Missional Capital:

Volunteering and Faith Communication.

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Abstract

In this thesis, I identify missional capital, which is a form of social capital comprising theological capital, bridging capital, and linking capital, collectively underpinned by bonding capital to explain how volunteering provides lay Christians with confidence they can participate with God in mission. Based on qualitative interviews and participant observation, I find that the experience of volunteering can give lay Christians assurance about sharing their faith commitments in their workplaces and communities, despite their general anxiety about sharing their beliefs with non-Christian peers. My participants believe that stories of their volunteering experiences are welcomed by their friends and colleagues and tell these in order to initiate discussions about their Christian beliefs.

My research arises from my professional practice as volunteer and leader at a Christian witness and service project I pseudonymously name “The Chapel”. The Church of England recognises the importance of witness and service projects, such as The Chapel, to help address its crisis of declining attendance (Church of England Research and Statistics, 2020; The Church of England, 2022, Oct 22). However, since existing volunteer studies typically focus on recruitment and retention (Wilson, 2012), there has been little research into how Christian witness and service projects might also help the Church of England to equip lay Christians to communicate their beliefs beyond their faith community.

My research shows how practices of prayer, listening and storytelling employed by The Chapel leverage the liminality and communitas inherent in volunteer witness and service projects to facilitate theological play. This play strengthens volunteers’ conviction that they can identify and participate in God’s existing activity in visitors’ lives. The attitudes and practices arising from this integrate belief and action creating missional capital. The church is usually conceived as either gathered in worship or scattered in witness and service to the world (Van Gelder & Zscheile, 2011). This study illustrates the service-learning potential of witness and service projects, such as The Chapel, which combine elements of corporate worship with individual witness. I suggest similar practices could be tested in other Christian witness and service

projects to teach other lay Christian volunteers to communicate their faith more effectively.

Summary of portfolio

In 2017 I conducted a critical evaluation of the ordinary theology of volunteers at The Chapel as part of an MA in Kingdom Theology. This led me to wonder how taking part in volunteering influences lay Christians' understanding and practices of missional engagement. I undertook the professional doctorate in order to interrogate the practices which had helped to shape these volunteers' understanding and discover the impact this might have beyond the project. The portfolio preceding this thesis illustrates my thinking as I addressed this question through the course of the professional doctorate programme.

My literature review considered how developments in missional ecclesiology relate to the barriers to lay participation in mission identified in Church of England's *Setting God's People Free* report into lay ministry (Lay Leadership Task Force, 2017, p. 14). I mapped a range of existing approaches recognising that these are predicated on different conceptual understandings of God's presence within and beyond the church. In my publishable article, I reflected on my prior experience of The Chapel through the lens of Pete Ward's (2002, 2008) liquid church model of participation and mediation. This raised theological capital, liminality, and chaordic management as potential areas for further investigation.

For me, holding a confessional position has methodological implications. In my reflexive practice assignment, I applied Richard Osmer's (2011) model of theological reflection to the possibility of praying with participants prior to interviews. This helped me to consider the implications of the power imbalance implicit in my ordination and previous leadership role more deeply. I therefore adopted Julian Müller's (2011) postfoundational practical theological method which allows participants to narrate and interpret their own experience, locates these narratives in context, and juxtaposes them with insights from other disciplines to generate a more complete description.

In this thesis, I argue that my research with lay Christian volunteers at The Chapel demonstrates how Christian witness and service projects can support service learning in faith communication, calling for more consideration of similar projects which stand as thresholds between the gathered and scattered expressions of church.

Chapter 1: Introduction

> It's made me realize that people actually want to talk about God. My colleagues at work, whenever I've done The Chapel on Saturday, wanted to know what had happened. They were interested in it, and they thought the church should be there for people. Which was interesting, given that they didn't believe in it. So, I think it's made me more confident about talking about it. (Anna)

> Tuesday at work "Out with the God Squad?" And it's not just the one or two people that are 'round me. The manager will ask me during the week "Out with the God Squad?" … and we have really good conversations. He's not a Christian … but he asks me questions about faith, the opener is "Out with the God squad?" (Peter)[1]

Anna and Peter are two participants in this qualitative research project which seeks to understand the impact volunteering at The Chapel has had on their ability to discuss their Christian beliefs. The Chapel is an independent charity operating a "night time church" in North West England to "advance the Christian faith" and interviewees offered insights into their practices of discussing Christianity in their communities and workplaces. I suggest that their experience illustrates the potential for Christian witness and service projects to equip lay Christians to prompt discussions about their Christian faith in ways that circumvent socio-cultural barriers.

Anna recognises that her colleagues have little interest in her private religious practices such as church attendance. However, she finds that volunteering at The Chapel sparks their curiosity, providing her with an opportunity to demonstrate the authenticity of her Christian commitments. Peter thinks that his colleagues ask about his experiences at The Chapel to inquire about his Christian beliefs, he avoids accusations of proselytising by ensuring that "[when] people ask me about faith, I will tell them about my faith. I can't tell them about theirs". My research suggests

[1] This research received ethical approval from the University of Chester. All organisations, participants, and locations are anonymised through the use of pseudonyms. I also deleted search engine links connecting me to The Chapel, replaced logos, and obscured faces in photographs.

volunteering at The Chapel helps participants, like Anna and Peter, to communicate their Christian convictions in locations that are typically regarded as hostile to evangelism. I describe this as ”missional capital”, a form of social capital created through practices which allow volunteers to play with techniques of listening, prayer and story sharing. Their experience of volunteering helps them to articulate their religious convictions and frames their interpretation of visitors’ responses.

My research was prompted by my professional curiosity at the contrast between volunteers’ negative perception of evangelism and their delight in sharing stories about their experiences at The Chapel with their friends and colleagues. It was conducted during training for ordination in the Church of England (2017-2019), parish curacy (2019-2022), and as an Anglican chaplain in His Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service (2021-date). I volunteered at The Chapel from 2011 and led the project 2015-2017. I have worshipped as part of the congregation which now meets at St. Martin’s church (where The Chapel is held) since 2005 and spent the final year of my curacy at St. Martin’s church (2021-22).

In this introduction, I explain why equipping lay Christians in faith communication is important to the Church of England and situate my research in missional ecclesiology. I then introduce The Chapel, explaining how its heritage in theological education, the Emerging Church Movement (ECM), and Charismatic Anglicanism make it a suitable case study for this research. Next, I explain my adoption of Rowan Williams’s definition of mission, before outlining my thesis at the end of the chapter.

1.1 “Motivating the million” (Church of England, 2019)

Declining attendance at Church of England churches has led to investment in motivating and equipping lay people for evangelism. Usual attendance at Sunday services has halved over the last fifty years, falling to 654,000 in 2022. Despite the launch of 90 new churches between 2009 and 2019, most measures of attendance dropped by 15-20% (Church of England Research and Statistics, 2020, p. 3; Eames,

2023).[2] The reduction in church attendance has been attributed to rising secularisation (Bruce, 2011; Bruce, 2021; Bruce & Voas, 2023; Field, 2021) manifested in changing intergenerational attitudes to religion (Bruce, 2011; Bullivant, 2019; Crockett & Voas, 2006) and falling religious participation within generations (Major-Smith et al., 2023; McAndrew & Richards, 2020). In 2017, the Church of England's report into lay ministry "Setting God's People Free" (2017, p. 14) identified "one million lay people in every sphere of society" as "the untapped source for mission and ministry". The term lay is commonly used in the Church of England to describe Christians who are not ordained as Deacons, Priests, or Bishops. This encompasses both formal lay ministries such as Reader or Pastoral Worker, and lay Christians whose ministry is offered informally, for example at home, or in their communities and workplaces.[3] However, the report concludes that previous efforts to "release and empower lay people into roles of influence and leadership" have been unsuccessful (p. 8). This has led to investment in resources to support the "Everyday Faith" of lay Christians (Church of England Renewal and Reform Committee, 2022) and the implementation of discipleship programmes, such as "Fruitfulness on the Frontline" (London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, 2014), which attempt to help lay Christians connect Sunday worship to their activity in their communities and workplaces during the rest of the week.

This focus on training lay Christians to connect their Sunday worship with the rest of their week is founded on the assumption that Christians gather as the collective church in worship and are subsequently sent to incarnate the gospel in their communities and workplaces (Van Gelder & Zscheile, 2011). The Church gathers in worship then sends believers "into the mission of God in daily life" as witnesses to God's inbreaking kingdom, as individual Christians engage in God's "transforming mission" this creates a virtuous circle through which congregations are themselves

[2] I offer 2019 as a benchmark since this figure was not affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Average Church of England Sunday attendance was recorded as 707,000 people in 2019, 345,000 people in 2020 (during the Covid-19 pandemic) and 605,000 people in 2021. See Clive Field (2021) for a comprehensive overview of the reduction in Christian religious participation across a variety of measures.

[3] Graham (2017a) provides a brief overview of lay ministry and an explanation of the Church of England's current understanding of the relationship between lay and ordained ministry can be found in The Church of England Faith and Order Commission Report (2020).

transformed by their engagement in God's mission in the world (Keifert, 2006, p. 37). In practice, the virtuous circle whereby the gathered and scattered church mutually inform and transform one another sometimes appears broken.

Individual believers usually live and work unsupported and isolated within a society which relegates religion to the domestic sphere (Ward, 2013, p. 329). They experience pressure to privatise their religious beliefs, including prosecution for discrimination for some who enact their Christian commitments in the workplace or marketplace (Coleman, 2013; Hambler, 2008, 2015, 2020, 2022, 2023). Although 29% of UK social workers attend weekly religious services, and practitioners demonstrate a clear understanding of the importance of spiritual care within holistic service provision, professional education (aimed at reducing discrimination) produces an environment that is "hostile towards religion, particularly the Christian faith" (Furman et al., 2004, p. 786). As Anna Strhan's (2015) ethnographic study of Evangelical Christians in the UK illustrates, lay members of the congregation experience tension evangelising their Sunday faith in their weekday lives. Consequently:

> Christians… rarely declare themselves. In part, this is because the space, being secular, does not easily admit what are still viewed as 'private' dispositions. Just as a line-manager I do not need to know that x is gay, and y is looking after a disabled child – unless such aspects of the private lives of x and y impinge upon the secular task they are being employed and paid to fulfil. (Ward, 2013, p. 329)

Since labelling oneself as Christian opens one's behaviour to public scrutiny through which a watching world either understands something of Christ or is misled (Ward, 2013, p. 331), privatisation of religion can be an easier choice, allowing church on Sunday to serve as an escape from the pressures of daily life. It is therefore unsurprising that lay Christians may choose to remain as "childish" consumers of religious services dispensed by clergy (Graham, 2017, p. 338). As a result, many lay Christians faithfully attend their church gathering week by week without fulfilling the potential of witnessing to God's inbreaking kingdom beyond the safety and acceptance of their religious community (Graham 2017).

The Church of England's "Everyday Faith" campaign (2022, Oct 22) aims to bridge the gap between Sunday gathering and the working week by teaching lay people to "find and follow God" beyond their Christian community. This includes taking part in "Community witness and service projects through the local church and networks" (The Church of England, 2022, Oct 22). In this study, I research The Chapel as one example of such "Everyday Faith".

