An Examination and Critique”, *Journal of Contemporary Religion,* 25:2 (2010), 243–259. [↑](#footnote-ref-378)
378. Bruce and Voas, “Vicarious Religion”, p.257. [↑](#footnote-ref-379)
379. Ramshaw, pp.317-322. [↑](#footnote-ref-380)
380. Ramshaw, pp.317-318. [↑](#footnote-ref-381)
381. Ramshaw, p.318. [↑](#footnote-ref-382)
382. Brueggemann, 1986, pp.57-71. [↑](#footnote-ref-383)
383. Brueggemann, *“*Necessary Conditions of a Good Loud Lament*”,* pp. 19-49. [↑](#footnote-ref-384)
384. Brueggemann, *“*The Costly Loss of Lament*”*, pp.57-59. [↑](#footnote-ref-385)
385. Ramshaw, p.317. [↑](#footnote-ref-386)
386. Ramshaw, p.318. [↑](#footnote-ref-387)
387. Ramshaw, p.318. [↑](#footnote-ref-388)
388. Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: the Bible and Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), pp.80-81. [↑](#footnote-ref-389)
389. Ramshaw, p.318. [↑](#footnote-ref-390)
390. Ramshaw, p.319. [↑](#footnote-ref-391)
391. Ramshaw, p.320. [↑](#footnote-ref-392)
392. Ramshaw, p.320. [↑](#footnote-ref-393)
393. Claus Westermann, Praise and Lament in the Psalms, (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1981), pp.52-70. [↑](#footnote-ref-394)
394. Denise Ackermann, Tamar's Cry: Re-reading an Ancient Text in the Midst of an HIV/AIDS Pandemic, (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 2002), p.32. [↑](#footnote-ref-395)
395. The Psalms of Lament would have played a greater role in the liturgy in the recent past, as they were chanted during Matins and Evensong. The Revised Common Lectionary appoints Psalms for inclusion in the Eucharist, but, as in my data, the skill of chant is largely lost. Psalms, if used at all, tend to be sung by the choir, or read by a lector with a sung, congregational refrain. [↑](#footnote-ref-396)
396. Brueggemann, “Necessary Conditions of a Good Loud Lament”, p.19. [↑](#footnote-ref-397)
397. Brueggemann, *“*Necessary Conditions of a Good Loud Lament*”* , p.20. [↑](#footnote-ref-398)
398. Brueggemann, *“*The Costly Loss of Lament*”,* pp.58-59. [↑](#footnote-ref-399)
399. Brueggemann, *“*Necessary Conditions of a Good Loud Lament*”*, p.19. [↑](#footnote-ref-400)
400. Brueggemann, *“*Necessary Conditions of a Good Loud Lament*”* p.22. [↑](#footnote-ref-401)
401. Brueggemann, *“*Necessary Conditions of a Good Loud Lament*”* p.25. [↑](#footnote-ref-402)
402. Brueggemann, *“*Necessary Conditions of a Good Loud Lament*”,* pp.29-33. [↑](#footnote-ref-403)
403. Brueggemann, *“*Necessary Conditions of a Good Loud Lament*”*, pp.33-35. Psalm 143, for example. This idea will be pursued later in this Chapter, when body theologies are considered. [↑](#footnote-ref-404)
404. Brueggemann, *“*Necessary Conditions of a Good Loud Lament*”,* p.35. [↑](#footnote-ref-405)
405. Brueggemann, *“*Necessary Conditions of a Good Loud Lament*”,* p.37. [↑](#footnote-ref-406)
406. Brueggemann, *“*Necessary Conditions of a Good Loud Lament*”,* p.38. [↑](#footnote-ref-407)
407. Brueggemann, *“*Necessary Conditions of a Good Loud Lament*”,* p.39. [↑](#footnote-ref-408)
408. Brueggemann, *“*Necessary Conditions of a Good Loud Lament*”,* p.39. [↑](#footnote-ref-409)
409. Brueggemann, *“*Necessary Conditions of a Good Loud Lament*”,* p.40. [↑](#footnote-ref-410)
410. Brueggemann, *“*Necessary Conditions of a Good Loud Lament*”,* p.40. [↑](#footnote-ref-411)
411. Brueggemann, *“*Necessary Conditions of a Good Loud Lament*”*, p.42. [↑](#footnote-ref-412)
412. Brueggemann, *“*The Costly Loss of Lament*”,* p.60. [↑](#footnote-ref-413)
413. Brueggemann, *“*The Costly Loss of Lament*”,* pp.59-60. [↑](#footnote-ref-414)
414. Brueggemann, “The Costly Loss of Lament”, p.61. [↑](#footnote-ref-415)
415. Brueggemann, “The Costly Loss of Lament”, p.62. [↑](#footnote-ref-416)
416. Brueggemann, “The Costly Loss of Lament”, p.64. [↑](#footnote-ref-417)
417. Brueggemann, “The Costly Loss of Lament”, p.61. [↑](#footnote-ref-418)
418. See p.16 of this thesis. [↑](#footnote-ref-419)