The Chapel does not completely fit the gathered/scattered typology of church but instead combines elements of both. For over a decade, teams of lay Christians from multiple churches have volunteered their time from 9.30p.m. until 2a.m. on Saturday nights. They open the 1,100-year-old St. Martin's church, located in the centre of a small city in North West England, as a "sacred space" hoping the predominantly non-Christian population living and working in the night economy will "experience God's love and peace". Most trustee, leadership, and team roles are performed by lay Christian volunteers.[4] Through my involvement in the project I became aware of stories from volunteers, like Anna and Peter, which suggested that volunteering at The Chapel had helped them to find ways of prompting non-Christian friends and colleagues to inquire about their Christian beliefs.

Volunteerism is "planned, non-obligated behaviour aimed at community improvement, engaged in through established community organizations with no expected payment to the volunteer" (Maki & Snyder, 2017, p. 6).[5] This definition excludes care-giving in the context of an ongoing relationship, for example parent to child or vice versa, and spontaneous acts of emergency assistance (Snyder & Omoto, 2008). Volunteer placements are widely used in higher education (Gordon et al., 2022; Salam et al., 2019) including theological colleges (Lewing, 2019) to integrate theoretical knowledge with practice. Volunteering can support spiritual growth by

[4] For the first five years the project was launched and led by employees of The Spirit College, initially a lay Christian before being passed to a Curate. In 2015 the project registered as an independent charity and leadership transferred to a team of volunteers and separate board of trustees. They employed the administrator of St. Martin's church (where The Chapel is located) for 10 hours per week 2015-2018. One retired priest currently volunteers at The Chapel, he is part of the leadership team, and a trustee, but does not hold overall responsibility for the project.

[5] This definition draws on Snyder's earlier study with Allen Omoto (2008). For an overview of volunteerism see Colin Rochester (2010), Mark Musick and John Wilson (2008), and John Wilson (2012).

integrating experience with classroom learning (Schaffer, 2004, p. 136) since "volunteer service, especially that which puts volunteers in relationship with persons in need, can transform volunteers personally and intellectually" (Myers et al., 2008, p. 369). However, there has been little research into how Christian witness and service projects might equip lay Christians for "Everyday Faith" (Church of England Renewal and Reform Committee, 2022). In the UK, 16.3 million people contributed £20 billion (1% of GDP) to the economy by volunteering their time through 165,000 voluntary organisations (National Council for Voluntary Organisations, 2022). Given the economic value of volunteerism and its potential to improve health and wellbeing outcomes (Jenkinson et al., 2013; Nichol et al., 2023), it is unsurprising that volunteerism research tends to prioritise understanding volunteer recruitment and retention (Wilson, 2012, p. 201).[6] While volunteerism can be driven by the desire to express deeply held moral values (Erasmus & Morey, 2016) and volunteers recognise that participating in community projects can deepen their religious commitments (Hugen et al., 2006) the impact of volunteering on faith communication has not been explored.

Christian witness and service projects connect volunteers with people beyond their social circle (Baker, 2011, p. 172). This means that they can provide lay Christians with an environment which reduces the social risk of enacting and communicating their religious beliefs, in contrast to communicating faith to non-Christian friends or colleagues where the social risk of shame or rejection is high (Strhan, 2015, p. 99). This study explores how the experience of volunteering at The Chapel reassures my participants that their non-Christian friends and colleagues are interested in finding out more about Christianity. I hope my research proves useful to similar projects seeking to help lay people worshipping in the Church of England to strengthen the link between the church gathered-in-worship and scattered-in-witness.

[6] A similar focus on volunteer recruitment and retention is demonstrated by Peiyi Lu, Cai Xu, and Mack Shelley (2021) who evaluate 41 articles across 13 countries consolidating knowledge on incentives and barriers to volunteerism among adults over 60. See also Gunlan Mao, Maria Fernandes-Jesus, Evangelos Ntonis, and John Drury (2021) for a review of 27 studies of volunteering in the UK during Covid-19, and Kayleigh Winch et al (2021) for a review of 1032 studies in environmental volunteering.

1.2 Missional ecclesiology: Shaping the gathered church for scattered witness

Missional ecclesiology, the quest to shape the church to participate in God's mission in the world, has become one of the most significant areas of research in mission studies (Niemandt, 2012). It is:

> a theological discipline that seeks to understand and define the church… from a missional point of view where the Church is understood as a community of witness, called into being and equipped by God, and sent into the world to testify to and participate in Christ's work. It is the discussion of what the church is called to be and to do - its nature, its purpose, its hopes, its structure, and practices. (Niemandt, 2012, p. 1)

The growing marginalisation of the church in the West necessitates new models of ecclesiology with an increased focus on the church sent as witnesses to God's love, lower resource intensity to sustain the church gathered in worship, and a growing prophetic voice (Richardson, 2013). Missional ecclesiology aims to enact a trinitarian understanding of God in mission recognising that God is creator, saviour, and the one with whom the church participates in mission (Niemandt, 2012). David Bosch (1991, p. 390) suggests that the International Missionary Council at Willingen in 1952 marked a shift in missiology; mission ceased to be defined as an activity of the church, such as the sending of western missionaries to colonised nations, becoming understood as "derived from the very nature of God" (*Missio Dei*) such that "the mission of the Church is the gift of participating through the Spirit in the Son's mission from the Father to the world".

In this study I use David Bosch's definition of mission as the "total task that God has set the Church for the salvation of the world… being involved in the redemption of the universe and the glorification of God" of which evangelism is a subset limited to sharing the gospel in word and action (Bosch, 2008, pp. 4-6,9).[7] Identifying evangelism

[7] The usage and definition of the terms mission and evangelism, and relationship between them is diverse and contested for an overview see "The study of evangelism: exploring a missional practice of the church" (Chilcote & Warner, 2008). For a Church of England perspective see "Mission-shaped

this way attends to the church's need to develop "excellence" in verbal communication of the gospel (Abraham, 1989, p. 45) and "practise what they preach" (Church of England, 2006, p. 8). Notwithstanding Elmer Thiessen's (2011, pp. 8-9) suggestion that proselytism can be equated with evangelism, proselytism is commonly used as a pejorative term. It implies coercive practices of evangelism which are lacking in empathy, inconsistent with the ethics of the Kingdom of God, or which reveal disputes between the theology of the evangeliser and the evangelised, particularly in relation to soteriology, ecclesiology, or ethics (Baxter-Brown & Miller, 2022, 7). I use the term proselytism in this negative sense, defining evangelism in accordance with Bryan Stone's assertion (2018, p. 17) that:

> To evangelise is to bear witness to beauty, so that the logic of evangelism is the logic of faithfulness, witness, exemplification, and embodiment rather than the logic of production, competition or winning.

As Stone rightly observes, the method of evangelism must be consistent with the gospel proclaimed, precluding techniques of coercion or manipulation which prioritise quantitative results over process quality.

There are a variety of emerging missional movements experimenting with missional ecclesiology in the western Church. Tom Sine (2009) identifies four streams: a Missional Stream populated by members of the Gospel in our Culture movement (Barrett et al., 1998); an Emerging Stream which is typified by a relational focus such as that advocated by Brian McLaren (2002); a Mosaic stream incorporating the cultures of multiple, mostly non-white, ethnicities in worship; and a Monastic Stream including "monasticism for the middle class", such as The Order of Mission started at St Thomas's Church, at Crooks in Sheffield (Sine, 2009, p. 49) who emphasise living among the poor, or communities which seek to unite the poor and middle class (Claibourne, 2006). Rick Richardson (2013) adds a fifth Multiplying Stream which focuses on church planting, for example in the work of Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch (Frost & Hirsch, 2003, 2013; Hirsch, 2006, 2016). These streams, while differentiated,

church: church planting and Fresh Expressions of church in a changing context" (Church of England Mission and Public Affairs Council, 2004).

are not mutually exclusive. They share a common assumption that believers can perceive and participate in God's mission to restore the world.

This has led to an increased focus on the person of the Holy Spirit as the one who gives life to the church, recognising that the Spirit does not conform to "human expectations" but will act in ways that are surprising and shaped by particular culture(s) (Niemandt, 2012, p. 3). Thus, the church is defined through the loving relationships it creates: with God, between church members (*koinonia*), and with the community in which it seeks to witness to the inbreaking kingdom of God, both within and beyond its own membership (Niemandt, 2012) such that :

> The emerging ecclesiology understands the mission of God's people as to be a community that tends and takes care of all creation and to be a blessing to all nations of the earth. It is a theology of mission that builds on the social perichoretic character of God and that understands the creation as the very first act of mission and leads to an ecclesiology calling for communities of integrity in relationship, combined with a radical care for creation. (Niemandt, 2012, p. 6)

This definition encompasses the full breadth of emerging missional movements. In practice, disputes arise in the relative prioritisation of evangelism and social action, and the relationship between church and culture, as each stream balances the risks of syncretism or irrelevance (Richardson, 2013). Nevertheless, there is agreement that since mission derives from the nature of God, and is generated in participation with God, the principal task of the missional church is one of discernment (Kiefert, 2009).

Therefore, the church's primary responsibility is "finding out what God is doing and joining in" (Williams, 2003, para 13). This definition has been widely adopted within the Church of England (Graham, 2017, p. 344; Rooms & Keifert, 2014, p. 10). It conceives the church as both the consequence and the means of God's mission:

> The mission of God as creator, through Christ, in the Spirit is to bring into being, sustain and perfect the whole creation… the Church is both the fruit of God's mission – those whom he has redeemed, and the agent of his

> mission – the community through whom he acts for the world's redemption… it is not the Church of God that has a mission in the world, but the God of mission who has a Church in the world. (Church of England Mission and Public Affairs Council, 2004, pp. 84-85)

If mission is God's action, then this shifts the focus of leaders from a primary function of leadership to one of discernment since "there is indeed a Church, because of God, not because of us. And if that is so, we are free to follow where he has led, to grow and to celebrate" (Church of England Mission and Public Affairs Council, 2004, pp. 84-85). In their report, *Witness* (The Faith and Order Commission of the Church of England, 2020), The Church of England defines Christian witness as a combination of speech and action that demonstrate the love of God. They note the importance of "trusting God to be God's own witness" and of "celebrating all the places and the faces in which we find that love at work, all the occasions on which that love surprises us, appearing where we had least expected it" (p. 14). My research at The Chapel uncovers one such process through which lay Christians learn to express confidence they can participate with God in witnessing to God's own love.

1.3 Finding out what God is doing: The challenge of belief

"Finding out what God is doing and joining in" (Williams, 2003, para 13) assumes that lay Christians can identify God's love even when this conflicts with their existing expectations. Anthropologist Tanya Luhrmann (2012, 2020) and theologian Andrew Root (2017, 2019, 2021, 2022) separately observe it is difficult to believe in a benevolent interventionist God in a world where suffering is prevalent, and that Christians (and other religious groups) enact deliberate strategies to uphold their belief. This rarely acknowledged, yet fundamental, challenge for missional ecclesiology may help to explain why lay Christians tend to position themselves as religious consumers rather than missionaries.

Root (2017, p. 110), drawing on Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* (2007), defines the central problem of contemporary ministry as the way in which the dominance of the "immanent frame", prevents Christians and non-Christians, lay and ordained alike

from perceiving the activity of the Holy Spirit in the present. The immanent frame refers to a social conception of reality which presumes the world can only be explained in "natural" terms, making it impossible to perceive supernatural agency (Smith, 2014, p. 80). Root explores this challenge from a confessional perspective suggesting that the primary role of churches is to equip Christians to recognise the real presence of Jesus through giving and receiving ministry (2017, pp. 200-201):

> The deeper issue is not only that people lack the time and energy for community, practice, and substantive moral traditions but that they're living alienated from the world. This means that any sense that a living God is moving in the world becomes unbelievable (after all, modernity obscures revelation). Our experience of the world is deadened; we are alienated from life itself. It becomes nearly impossible for people to have the ears to hear and the eyes to see the living God who comes into the world in Jesus Christ, speaking to us of life, rest, and mercy. (Root, 2021, p. 187)

My research suggests part of the difficulty lay Christians have in communicating their religious beliefs is overcoming the dominance of the immanent frame which inhibits them in perceiving the work of the Holy Spirit in the present. Root attributes this "cultural observation blindness" (2021, p. 69) to time-poverty, evidenced in exhaustion, competitiveness, and an innate sense of guilt. Consequently, he rejects strategies of innovation in which, he claims, busyness silences spiritual connection (pp. 118-120). Instead, Root argues for an intense focus on the present moment as the location for meeting with God (p. 91).

For Root (2021, p. 194) present moments of relational "resonance" form a connection with eternity in the person of the Holy Spirit. He suggests that creating the "best story" of these moments is how individuals and congregations maintain faith in the presence of doubt (2017, p. 210). Root's focus on resonance leads him to reject marketing driven strategies popularised by the church growth movement; however, his recommendation to reappropriate ancient-modern approaches to worship does not explain the decline of churches that have not pursued youthfulness and change (Webster & McKnight, 2018). During my research, volunteers at The Chapel

demonstrated practices of listening, prayer, and storytelling through which they believe they can identify what Root describes as moments of resonance. I argue that these practices strengthen their missional capital equipping my participants to communicate their Christian commitments within and beyond The Chapel. Root's focus on resonance aligns with Stone's (2007) insistence that the processes of evangelism must be consistent with it its purpose and that gospel communication requires an ethics of "response and witness to a beauty that interrupts and lays claim on us inviting us outward" (Stone, 2018, p. 122). Stone emphasises the importance of attending to interruption and surprise, ideas Root alludes to, although he does not draw on these thematically. This focus on surprise as evidence of the action of the Holy Spirit is commonly elevated within the Charismatic Movement (Bialecki, 2017). Root (2022), like Stone (2018), rejects the idea that success in faith communication can be measured in numerical growth which calls into questions whether it is possible to evaluate the effectiveness of his approach.

Similarly, Luhrmann (2020, pp. xii-xv) shows, that it is difficult for people of all faiths to believe in invisible gods and spirits when doctrine does not consistently protect them from harm, and prayer does not reliably heal the sick or provide economic security. Luhrmann explores how Christians, and other religious groups, strengthen and sustain their religious convictions in a world where an invisible benevolent deity is no longer socially normalised, and in the absence of consistent corroboratory experience. She refers to this as the "paradox" of "believers as the unbelieving" (p. 2):

> When you look carefully, you can see that church is about changing people's mental habits Sunday by Sunday so that they feel that God is more real, more relevant, and more present for them — so that they believe more than they did when they walked in and hold on to those beliefs a little longer after they walk out. It is one of the clearest messages in Christianity: *You may think you believe in God, but really you don't. You don't take God seriously enough. You don't act as if he's there.* (p. 1)

Luhrmann identifies common "real making" processes at work among Evangelical Christians, Indian Zoroastrians, American Santeria, and others (Luhrmann, 2020, p. x).

These include a shared "faith frame" underpinned by "detailed stories", and training through which believers identify discontinuous thoughts as interactions with an the invisible other. Over time, by repeating these practices, believers create emotional connections with the invisible entity until the relationship "feels alive" (Luhrmann, 2020, pp. xii-xv). Peter Stromberg (2013, p. 221) criticises Luhrmann for trivialising belief in God by referring to prayer and worship as pretend play. He maintains that believers do not have a "playful conception of truth" and that even if "ecstatic emotional states establish powerful, indeed visceral, commitments to ideas, values, and symbols. Absorptive states can be harnessed to establish Truths". Stromberg unfairly trivialises play; the rise in creative arts-based methodologies in practical theology indicates that there is growing respect for creative and playful "ways of knowing" (Radford, 2020, p. 71) and that play is sometimes promoted in relating to the divine (Edgar, 2017) and supporting religious formation (Goto, 2016a, 2016b).

Root and Luhrmann separately highlight what I believe to be the principal barrier to "finding out what God is doing and joining in" (Williams, 2003, para 13), namely the difficulty of overcoming the immanent frame. In this research, I draw on their insights to identify how framing practices implemented at The Chapel teach volunteers to interpret their experiences in ways that enable them to believe they participate with God in real time. I describe the outcome of this as missional capital and argue that making similar changes in the framing of other Christian witness and service projects might help other lay Christians to overcome their fear of speaking about their beliefs in beyond their faith community.

1.4 Welcome to The Chapel

It is 1a.m., overdressed racegoers, tourists, hen parties, and football fans overflow from pubs and clubs. Many have been drinking since lunchtime. A police van dominates the square. In the centre stands St. Martin's Church. At street level, the church provides an unremarkable sandstone setting where busking drummers compete against The Red Lion pub's sound system, as it blasts "It's rainin' men, hallelujah!" The stained-glass windows rattle two stories above the glazed gaze of

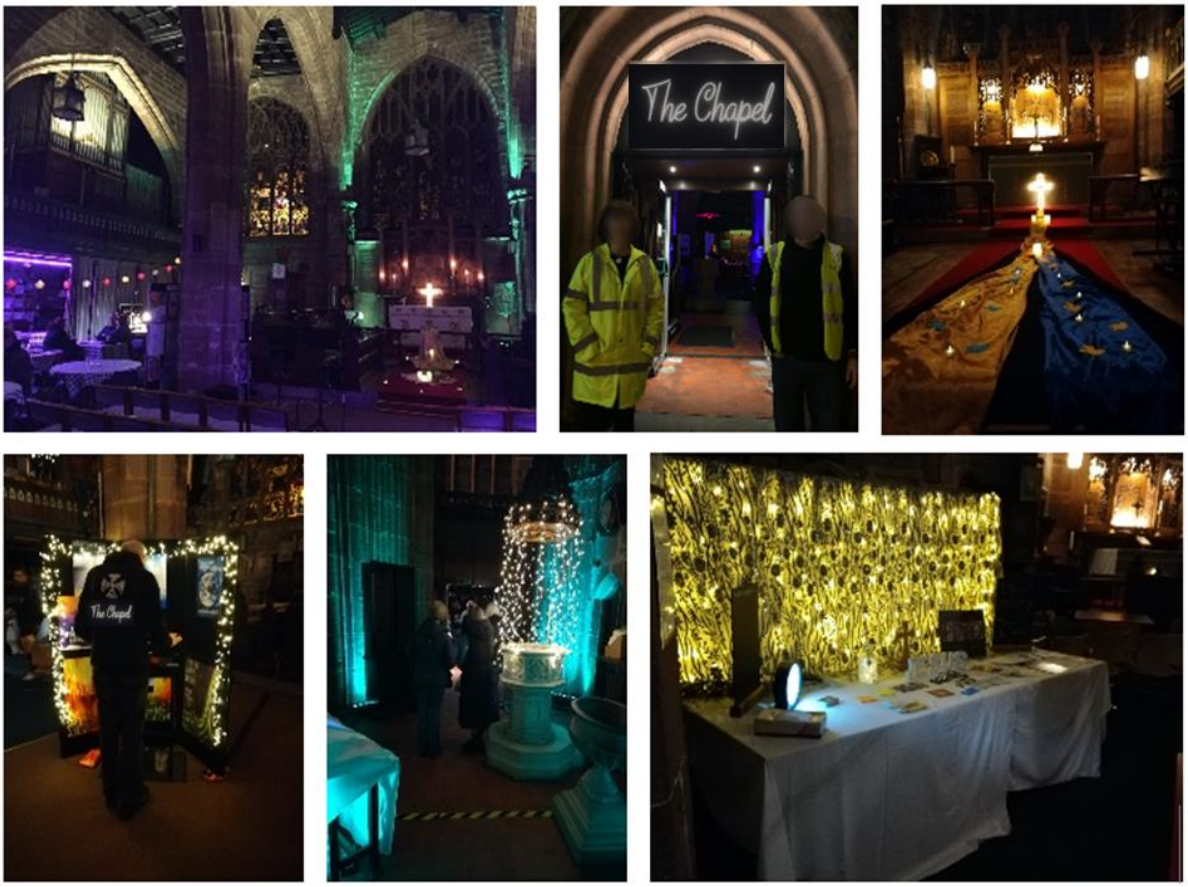
partygoers. There has been a place of worship here, in the centre of the city, for more than a millennium. Above the door a neon sign declares this is The Chapel. Fairy lights sparkle in the doorway as volunteers in reflective coats banter with the crowd. Several of this picturesque city's churches have already been converted into bars. Visitors might be forgiven for thinking that this church has also succumbed to the rising tide of secularism. They would be wrong.

A woman in a crop top and fake tan carries four-inch stiletto heels as she picks her way past the doorway dodging cigarette butts and a patch of vomit someone has attempted to wash away. Her friend glances into The Chapel, "What's that?" She responds without looking up: "Church". They head into the Red Lion. A couple of drinks later, she drags her reluctant friend into The Chapel. When they enter the noise recedes. As volunteer Lucy explained "As I walk through the door it hits me… It's like landing in a foreign country". Visitors frequently comment on the "beautiful atmosphere in here" and a sense of peace (Anna).

In many ways this foreign country feels familiar. Uplighters illuminate the prettiest bits of architecture alongside multicoloured LED strip lights. But the musician sings contemporary worship songs at a level that facilitates speech, rather than belting out eighties' hits, and there is space to sit at the café-style tables. Lengths of blue and yellow fabric dotted with tealights form a path to the neon cross leaning against the altar, inviting prayer and reflection on Russia's attack on the Ukraine. Some visitors walk in confidently to light a candle or use the toilet, most pause as they enter and gaze around the building. A woman in her fifties pockets a puzzle piece branded The Chapel and flicks through a small prayer book under a sign saying "free". A man in his twenties proffers a twenty-pound note for two coffees. His payment is politely refused. He looks bemused, nobody expects the church to be open on a Saturday night, surely this is a fundraising event? He offers to pay again. The volunteer declines smiling, "The Chapel is here to bless the city," she adds a slice of lemon cake to his order.

Volunteer John explains "There's an awful lot of people for [whom] church isn't necessarily frightening but it's not a functional part of their life. So, when it's made available, served up on a plate… on a Saturday night [when] you've got the braveness

of a couple of pints behind you. You may feel that yes, you can step in and just have a look. Because it's only ten yards in ten yards out and there's no crowd of people singing hymns or throwing Bibles at you". No service is held during The Chapel. St. Martin's Church is opened to the public from 9.30p.m. until 2a.m. by a team of ten volunteers from local, mainly Anglican, churches.