419. <<https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=Westminster+Abbey+Service+100th+anniversary+of+WW1&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws_rd=cr&ei=kcobVsehHYHx-QGo6Lcg#q=Westminster+Abbey+Service+100th+anniversary+of+WW1+liturgy>> [accessed 02.06.15] [↑](#footnote-ref-420)
420. This is born out in my own experience: many years ago, listening to Gorecki’s Third Symphony (written about the suffering of the concentration camps) on my car radio, I became aware that my three your old son was weeping in the back. He said it was because the music was so sad. [↑](#footnote-ref-421)
421. <<http://www.westminster-abbey.org/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/69685/13-12-21-Lockerbie-order-of-service-web-friendly.pdf> > [accessed 02.06.15]. [↑](#footnote-ref-422)
422. Brueggemann, “The Costly Loss of Lament”, p.62. [↑](#footnote-ref-423)
423. McGilchrist is a philosopher and neurologist whose work has had a considerable influence on theologians such as Rowan Williams. See , for instance Rowan Williams, *The Edge of Words : God and the Habits of Language,* (London: Continuum, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-424)
424. McGilchrist, p.74. [↑](#footnote-ref-425)
425. McGilchrist, pp.106-110. [↑](#footnote-ref-426)
426. McGilchrist, pp.74-75. [↑](#footnote-ref-427)
427. McGilchrist, p.73. [↑](#footnote-ref-428)
428. McGilchrist, p.74. [↑](#footnote-ref-429)
429. McGilchrist, p.96. [↑](#footnote-ref-430)
430. McGilchrist, p.304. [↑](#footnote-ref-431)
431. McGilchrist, p.304. [↑](#footnote-ref-432)
432. McGilchrist, p.306. [↑](#footnote-ref-433)
433. McGilchrist, p.103. [↑](#footnote-ref-434)
434. McGilchrist, p.75. [↑](#footnote-ref-435)
435. Mark. D. Jordan, “Body” in The Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology, ed. Ian McFarlane (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011) <<https://www.dawsonera.com/abstract/9781139068956>> [accessed 08.06.15] [↑](#footnote-ref-436)
436. Jordan, “Body”. [↑](#footnote-ref-437)
437. Epstein, p.5. [↑](#footnote-ref-438)
438. This idea has been explored in Chapter One of this piece, and confirms the observation in my earlier Literature Review, that writing on hymns almost always focuses on the words rather than the music. [↑](#footnote-ref-439)
439. Epstein, p.17. [↑](#footnote-ref-440)
440. Epstein, p.19. [↑](#footnote-ref-441)
441. CE 1090 –1153) [↑](#footnote-ref-442)
442. Epstein, p.16. [↑](#footnote-ref-443)
443. Epstein, pp.19-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-444)
444. c. CE 480–524 [↑](#footnote-ref-445)
445. Epstein, pp.20-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-446)
446. Died c. CE 330. [↑](#footnote-ref-447)
447. Epstein, p.54. [↑](#footnote-ref-448)
448. c. CE 1540 – 1613. [↑](#footnote-ref-449)
449. Epstein, p.37. [↑](#footnote-ref-450)
450. Epstein p.41. [↑](#footnote-ref-451)
451. c. CE125 – after CE 180. [↑](#footnote-ref-452)
452. Epstein, p.33. [↑](#footnote-ref-453)
453. Epstein, p.34. [↑](#footnote-ref-454)
454. Epstein, p.38. [↑](#footnote-ref-455)
455. Epstein, p.39. [↑](#footnote-ref-456)
456. Epstein, pp.32-33. [↑](#footnote-ref-457)
457. Epstein, p.37. [↑](#footnote-ref-458)
458. Epstein, pp.17-18. [↑](#footnote-ref-459)
459. Epstein, pp.71-74, 74-77, 81-84. She refers to Karl Barth, *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart,* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1986), Hans Kung, *Mozart: Traces of Transcendence,* (London: SCM, 1992) and Jaroslav Pelikan, *Bach Among the Theologians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986). [↑](#footnote-ref-460)
460. Wren, p.138. [↑](#footnote-ref-461)
461. Wren, p.133. [↑](#footnote-ref-462)
462. Wren, p.140. [↑](#footnote-ref-463)
463. Saint Hildegard of Bingen, Joseph L. Baird and Radd K Ehrman, *The Letters of Hildegard of BIngen, Vol I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.78. [↑](#footnote-ref-464)
464. Holsinger, pp. 91-94. [↑](#footnote-ref-465)
465. Holsinger, p.94. [↑](#footnote-ref-466)
466. Holsinger, p.97. [↑](#footnote-ref-467)
467. Holsinger, pp.97-103. [↑](#footnote-ref-468)
468. Holsinger, pp.103-116. [↑](#footnote-ref-469)
469. Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias* (New York, Paulist Press, 1990), p.367. [↑](#footnote-ref-470)
470. <http://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/125.html> [accessed 15.10.15]. [↑](#footnote-ref-471)
471. Hildegard of Bingen, *Symphonia: a Critical Edition,* (New York; Cornell University Press, 1998), p.275. [↑](#footnote-ref-472)
472. Holsinger, p.102. [↑](#footnote-ref-473)
473. Holsinger, p.103. [↑](#footnote-ref-474)
474. Holsinger, pp.100-101. [↑](#footnote-ref-475)
475. Holsinger, pp.122-123. [↑](#footnote-ref-476)
476. Epstein, pp.129-130. [↑](#footnote-ref-477)
477. I saw “Ordo Virtuum” performed at the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester many years ago and found Satan’s absence of song very powerful. [↑](#footnote-ref-478)
478. Wren, pp.88-89. [↑](#footnote-ref-479)
479. c. CE 150 – c.215 [↑](#footnote-ref-480)
480. Hildegard of Bingen, *Symphonia: a Critical Edition,* p.261. [↑](#footnote-ref-481)
481. Epstein, p.126. [↑](#footnote-ref-482)
482. Epstein, p.150. [↑](#footnote-ref-483)
483. Epstein, p.126. [↑](#footnote-ref-484)
484. See Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). [↑](#footnote-ref-485)
485. Epstein, pp.166-173. [↑](#footnote-ref-486)
486. Epstein, pp.123-124. [↑](#footnote-ref-487)
487. Epstein, pp.127-128. [↑](#footnote-ref-488)
488. Epstein, pp.122-123. [↑](#footnote-ref-489)
489. Francis, p.73. [↑](#footnote-ref-490)
490. Francis, pp.72-73. [↑](#footnote-ref-491)
491. Francis, p.73. [↑](#footnote-ref-492)
492. Francis p.73. [↑](#footnote-ref-493)
493. Francis, p.78. [↑](#footnote-ref-494)
494. See Genesis 2:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-495)
495. The idea of borrowing language was that of Brain Wren with reference to inclusive language in hymns. It seems an appropriate means of raising the issue of positive body language. [↑](#footnote-ref-496)
496. Brian Wren, *Praying twice,* p.52. [↑](#footnote-ref-497)
497. Westermeyer, “The Future of Congregational Song”, p.5. [↑](#footnote-ref-498)
498. Good methods for teaching new hymns are important. The choir can learn new songs in advance, enabling them to give a strong lead. The congregation can also do this in preparation for services where numbers of occasional worshippers will be present. Support of tune by melodic instruments helps. Before the service the congregation need to learn the song by *singing* one phrase at a time and then building up the whole tune. Electronic media can also be used to make new songs available on the internet beforehand – this is useful for weddings. [↑](#footnote-ref-499)
499. Begbie, Theology, Music and Time, pp.34-35. [↑](#footnote-ref-500)
500. Davie, Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe,* p.59. [↑](#footnote-ref-501)
501. Begbie, Theology, Music and Time, p. 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-502)
502. Atkins, pp.77-78. [↑](#footnote-ref-503)
503. Ford, *Self and Salvation*, p.117. [↑](#footnote-ref-504)
504. David Ford, *Self and Salvation,* p.121. “Inclusivity” will be further discussed later in this chapter. [↑](#footnote-ref-505)
505. Welker, p.128. [↑](#footnote-ref-506)
506. Westermeyer, “The Future of Congregational Song”, p.7. [↑](#footnote-ref-507)
507. Atkins, p.287. [↑](#footnote-ref-508)
508. Welker, p.128. [↑](#footnote-ref-509)
509. This reflects Welker’s “cold” memory; see Welker, p.128. [↑](#footnote-ref-510)
510. McGilchrist, p.75. [↑](#footnote-ref-511)
511. Ramshaw, p.319. [↑](#footnote-ref-512)
512. Ramshaw, p.320. [↑](#footnote-ref-513)
513. Brueggemann, “Necessary Conditions of a Good Loud Lament”, pp.38-39 [↑](#footnote-ref-514)
514. Brueggemann’s words. [↑](#footnote-ref-515)
515. McGilchrist, p.75 [↑](#footnote-ref-516)
516. Epstein, Ch.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-517)
517. Epstein, pp.120-123. [↑](#footnote-ref-518)