Over the course of the evening around one hundred people visit. Some visitors walk straight in and out again, embarrassed to mistake a church for a bar. Others stay for hours. Most are partygoers, a few live or work in the city, or on its streets. The ticket touts, mainly students, clubbed together to send a card and a box of Roses at Christmas to say thank-you-very-much for warm drinks and the use of the toilet. Drug dealers value the same facilities. Their presence necessitates Vaseline on the cistern and routine toilet checks. Bouncers donate take-out-cups, at the Red Lion some vie for shifts when The Chapel is open. Many visitors to The Chapel are tourists. Almost all are surprised to find themselves in church since "no one goes on a night out drinking thinking, I'm gonna end up in church tonight, do they? No one thinks that!" (Ailsa).

Volunteers say visitors are surprised to learn that staff are lay Christian volunteers with life-struggles and working lives beyond The Chapel (Da).

Volunteers “don't generally say, would you like to talk about God? People talk about God because it's church. They think that's what we want to do. Well, we do, but we don’t tell them that. We just listen, weeping with those who weep [and] laughing with those who’re laughing. [We] try to listen to God. Sometimes you can say something to somebody, and they'll [respond]. It's sort of word of knowledge type stuff on a very low level. People talk: lonely, serious trouble, bereaved, regrets, joys, the whole of life. It's a privilege” (Anna). They try to communicate their faith while avoiding accusations of proselytising. Several cite the website’s claim that “it’s God’s mission, we just ‘put the kettle on’ and see what he does”.

Winston, a volunteer, smiles with tears in his eyes “I’m overwhelmed”. He’s just been chatting with a young couple. It occurred to him to say to the man, you don’t hold yourself in very high esteem”. This unlocked a story of grief and self-harm spanning years. It’s a story the man says he has not shared before. At the end Winston offers to pray for the visitors and they accept. He recalls telling the man “God values you highly,” reflecting that “it’s amazing, the language that comes out of you”. Winston is clearly moved by his experience “if ever there was a God-incidence it was that: the fact [the visitor] came in and God gave me some words for him” because “coming in here he’d found some peace he didn’t have”. This young man’s suffering has personal resonance for Winston whose daughter has been cutting herself for months. Other volunteers recall the gratitude the couple expressed as they left and their promise to return next month. Experience suggests they won’t. Nevertheless, Winston has offered to pray for the young man daily until then. He will.

Every visitor to The Chapel is prayed for although most would not know this. For “lots of people it [visiting The Chapel] doesn't make the blindest bit of difference. But there's people who end up in tears and talking through things and it makes a difference. We've had stag dos, you tell them to go in and they’re like, nahh ... you persuade them, and they get as far as the font and... stay for an hour and just wander around. And they feel the sense of peace. And it's a new thing, and it's just a whole thing that they never

thought was possible from culture" (Cate). Volunteers offer stories of visitors' emotional responses as evidence that visitors experience the presence of God. They express hope such experiences sow seeds of future Christian commitment. They acknowledge that the outcome is uncertain: "You just wonder. I know that that [being at The Chapel] did make a difference to him [a visitor. Although], it might have made no difference to him whatsoever. There's a verse in the Bible 'God's word never returns empty' whenever somebody engages with God that is time well spent. The result might not be immediate or visible, but I think it does something" (Anna).

Volunteers recognise that telling their friends and colleagues about Sunday worship is a "yawn moment" (John), most wouldn't mention it. In contrast, they delight in sharing stories about The Chapel in their workplaces and communities. Volunteers believe that telling non-Christian friends and colleagues they have spent the evening volunteering at The Chapel normalises faith conversation because it "creates a little bit more interest which then gives you an opportunity for people to understand a little bit more about where you're coming from" (John). They value such conversations within The Chapel, and beyond it, as a way to demonstrate that their beliefs are "real" (Da).

The Chapel operates as a Christian witness and service project drawing on the traditions of both the ECM and Charismatic Anglicanism. An intersection where, owing to the project's heritage in religious education, volunteers learn to reflect theologically on their experiences. This leads them to express confidence in their ability to find out what God is doing and join in. It was launched in 2010 by a local theological college, The Spirit College, which offers degree level courses in theology, mission, and evangelism. The project aimed to provide a Christian witness in the night economy and to train its student workforce in evangelism. The college works to connect individuals and groups who "share a desire for pioneering new ways of being church, for mission and evangelism". The Spirit College accepts students, from any denomination, wishing to "hone" their ability to "help our churches to reach out in their local communities to share Jesus' Gospel of justice, mercy and peace in ways that are both natural and context-specific". The college, led by ordained Baptist and Anglican ministers, is illustrative of what Muir (2019, p. 168) describes as a growing network of theological education institutions serving the Charismatic Movement. Their primary

focus is on “practice-based learning” through participation in “innovative outreach projects”. Over time, the volunteer workforce shifted from students to members of local churches until, in 2014, The Chapel separated from the college and became an independent charity. Almost all volunteers, leaders and trustees are lay Christians working in, or retired from, secular employment aged over fifty with adult children, a minority are in their twenties. Volunteers are usually white and middle class, a profile which is typical of Christians within the Charismatic Movement (Davies, 2019, p. 9). Since The Chapel was developed by a team of theological educators, it provides a case study in how to shape a witness and service project to deliver service learning in the necessary communication skills to enable lay Christians share their religious convictions beyond their faith community.

The Chapel was created in recognition of the growing trend for people to identify as spiritual rather than religious and aims to provide a space in which volunteers do not try to “tell people of God but to show them”.[8] The Chapel explicitly states the values it expects to “shape” volunteers’ “way of being (or living): our thinking, our words and our actions” at The Chapel. These values are printed on the prayer board which is used every time The Chapel is open, reiterated in training discussions, and used to address inappropriate behaviour:

> Embracing a Deep Spirituality: We believe that our Christian witness is as much to do with who we are in God as it is with what we do.
>
> Creating Safe Spaces: We look for opportunities to help others feel secure, valued, and listened to.

[8] The relationship between spirituality and religion is complex and cannot be considered mutually exclusive. For example, Nancy Ammerman (2013, 258) posits four overlapping cultural references for spiritual discourse: “Theistic”, expressed by 71% of her participants, focuses on mystic encounters with a personal God articulated by those who participate in Judeo-Christian religious services; “Extra Theistic”, expressed by 57% of participants, focuses on experiences of transcendence, triggered by beauty in nature, art, or self-reflection, which provide meaning to life. This form of spirituality is articulated by those with and without formal religious participation; “Ethical”, expressed by 69% of participants, centres on ‘everyday compassion’ encapsulated in the notion of treating others as one would wish to be treated; and “Belonging and Believing” expressed by 45-47% of participants, this centres on participation in a religious tradition. This definition is embraced by both those who adopt religiosity and those who reject it. See also Ammerman (2017).

> Called to Simplicity: Our dependence in all things is on God and we seek not to over-complicate what we do. It's God's mission, – we just 'put the kettle on' and see what he does.
>
> Committed to Inclusion: … everyone is welcome and accepted at The Chapel. We have a deep compassion for those who feel excluded and recognise that some people feel excluded by the Church.
>
> Living with the Questions: We do not try to persuade people what to believe or provide easy answers to difficult questions.
>
> Dedicated to Transformation: As a community of Christians, we are committed to social justice, equality, and freedom.
>
> Working for Peace: We believe that the Christian message is one of peace: for individuals, relationships, and communities.
>
> Celebrating Unity in Diversity: We are from a broad spectrum of Christian traditions; we celebrate this diversity and the wonderful creativity it brings in people.

Although these values combine theological and socio-ethnic inclusivity with action for peace and justice. The Chapel does not usually engage in activities directly promoting social justice or peace making.

The Chapel's values of deep spirituality, inclusion, safe space, and unity reflect themes frequently cited by communities which identify as part of the ECM (Clawson et al., 2016, p. 4). Emerging missional ecclesiologists emphasise local, and contextual expressions of church (Fitch, 2016; Niemandt, 2012; Richardson, 2013) which focus on discipling believers to express their faith in their daily lives (Niemandt, 2019). In the UK, Matthew Guest and Steve Taylor (2006) define the ECM communities they observe as post-evangelical, uniting around shared "principles of practice", which facilitate community and reflexivity, rather than "shared beliefs" and avoiding controversial

topics such as male headship or gay marriage (p. 56).[9] The two volumes of, chiefly ethnographic, studies which comprise *The Emerging Church, Millennials, and Religion* (Reed & Zbaraschuk, 2018; Shoemaker, & Alvizo 2022, 2018) characterise the ECM in as a series of de-centralised experiments in practical theology wherein Christian millennials, marginalised from mainstream denominations, critically reflect on their experience of religion and revise their practice (2022, p. 27).[10] ECM communities aim to offer a safe space to facilitate Christian experience and dialogue (Packard & Sanders, 2013) by focusing on "narrative and storytelling as a means of cultivating Christian selfhood" (Guest, 2017, p. 42) and positioning Christianity as a "conversation" through which individuals develop "authenticity" in their religious commitments (Guest, 2017, p. 42). Church gatherings thus become sites for the enactment of "strategic religiosity" through which individuals experiment with and explore their Christian identity (Gerardo & Ganiel, 2014, p. 60). Matthew Guest (2017, p. 42) shows that the ECM works to create "inclusive 'safe spaces' in which those alienated from, or damaged by, mainstream Christianity can freely express their identities". This leads to "pluralist congregations" since it is the interaction between people with different perspectives and experiences that creates the conditions in which ECM members construct their own religious identity (Gerardo & Ganiel, 2014, p. 60). The movement is porous, lacking boundaries or unified commitments, and extends beyond clearly defined congregations to include a "milieu" of people which extends beyond the congregational gathering to include those consuming ECM books, podcasts, and seminars through which the ideas and practices of the ECM disseminate more broadly. (Moody, 2010, p. 497).[11] James Bielo (2012) initially

[9] Guest and Taylor draw on Dave Tomlinson's (1995, 50) description of mainstream evangelicalism, as founded on modernist assumptions that faith is 'unequivocal and unchanging' in contrast to post evangelicalism, which offers "freedom and space" through which individuals to "think through their faith lives in dialogue with their experience".

[10] For an overview of the ECM in the UK and US see Matthew Guest (2017) and Patrick Tojerdas (2019).

[11] Katherine Moody (2010, 498) Moody's definition indicates the breadth and diversity which characterise the ECM. She suggests participants in the ECM (and those who engage in the dialogue without congregational belonging, what she terms an emerging church "milieu") unevenly display several of "practical commitments" namely "1) 'glocal' contextualisation, (2) 'ancient-future' traditions, (3) organisational experimentation, (4) exploring postmodern thought, (5) (re)thinking theology, and (6) socially, politically, and environmentally just living". These may be displayed in reappropriation of the biblical narrative to support spiritual formation in opposition to the 'liberal or modernist narrative' or in ethical living which may or may not be affiliated with the name of Jesus.

observes ECM communities working to deconstruct their early experiences of Christianity as they reject pressure to conform to conservative values, dismiss mainstream denominations as lacking depth and breadth, and accuse megachurches of emotional manipulation. However, in his later study he discovers ECM members reforming the denominations they previously rejected (2017).

While the Chapel's values and practices are consistent with the ECM in many ways, it remains embedded in what Andrew Davies (2019, p. 4) describes as "Charismatic Anglicanism". Members of this stream of the Charismatic Movement focus on the present activity of the Holy Spirit while remaining within traditional denominations (Davies, 2019, p. 4). Most volunteers at The Chapel, at the time of this study, are lay members of the Church of England. Applications to volunteer at The Chapel must be supported by references from a church leader and volunteers sign their assent to the Nicene Creed in addition to The Chapel's values statement. While some volunteers' express doubts about their denomination, particularly following the publication of the Independent Investigation into Child Sexual Abuse in the Church of England (Jay et al., 2020), they have remained worshipping within it. Most volunteers at The Chapel regularly attend Anglican churches affiliated with the Charismatic-Evangelical New Wine Network (New Wine Trust Ltd, 1989-2019). Over half of The Chapel's volunteers regularly attend the host church, St. Martin's, which describes itself as "open evangelical, Anglican and largely informal". St. Martin's church also aligns itself with the Third Wave Charismatic Movement which emphasises "personal relationship with God and intimate spiritual fellowship with the Father leading to the demonstration of the power of God" (Akhazema, 2019, p. 82).

At The Chapel, there is no worship service for visitors. However, once the building has been set up, the evening starts with a team briefing of 15-30 minutes. This echoes, but does not completely conform to, the usual pattern of charismatic services, which typically include sung worship, then a sermon, followed by formal prayer ministry (Albrecht, 1999; Cartledge, 2018, p. 14). The Chapel omit other characteristic features of charismatic worship such as hand or banner waving in prayer and praise, or public sharing and evaluation of "congregational prophecy" (Cartledge, 2018, p. 15). On evenings where a musician is present the team briefing opens with two or three

contemporary worship songs sung without the aid of lyric sheets. One of the team leaders reads a short passage of scripture and may offer a personal reflection, then volunteers are invited to listen for words of knowledge and to pray for the evening ahead in the expectation of God's intervention in real time.

One of the characteristics of Charismatic Anglicanism is its emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit. At the end of the evening, volunteers share stories of their experiences, explicitly identifying these as the work of God in visitors' lives. Then they pray blessings over people who have visited The Chapel. During my research, it became apparent that it is this juxtaposition of an ECM-style emphasis on dialogue with the Chapel's denominational embeddedness within Charismatic Anglicanism that gives volunteers confidence in communicating their religious beliefs. This, coupled with the project's origins in theological education, mean that The Chapel provides insight into how The Church of England might leverage the potential of similar witness and service projects to improve the gathered church's effectiveness in equipping the laity to communicate their faith.

1.5 Learning to find out and join in

Against a backdrop of lay disengagement from Christian witness, this research suggests that volunteering at The Chapel builds my participants' confidence in sharing their beliefs in their communities and workplaces. Volunteers' experiences are critical to this research, providing insight into the ways The Chapel's practices impact their engagement in, and understanding of, faith communication.

Missional ecclesiology seeks to structure the church in its gathered form to equip lay Christians to witness to the gospel dispersed through mainly non-Christian communities and workplaces. Gathering and scattering are usually conceived as separate states, in section 3.4, I will show that The Chapel creates a space which incorporates elements of both church-gathered-in-worship and church-sent-in-the-world. I suggest that this positioning renders The Chapel particularly well-suited to support service learning in faith communication. Drawing on the widespread incorporation of service learning within education (Sotelino-Losada et al., 2021),

including theological education (Schaffer, 2004), I posit that minor changes in witness and service projects might facilitate similar service learning in how to instigate and engage in conversations about religion which are accepted by those beyond the faith community. During the Covid19 pandemic, 37% of churches increased their social provision; by 2022 almost four in five churches supported a food bank, and around 70% of churches provided pastoral support (Church Urban Fund, 2022, p. 3).[12] If the effect I have found at The Chapel can be replicated elsewhere then there is potential for my findings to support the Church of England's (2022) implementation of "Everyday Faith" (Church of England Renewal and Reform Committee, 2022).

In this study, I explore the changes in volunteers' attitudes and approaches to evangelism formed through participation in The Chapel from the perspective of faithful capital (Church of England, 2006, p. 8). Faithful capital a form of social capital, which enables Christians to live out the biblical injunction to "seek the peace and prosperity of the city" (Jer 29:7). This definition encompasses the church's centralised and disseminated forms:

> In corporate and personal worship, prayer, reading and meditation there is regular and explicit reminder and celebration of the gift of life and recognition and remembrance of guilt, forgiveness, and healing. This inspires the commitment to personal and collective transformation, love for neighbour and care for "the stranger", and to human dignity and social justice. Genuinely distinctive and important contributions to wider social capital are made when this faith is acted out in the wider community in authentic local engagement. Two particular distinguishing elements of faithful capital are its language and its practices. (Church of England, 2006, p. 8)

[12] For example, Liverpool Diocese's (Maynard, 2019) *A Bigger Difference* and the Church Urban Fund's (Church of England, 2006) *Faithful Cities* reports. Edward Polson (2018) offers a North American perspective.

I consider how the language and practices volunteers learn at The Chapel give rise to missional capital, a particular form of faithful capital, and assess the impact this has on volunteers' ability to discuss their Christian beliefs beyond their faith community.

1.6 Objectives and summary of thesis

The challenge of motivating lay Christians to connect Sunday worship with their weekday lives described in the *Setting God's People Free* report (The Church of England, 2022, Oct 22) contrasts with the confidence volunteers at The Chapel express in discussing their religious commitments with non-Christian friends and colleagues. In this research, I address a question seldom considered in missional ecclesiology, namely the potential for Christian witness and service projects to be configured as sites for service learning in faith communication. I explore this question by considering the experiences of volunteers at The Chapel from their own perspective. My objectives in this project are firstly, to hear the stories of volunteers, in particular their experiences of discussing their religious convictions at The Chapel, and to understand how this relates to the way they communicate their religious commitments in their workplaces and communities. Secondly, to identify how The Chapel's practices support volunteers' conviction that they find out and join in with what God is doing in visitors' lives. Thirdly, to identify how these practices relate to The Chapel's contextual framework of the ECM and Charismatic Anglicanism. And finally, to engage critically with the idea of social capital within religious organisations, arguing that Christian community witness and service projects have untapped potential to equip lay Christians with missional capital which enables them to discuss their beliefs in ways they feel are welcomed in their communities and workplaces. My findings may have resonance for other similar projects. If so, given the high number of Christian witness and service projects populated by religiously motivated volunteers, this may help to address the question of how to motivate lay people to communicate their religious convictions in their everyday lives.

In chapter two, I outline my qualitative approach to this research in practical theology. I describe the design and execution of my field work and the process of analysis. These

were undertaken using Julian Müller's (2017) postfoundational practical theological research method. I prioritise the perceptions and experiences of volunteers at The Chapel and set these in dialogue with insights from other disciplines. As a former volunteer and project leader this requires reflexive consideration of my own impact on the research and the kind of knowledge this methodology creates.

Chapter three illustrates the potential of Christian witness and service projects to operate as sites of service learning. First, I show that existing literature demonstrates religiously motivated volunteers donate their time as an expression of their religious values. Next, I draw on the work of Luhrmann (2020) to show how practices of faith framing create a "paracosm" in which volunteering experiences are interpreted. Then, I demonstrate how The Chapel can be experienced as a "liminoid moment" (Turner, 1974) bridging between the church and the night economy. I argue that the experience of liminality reduces the social risk of talking about religion, creating a space in which lay Christians can play at articulating their religious commitments to non-Christians by inviting them to share in the paracosm, albeit briefly. Lastly, I show how the processes of faith framing used at The Chapel helps to facilitate service learning.

In chapter four, I evaluate the knowledge generated through this service learning using the lens of social capital, arguing that volunteers develop missional capital. Missional capital comprises bonding capital, theological capital, bridging capital and linking capital. The Chapel provides a supportive environment (bonding capital) and clear faith frame which gives volunteers confidence to play with ways of sharing their religious convictions with strangers through listening and prayer (bridging capital). Turning to Root's (2017, 2019, 2021, 2022) work, I show that volunteers experience moments of resonance in their interactions with volunteers. Such moments anchor the faith frame in the real world as volunteers believe they participate in the life of the triune God through the power of the Holy Spirit (theological capital). Missional capital thus re-frames volunteers' experiences of vulnerability as opportunities for participation with God through listening and prayer (linking capital).

In chapter five, I demonstrate the pressures lay Christians experience in communicating their religious commitments beyond their Christian community,

showing how missional capital alleviates these. I locate The Chapel within current missional ecclesiology, considering the risks and opportunities it presents for service learning in faith communication. I then conceive missional capital as a form of "liminality competence" (Borg & Söderlund, 2015), showing how the skills volunteers develop in the liminoid moment of The Chapel enable them to normalise religious discourse with non-Christians beyond the project. I suggest that viewing the gathered/scattered church as a scale on which the paracosm is officially/unofficially supported to a greater or lesser extent in different environments highlights the potential of other Christian witness and service projects to equip volunteers with missional capital and deliver liminal competence in sharing their Christian beliefs beyond their faith community.

In the concluding chapter I evaluate missional capital as a concept and assess its significance in equipping lay Christians for the missional task of "finding out what God is doing and joining in" (Williams, 2003, para 13). I argue that minor changes to the faith framing of Christian witness and service projects might similarly equip other lay Christians with missional capital to engage in evangelism in their workplaces and communities.

In this chapter I have located my research in missional ecclesiology and explained my choice of Williams' (2003, para 13) definition of mission as "finding out what God is doing and joining in". I have also suggested that the primary barrier for Christians seeking to engage in this mission is their inability to perceive God's action in real time, based on the work of Root and Luhrmann. Finally, I have introduced The Chapel as an example of a Christian witness and service project which equips lay Christians for faith communication, strengthening the link between gathered and scattered expressions of church. I now explain how I designed and implemented my study.

Chapter 2: Story-catching

I have adopted a practical theological approach in order to study how volunteering at The Chapel helps my participants overcome their discomfort at expressing Christian beliefs beyond their faith community as practical theology seeks to explicate the relationship between theology and lived experience and takes the engagement of individual Christians in mission seriously (Swinton & Mowat, 2006, p. 27). Friedrich Schleiermacher (2011 [1811/1830]) initially conceptualised the relationship between theory and practice using the analogy of a tree to illustrate how pastoral practice forms a canopy growing out of the roots of doctrine. Congregational practices are embedded in an "envelope" of assumptions which embody an "explicit narrative tradition" within which Christian congregations interpret experience (Browning, 1996, p. 12, 40). Theoretical knowledge has historically been granted primacy (Miller-McLemore, 2016) with practical (or applied) theology devolved from this to address the needs of the church and higher education rather than the laity (Fulkerson, 2007). In consequence, clerical perspectives have been prioritised over lay experience (Graham, 2017) leading to limited research into how lay Christians integrate their spiritual and working lives (Church of England, 2017).

In contrast, hospital chaplain Anton Boisen (1952, p. 12) views the struggles of his psychiatric patients as a "living human document" granting insight into human experience, including experience of God. This insight has led to increasing recognition that phronetic wisdom (knowledge developed through practice) extends beyond the pastoral application of doctrine to include the creation of fresh theological insight (Hiltner, 1999). Indeed, Elaine Graham (2002) maintains that Christianity is primarily performative, and only subsequently codified in theory, such that practice reveals the values and assumptions of an individual community and the ways in which these are enmeshed with, often invisible, assumptions of power and privilege.[13] Thus, liberation

[13] Graham and Poling (2000) define practical theology as "a discipline that facilitates anamnestic solidarity; an awareness from the human sciences, literature and modern psychologies of the nature of remembering; an attention to justice and injustice, with a preferential bias to retrieving the traces of forgotten memory; engagement with God's liberating covenant through liturgy and other forms of remembering; collective action to create communities of solidarity and change". Graham (2007) illustrates this in her assessment of the influence of liberation theologies on public theology by drawing on Nelle Morton's (1985, p. 128) assertion "we empower one another by hearing the other to speech" in

theologies have been incorporated within practical theology seeking to redistribute power more evenly (Miller-Mclemore, 2012) and prioritise people-groups whose experience has historically been silenced (Graham, 2007). Because the relative prioritisation of theory and practice is debated (Fulkerson, 2007) this has given rise to a range of models facilitating a "critical conversation" (Pattison, 2000) between the two.[14] Research is inherently selective, prioritising some voices and silencing others (Ganzevoort & Roeland, 2014, p. 100). Failing to listen to the voices of those who are typically unheard deprives the church of a fuller understanding of God (Miller-McLemore, 2018), therefore I have chosen to prioritise the lived experience of lay Christians.

I selected The Chapel as a single-case study in order to gain a detailed understanding of the processes underpinning volunteers' confidence in speaking about their religious commitments. The "particularity" of a single-case study, with its emphasis on providing an in-depth description of a unique illustration, generates knowledge through "vicarious experience" and thus has the potential to reveal insights of "universal significance" (Donmoyer, 1990, p. n.p.). While acknowledging that generalising from single case studies overlooks diversity (Gomm et al., 2000), I suggest that this study illustrates the potential for "process generalisation" (Simons, 2015) by identifying practices which may assist other Christian witness and service projects.[15] Determining whether my findings might be applicable elsewhere necessitates a detailed understanding of the research context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), I therefore provide a "thick description" (Geertz & Darnton, 1973) of volunteers' experiences at

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which Morton proposes that because God both hears and speaks "women know hearing to speech as powerfully spiritual and know spirit as movement and presence hearing us" (p. 129).

[14] For example: Richard Osmer (2011, p. 4) suggests "practical theological interpretation" as the accumulation and analysis of four types of evidence: 1. "descriptive"/"empirical" (evidence from experience). 2. "interpretive" (social scientific explanations). 3. "normative" (evidence from scripture, religious tradition etc.). 4. "pragmatic" (action required in response). He recognises that all such evidence is gathered within a specific context which itself exists within a complex and interconnected socio-cultural 'web' (Miller McLemore, 1996) of relationships in which power is held asymmetrically.

[15] This is similar to the way that organisations analyse one-off critical incidents to reduce risk and optimise performance (March et al., 1991). Although, individual Christian witness and service projects vary in their specifics (e.g. between a toddler group and a food bank) volunteers' experiences at The Chapel suggests there may be potential to structure completely different projects to effect a similar learning opportunity.

The Chapel so that readers can judge whether my findings are relevant to their context (Gomm et al., 2000).

Protecting participants privacy is an inherent challenge of single case studies. I have anonymised my data, created pseudonyms for all locations, organisations, and individual participants, deleted search engine links connecting me to The Chapel, and obscured logos and faces in photographs. I also withheld information which would render my participants, The Chapel, or people/situations they discussed individually identifiable.[16] All data was stored securely on University of Chester servers to protect against inappropriate access. Nonetheless, privacy is relative, in small communities participants may be able to identify one another (Allmark et al., 2009) and several volunteers openly discussed their involvement in this study.

2.1 Insider research

People researching their own organisations benefit from "access" and "pre-understanding" including a grasp of the "politics", although their proximity to the research environment calls for enhanced reflexivity in order to "reframe" experience in discussion with the literature (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007, pp. 67-72). As a Christian, and former project leader, my participants regard me as "insider" to The Chapel since I share many of their beliefs, values, and social circle.[17] Research participants can be more willing to share their experiences of vulnerability with someone they believe understands their experience (Talbot, 1999). Volunteer Marie expressed concern she would be labelled "dramatic" if she told the people she was out drinking with that "the word suicide came to mind" as she watched a young man at the bar. Initially, when relating the experience to me during our interview, she stressed that she "might be quite wrong" about believing the man felt suicidal. On reflection, she admitted "I think

[16] Given the need for a thick description to enable individual assessment of the applicability of findings (Wiles et al., 2008) I have included as much detail as possible without compromising the anonymity of the project or participants.

[17] James Banks (1998) identifies two dimensions of belonging in cross cultural research: indigenous/external, which refer to the individual's level of socialisation within the research community or organisation; and insider/outsider, which refers to the degree to which they share the community's goals, values, and culture.

it probably was God nudging me to speak to him. But I don't want to say that, you know, just don't want to come out and say it". I suspect our existing relationship gave her confidence to share her interpretation of this experience with me.

Insider researchers balance elevated levels of organisational trust and access with critical distance, while treating participants with dignity (Knott, 2005). During Luhrmann's (1985, p. 17) study of witches she observes that a previous (male) researcher, whose actions clearly identified him as an outsider, had been "heartily despised" among witches. Knowing this, Luhrmann worked to "dispel" her "outsider status" feeling "relieved when people forgot what I had so carefully told them" (Luhrmann, 1991, p. 17). Following publication, her participants expressed distress, believing Luhrmann had "dishonoured" the vows of secrecy taken in the initiation rites which gave her access to their meetings (Pearson, 2001, p. 56). Luhrmann's decision to hold insider status alongside an avowed disbelief in magic is disrespectful to her research participants since it either requires her to "misrepresent" herself to her coven or means she must "deny her experience" (Ewing, 1994, p. 573).[18] Jo Pearson (2001, p. 58), who self-identifies as a witch, therefore grapples with the issue of whether to breach her own vows of secrecy to "contextualise" her research. She relies on her purpose, correcting misconceptions about Wicca, to justify her research as "ethical and informative" (Pearson, 2001, p. 58). Nevertheless, she acknowledges there is a risk of identifying phenomena her fellow witches are not aware of and may not wish to know. Within practical theology, the requirement "to do theological justice" means disclosing the community's "habits and idiosyncrasies, its mistakes and its blindness as well as its moments of honesty and grace" (Fulkerson, 2007, 14) in the hope that this will provide fresh insight to overcome new challenges, and support "faithful and transformative" practices within the church (Swinton & Mowat, 2006, p. 25). I implemented transparent processes (outlined below) to ensure my participants offered fully informed consent to participate and invited volunteers to redact their transcripts in full or in part. In addition, anonymising the project eliminates

[18] Luhrmann (2020, 63) recalls a number of 'anomalous experiences" such as seeing a group of druids by her window "as if they were real". She concludes that magic practices create a different "mental modal" of the world which lead practitioners to have unusual sensory experiences which she defines as the result of increased psychological absorption in the model.

the risk of reputational damage which might impact The Chapel's ability to attract future funding or volunteers.

However, communities are not homogenous and exhibit degrees of belonging and divergent levels of value assimilation (Ganiel & Mitchell, 2006); it is possible to belong in some ways and not in others.[19] As a newly ordained minister and former project leader I needed to be sensitive in addressing the power dynamics within my research. My newly acquired clerical collar, even unworn, lends me authority. This was compounded by my previous role as leader, and ongoing relationships with the leadership team at The Chapel, as a result I wanted to make sure that participants did not feel pressured to take part. In accordance with the Economic and Social Research Council (2023) principles of ethical research all participants in this study received a letter of invitation and participant information sheet.[20] They each signed a consent form which stated that they could withdraw from the research at any time prior to publication without explanation or negative consequences, although none of them exercised this right. Despite this, it can be difficult for insiders to juggle the roles of researcher and professional (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007). I found myself distracted during participant observations when team members engaged me in pastoral conversations, reflecting on my experience I came to recognise the importance of such conversations in re-enforcing trust between team members. When participants spoke about painful experiences I felt conflicted. As a researcher, I no longer hold pastoral responsibility for the team, but they still respond to me as if I held this role. Recognising that they may not wish me to use this information in my study I invited

[19] Insider/outsider researcher positions are not binary, they represent a continuum within which the researcher's position is situationally unstable (Hoel, 2013). See also Ganiel and Mitchell (2006) who reflect that within religious traditions, power inequities result in barriers that are fluid but often only semipermeable since religious identity is inextricably intertwined with a range of socio-political, spiritual, and emotional identities, each of which is inhabited.

[20] ESRC six principles of ethical research to be incorporated within the full lifecycle of the research project are "Research should aim to maximise benefit for individuals and society and minimise risk and harm; The rights and dignity of individuals and groups should be respected; Wherever possible, participation should be voluntary and appropriately informed; Research should be conducted with integrity and transparency; lines of responsibility and accountability should be clearly defined; Independence of research should be maintained and where conflicts of interest cannot be avoided they should be made explicit" (Economic and Social Research Council, 2023). See appendices for copies of the participant information sheet and consent form.

each participant to review their transcript and delete information they preferred not to share.

I approach this research as a Christian, navigating the "dual calling" (Stoddard, 2013, p. 569) of researcher and believer and seeking glimpses of the "passion, the wounding and the glory of… this living God" (Walton, 2014, p. 17) in stories of everyday life. Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor rightly draws attention to the risk of "producing propaganda instead of research and/or of pushing personal agendas" (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2017, p. 250) and research findings can overemphasise common or divergent experiences between researcher and participants (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Researchers have historically sought to demonstrate objectivity by distancing themselves from their research community (Harvey, 2003, p. 125) since "if you had already accepted the same assumptions inhering in your participants' world views, then you risk reproducing them in your research" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 127). I do not claim objectivity in this research, my findings are "deepened, complex" and "thoroughly partial" since every stage of this research has been "filtered" (Richardson, 2000, pp. 14, 15) through my experiences and commitments. Instead, I seek to be transparent in explaining how my commitments shape my findings and including times of risk and failure to offer a more complete description of my participants' experiences. I have therefore adopted Julian Müller's (2004) postfoundational practical theology research methodology in conducting this study. Müller's methodology elicits narratives, interprets these in context, explores the co-creative impact of the researcher, and reviews findings through interdisciplinary lenses on the basis of "transversal rationality" which juxtaposes insights from disciplines with competing, or even conflicting, foundational assumptions to offer a more complete understanding (Müller, 2009; Müller, 2011).[21] I

[21] Post-foundationalism embraces diversity at an individual level (by inviting narration of the same events from the perspective of different academic disciplines) and valuing the uncertainty and doubt this may generate as a necessary pre-requisite for generating "meaningful questions about God" (Müller, 2023, p. 7). Müller (2011, p. 4-5) uses the analogy of an "ecotone", the border between different plant communities which supports plant life from two or more habitats resulting in a more diverse ecology. Müller (2001), drawing on the work of J Wentzel van Huyssteen (2017), proposes post foundationalism as a middle way between foundationalism, which maintains that "absolute truth" can be accessed via research, and anti-foundationalism, which holds that there is no foundational truth, merely a range of perspectives on events. Van Huyssteen (2017, p. 7) recognises that all academic disciplines (including theology) are underpinned by cultural and contextual assumptions which define the type of questions they are best equipped to answer. Thus, taking an approach of transversal

have selected authors within the fields of service learning, volunteerism, social capital theory, and anthropology of religion to consider the interplay between these, competing and sometimes conflicting perspectives to "imagine alternative stories" (Müller 2023, p. 1) in which Christian witness and service projects might be configured as sites supporting service learning in "finding out what God is doing and joining in" (Williams, 2003, para 13) in real time.

2.2 Collecting narratives

Müller (2017, p. 92) takes a qualitative approach involving multiple levels of narrative inquiry. Narrative approaches are widely used in practical theology (Ganzevoort et al., 2014), including within congregational studies which seek to reveal the lived experiences of lay Christians (see (Bialecki, 2017; Bielo, 2011; Gerardo & Ganiel, 2014; Strhan, 2015). Müller (2004, p37) locates participants' experiences in context, elicits their interpretations of these, clarifies their understanding of God's "presence/absence" within the experience, and then reflects on this from an interdisciplinary perspective.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with ten volunteers during which I invited them to share and interpret stories about The Chapel with me and to reflect on their experience of the presence or absence of God within these narratives. Stories are flexible, events are first "lived", then "told" and "re-told", changing over time and ultimately "re-lived" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2006, p. 479), each re-telling is shaped to illustrate the meaning the story teller wishes to communicate to the hearer from that particular experience at that particular time (Bold, 2012). Next, I considered how volunteers interpretations relate to the "traditions of interpretation" within their context. This matters, because stories are not fixed but continually evolving and told to serve a social purpose (Clandinin, 2013, p. 14) since they are shaped by their context over time in a particular location, and in relation to specific social

rationality in practical theology "yields a collage of knowledge claims that aims to be the most adequate, most reliable and for now the most meaningful we can claim in certain specific contexts" (Van Huyssteen, 2017,p. 7).

relationships (Clandinin & Connelly, 2006). In the remainder of this thesis, I explain how participants draw on paradigms and practices common to the Emerging Church and Charismatic Anglicanism as they generate their interpretation of events. In narrative studies, the resulting stories sometimes conflict or appear incoherent (Clandinin, 2013, pp. 70-71, 218), juxtaposing data from interviews and observations illuminates areas of conflict and alignment providing a more complete understanding (Tobin & Begley, 2004, p. 394). Comparing these, I was struck by the contrast between participants' self-description of being "rubbish" (Ailsa, Peter), the amount of time visitors seemed willing to spend with them, and the high esteem in which they were held by other team members.

Finally, the description is thickened by bringing in perspectives from other academic disciplines based on transversal rationality (Müller, 2009). Transversal rationality promotes interdisciplinary discourse by recognising that each discipline is predicated on its own, sometimes conflicting, assumptions. It seeks to find a balance between the risks of "relativity and subjectivity" inherent in social constructionist methodologies with the "rigidity and false claims" of foundationalist methodologies that fail to recognise the influence of context on perspective (Müller, 2009, p. 203). In this study I consider volunteer's stories from viewpoints within practical theology, volunteerism, service learning, social capital, and anthropology of religion to illuminate different facets of my participants' experiences. I now describe how I applied the stages of Müller's methodology, although, in practice, as is common in research, these overlapped and became mutually informative (Tobin & Begley, 2004).

I began by eliciting volunteers' experiences and situating these in context. I used a purposive sampling approach based on criteria (Silverman, 2017, pp. 272-278) selecting current volunteers who, via paid or unpaid work, had opportunity to discuss beliefs beyond their faith community. I recruited ten current lay volunteers (rather than those who had left the project) across the different volunteer functions within The Chapel (leadership (three), prayer (one), worship (one), and visitor engagement (five)). Volunteers had taken part in the project for between two and nine years. Most participants work in education, healthcare, or the hospitality sector. Over half are self-employed or hold senior management positions. Three participants are male, seven

are female. Two were aged in their twenties, most were aged between forty and fifty, with two respondents aged over sixty. Most hold undergraduate degrees, some have postgraduate or professional qualifications, and one holds a theological qualification. Only one participant in this study had no connection to other volunteers beyond The Chapel.

I originally planned to interview between twelve and fifteen volunteers and recruit a representative proportion from different churches. I was unable to reach this target due to the reduction in volunteers and increasing concentration of volunteers worshipping at St. Martin's church.[22] Seven participants regularly attend New Wine or Spring Harvest and five are married to church-attending Christians. St. Martin's church describes itself as "open evangelical, Anglican, and largely informal". However, its worshippers might be considered as an example of "mainstream charismatics" (Kay, 2019), specifically within "Charismatic Anglicanism" (Davies, 2019) which describes Church of England congregations which embrace a Pentecostal theology emphasising the work of the Holy Spirit.[23] The church runs the Alpha course regularly, attends New Wine conferences and is linked in ecumenical partnership with churches from the Baptist Fresh Streams network, its services tend to incorporate contemporary worship songs popularised in churches such as Hillsong many of which focus on the person of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, this research reflects experienced volunteers in paid or voluntary employment who are engaged with Charismatic Anglicanism and have long-standing relationships with one another. Their understanding of the impact of volunteering at The Chapel is related to their lifelong experience of religion, however

[22] 2010-2019 the project had 20-35 volunteers from 6-12 churches. The Chapel closed 2020-2021 during the Covid-19 pandemic, when it re-opened in Autumn 2022 only 16 volunteers returned of whom 12 worship at St. Martin's church. Two participants are long-standing members of St. Martin's Sunday congregation, one regularly worshipped with them until 2020, five moved from other churches to worship at St. Martin's after volunteering at The Chapel, one began volunteering at The Chapel shortly after joining St. Martin's Sunday congregation.

[23] Mark Cartledge (2017) studies the charismatic church in Britain, he notes that experience is valued within this tradition as evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit and highlights the importance of religious socialisation through practices of donating time or money which embody God's love for all humanity. Not all the practices he identifies are visible at The Chapel, for example times of ministry tend to be informal and glossolalia (speaking in tongues) is not publicly discussed, or promoted although some interviewees use this practice in private prayer.

my focus is on finding out how participating in The Chapel has impacted their faith communication.

Qualitative interviewing techniques enable the researcher to "collect and rigorously examine narrative accounts of social worlds" (Miller & Glassner, 2011, p. 144). I interviewed ten volunteers, interviewing fits well with the culture of The Chapel since testimony (within the context of public worship) is highly valued among Charismatic Christians indeed Mark Cartledge shows that:

> The narrative structure of Pentecostal and charismatic spirituality gives the best possible framework for such testimony as people simply tell and retell their stories about life with, and through, and in God.

I selected semi-structured interviews as these are particularly well suited to "obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 124) while enabling the researcher to focus conversations on answering the research question or obtain more detailed descriptions as the interview develops (Brinkmann, 2014, p. 286).

During each interview I invited participants to describe and then reflect on the meaning of their stories in line with Brinkman's (2014) best practice to obtain data through interviews. I conducted a pilot study of three participants to test my discussion guide, revealing that the guide was too long and lacked focus on communicating Christian beliefs beyond the faith community. I initially planned to use the "five whys" technique (Kohfeldt & Langhout, 2012; Ohno, 1988) to encourage volunteers to reflect more deeply on their experiences.[24] I was unable to implement this completely in any of the pilot interviews since my participants found repeated "why" questioning uncomfortable, even after it had been explained. Instead, I asked participants to provide more detail and directly invited them to articulate their view on the presence or absence of God in the experiences they related. Although pilot data in research

[24] Five whys is a tool developed for root cause analysis which involves iterative "why" questioning coupled with brainstorming possible solutions (Ohno 1998). This was used successfully with students in the context of group problem solving (Kohfeldt & Langhout, 2012), however in one-to-one interviews it made my participants feel under pressure.

studies is regarded cautiously in research due to the risk of data contamination (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002, pp. 34-35) since my study did not test alternative interventions and the majority of the discussion guide was used in subsequent interviews I chose to include data from pilot interviews alongside interviews obtained using the revised discussion guide.

I interviewed participants using Zoom Web Conferencing between 8th August and 12th October 2020 since face-to-face interviewing was prohibited by Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. Zoom is valued by researchers for its sound quality, simplicity of use, widespread uptake of the free version, and its ability to securely record conversations (Archibald et al., 2019). Video conferencing facilitates rapport through gesture and facial expression when compared to phone or email communication (Archibald et al., 2019) and because participants login online from their own homes, the conversations were relaxed (Oliffe et al., 2021). The audio lag led to situations where both researcher and participant spoke simultaneously (Oliffe et al., 2021) making recording inaudible in places. During later interviews I deliberately left longer pauses after each time a participant stopped speaking, this led to richer data as they elaborated on their thoughts.

I conducted interviews, transcribed these, and analysed the data myself to reduce external “compromising influences” (Mero-Jaffe, 2011, p. 233). This process helped me to familiarise myself with the data (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018) and reflect on my interviewing style (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). I started each interview with an informal chat to establish rapport before initiating a “meaning making conversation” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2011, p. 152). I tried to maintain a position of “unconditional positive regard” (Rogers, 1992) which refers to an attitude of valuing another person through empathy and affirmation while refraining from judgement or disapproval. It is considered a “spiritually competent practice” (Wattis et al., 2017) in therapeutic settings, where it helps patients and clients feel comfortable discussing difficult topics. Svend Brinkman (2007) is critical of positive regard, particularly in elite or political interviewing, where he maintains participants should be challenged to explain or defend their claims. However, given the high number of my participants who expressed insecurity about their faith communication, and the dominance of clerical

perspectives in theology, I felt it was important that volunteers felt safe to offer their own opinion rather than guessing at a "right answer" to please me as former leader and ordained priest. The information participants shared often surprised me, including how their suffering through poor mental and physical health, self-harm, baby-death, or attempted suicide had helped them connect with visitors at The Chapel. Interviews carry an ethical risk of encouraging over-disclosure (Brinkmann, 2014, p. 297) and I worried that my participants would regret sharing this information. I invited them to review and edit their transcripts, however no-one chose to delete sensitive data.

Müller's methodology recognises the importance of clearly identifying the researcher's precommitments and positionality (2017, p. 92). Since interviewing is an "interpretive practice" in which "knowledge is actively formed and produced" through "social encounter" (Holstein & Gubrium, 2011, p. 151), my confessional position has methodological implications. Ward (2017, p. 10) advocates for a practical theology conducted within the context of worship and prayer since:

> Taking theology seriously means fostering a continual relationship with God. Worship and prayer is the basis for practical theology because it enables a theology that is relational and that starts with encounter and wonder.

Including prayer respects The Chapel's position that God is active within all of life and allows for the possibility of richer data. The Chapel's values state their intention to "seek the presence of God first and foremost", this is embodied in the project's practice of starting each evening in prayer. Within the Charismatic Movement, prayer is most associated with the person of the Holy Spirit manifesting gifts of healing or the ability to pray in tongues (Bialecki, 2017; Gabriel, 2020). In Bielo's (2011, p. 82) study of Christians within the ECM he observes his research participants using prayer as an imaginative exercise for engaging with God. Underpinning such practices is an expectation that God is immanent and active in the world, and that God speaks in ways that can be understood (Bialecki, 2017, p. 57). Eileen Campbell-Reed and Christian Scharen (2013, p. 249) incorporate silent attention to "sacred presence" within their research. They maintain that such "theological framing" forms a "more thoroughly

practical theological mode of ethnographic interviewing" transforming data gathering into "a space of substantive conceptual and theological work" and rendering their research a "relational, emotional and embodied practice of pastorally imaginative work and participation in the life and work of God" (p. 259). From a non-confessional perspective, Luhrmann and Morgain (2012, p. 359) also suggest that "people who pray actually have different sensory evidence with which to interpret the claims they make about reality".

Despite its benefits, prayer can also be used manipulatively, I wanted to open interviews in prayer without compromising my participants autonomy. There is little research into prayer in the context of qualitative interviewing, so I drew on studies reviewing the use of prayer in therapeutic settings to determine best practice. Marianne McInnes Miller and Monica Chavier's (2013) identified ethical risks to using prayer within a therapeutic context: faith may be imposed by the therapist on the client, prayer can be used to increase the therapist's power, or expressed inappropriately. Similar risks exist in incorporating prayer within qualitative interviewing. Despite these, over time family and marriage counsellors from a range of religious traditions recognise they have absorbed a bias against prayer during training and find ethical ways to incorporate prayer in their practice (Miller & Chavier, 2013). Peter Gubi asserts that the risks of prayer can be mitigated during therapy and are outweighed by the benefits, particularly where prayer is silent (Gubi, 2007a, 2007b, 2009, 2017; Gubi & Jacobs, 2009). His research shows that silent prayer can facilitate a sacred space which empowers clients to respond authentically, suggesting it may be "unethical" not to offer prayer where this is central to a client's spirituality (Gubi, 2017, p. 44). The issue of power in the relationship between researcher and participants is complex (Mason, 2018, pp. 92-93), nevertheless, given that prayer is central to The Chapel's practices I felt a period of silent prayer respected volunteer's commitments and could positively impact the quality of my data without risking participant coercion.

I transitioned from introductory rapport-building conversation into interview by lighting a candle and holding a period of silent prayer. To ensure participants understood this commitment in advance I stated that there would be a time of prayer

in the participant information sheet and reiterated this at the start of each interview. Several participants brought a candle with them to the Zoom meeting. One participant, who serves on the prayer team, chose to pray aloud at this point. In practice silent prayer was awkward over Zoom. Reviewing one early video I realised that my participant and I had alternated looking at the camera to speak, realised the other was praying then resumed a bowed posture three times. In subsequent interviews, I prayed with my eyes open, looking at the camera so that the other did not feel pressured to extend their prayer. It is impossible to determine what impact this had on data quality or participant experience; as a minimum, it may have increased participants confidence that they would not be ridiculed for speaking honestly about their religious beliefs.

Transcription is an interpretive process involving decisions about the underlying meaning of statements (Bailey, 2008). I recorded each interview as a video and created denaturalised transcriptions indicating pauses, emphasis, and changes in tone of voice to help avoid embarrassment for my participants, since naturalised transcripts can appear inarticulate (Mero-Jaffe, 2011, p. 240). I did not indicate linguistic variations since this was not the central focus of my research, nor did I include visual information in the transcripts partly due to the complexity of coding and partly as Zoom records video meaning that I could review relevant portions during analysis. Issuing transcripts to participants helped to ensure I had accurately represented their meaning (Mero-Jaffe, 2011, p. 234). I invited feedback, advising participants that if they did not respond these would be presumed an acceptable record of our conversation. In a close community such as The Chapel there is a risk that despite pseudonyms, people will identify one another through their interview data (Neal & McLaughlin, 2009). Providing transcripts gives participants the opportunity to reflect on whether they are willing for all their data to be included (Lancaster, 2017). Four participants acknowledged receipt, three offered clarifying information on minor details. Half did not respond at all. Non-response is common, and may be due to low engagement, time pressure, embarrassment, or unknown factors (Mero-Jaffe, 2011, p. 244).

I drew on my experience of the project alongside participant observations undertaken in February, May, and September 2022 to locate these narratives in context. During my

time at The Chapel I spent time in each of the volunteer areas (kitchen, café, door, worship space, prayer space). I recorded my impressions in photographs and field notes, (Musante & DeWalt, 2010, pp. 138-156), and used journalling to explore tensions within my experience and between data sources.[25] This "reflexive interplay" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 58) was supported by the critical distance I gained by spending my curacy at a different church which helped me to move from participant to participant-observer (Takyi, 2015).

2.3 Interpreting & extrapolating narratives

Originally, I planned to use NVivo to conduct thematic coding of my data using Christina Silver and Nicholas Woolf's (2015) five level qualitative data analysis (5QDA) approach. 5QDA translates strategic objectives (addressing the purpose of the project and conceptual framework of analysis) into tactics (software tools) to leverage NVivo tools effectively. Building on Helen Collins' (2018) recognition that analysis is anchored in prior reading and experience, I created a simple analytical framework drawing from Walter Brueggemann's (1993) *Biblical Perspectives on Evangelism: Living in a Three-Storied Universe*. I took an iterative approach, analysing my data from the first pilot interview. In the process, I found the narrative context became lost. I tried alternative categories and descriptions, but the gap remained since this "categorising" approach is more helpful for identifying themes than stories (Butler-Kisber, 2002, p. 229).

I experimented with creating a series of narrative "found poems" (Butler-Kisber, 2002) from each interview. Found poetry requires creative editing rather than creative writing (Robinson, 2022), condensing and distilling participants words engenders empathy and facilitates reflection (Furman, 2004), which increases the researcher's familiarity with the data and creates fresh insight (Faulkner, 2017, p. 215). This makes poems a powerful tool for generating new insight (Butler-Kisber, 2018, p. 229), and connecting

[25] See also, Goto (2018, pp 87-88) who insists that context cannot be regarded as a "background" against which the researcher "foreground['s]" particular experience since experience is inextricably embedded in a specific location.

participants thoughts and emotions (Furman, 2004), while retaining the context (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Found poetry demonstrates the co-creative nature of qualitative research as I selected what was included and excluded at every stage. Cahnmann-Taylor (2017) addresses criticism that arts-based research methods, such as poetic inquiry, are: self-absorbed; failing to address the needs of those whose voices are suppressed; confuse fact with fiction; focus on concepts at the expense of praxis; elevate marginal voices without consideration of consensus; and lack artistic merit. She concludes that the solution is not to reject arts-based research tools because they are risky, but instead to address the risks and learn from failure. While found poems offer the researcher's perspective on what they have seen and heard, they can, when created collaboratively, give participants a voice with greater clarity and resonance (Butler-Kisber, 2018, pp. 229, 232, 235). I sought to mitigate some of these risks by sending the poems to my participants with their transcripts. Anna responded that her poems "reflected back to me in such a succinct way my own thinking that makes me understand it better". Cate described reading them as "like looking in a mirror" a reflection which, while not always comfortable, "captures what we talked about". The found poems were crucial to my reflection and analysis, however, I do not consider myself a "scholartist" (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2017, pp. 254-255) and have not included found poems in this thesis.[26] I then used NVivo collate data from poems, transcripts, and the literature in nodes making easier to access and cross reference multiple data sources. This enabled me to conduct thematic analysis while retaining the narrative context.

Practical theology situates experience within a "living web" of interconnected social, religious, and cultural influences to generate meaning (Miller-McLemore, 1996; Miller-McLemore, 2018). This includes societal meta-narratives (Clandinin, 2013, p. 207) and a dialogue with participants theological tradition (Ward & Campbell, 2011, pp. 228-229). A high proportion of my participants are engaged with Charismatic Anglicanism through St. Martin's church and New Wine festivals. Likewise, recognising the ECM paradigms on which The Chapel is founded, I reflected on how my participants'

[26] See also Lynn Butler-Kisber (2002, 238) who demonstrates the value of arts-based research methods to generate insight without necessarily being included within the "final representational form".

theology and practices interact with these streams of Christianity. My study also considers the "interplay" of "alternative stories" from practical theology, volunteerism, service learning, social capital, and anthropology of religion (Müller, 2011, p. 5).

Since narrative inquiry reflects the knowledge of a particular people, at a particular time and place, the learning generated is inherently incomplete and subject to change (Clandinin, 2013, p. 205) the veracity of narrative research is therefore judged by its persuasiveness, whether the interpretation is reasonable and convincing (Riessman, 2008), rather than by tests of validity. I re-tell volunteers' stories in this thesis in the hope that other Christian witness and service projects find elements within my participants' particular narratives which resonate with their own context and might enhance their professional practice (Butler-Kisber, 2002, pp. 229-230; Conle, 1996; Donmoyer, 1990). Ultimately, "the telling of the different stories needs to develop into a retelling, which will, it is hoped provide new insights and understanding" (Müller, 2017, p. 95). The primary finding of this study is that it is possible to structure Christian witness and service projects to equip volunteers with missional capital. In the following chapter, I discuss the principles of service learning and demonstrate how The Chapel facilitates this.

Chapter 3: Service learning

In this chapter, I show how my participants collectively enact their religious commitments at The Chapel in ways that re-enforce their belief that God is active in real time, overcoming the dominance of the "immanent frame" which usually precludes supernatural interpretations (Root, 2019, p. 270). I then outline how The Chapel operates as a bridge between the church and the night economy and explain how this environment has been constructed to effect service learning in faith communication.

3.1 Volunteering as an expression of religious values

Volunteers at The Chapel donate their time as an expression of their Christian commitments. Jane describes volunteering as a "really good opportunity" to show "how I live out my faith", likewise Da believes that his "faith is real and evident" to visitors to The Chapel. Existing research indicates that religiously motivated volunteers primarily offer their time as an expression of their values (Erasmus & Morey, 2016, p. 1346; Okun et al., 2015, p. 860). The Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI) (Clary & Snyder, 1999) identifies six reasons for volunteerism: expressing personal values, developing skills & understanding, personal enhancement, gaining career experience, forming social relationships, and protective, for example to relieve guilt (Clary & Snyder, 1999). However, volunteers who also take part in corporate forms of religion are more strongly inspired by appeals to altruism than to ego, describing their primary purpose as the "expression of altruistic and humanitarian activities" (Erasmus & Morey 2016, p. 1343).[27] The VFI has been extended to include role identity (Penner,

[27] There is evidence of reduced attrition among volunteers who participate for altruistic or other centred reasons versus those with egoistic motivations in crisis-counselling (Clary & Orenstein, 1991) and AIDS support (Penner & Finkelstein, 1998). Notably, a focus on others is positively correlated with a higher frequency of activism (Omoto et al, 2010), although egoistic needs must be met over the longer term to prevent attrition (Omoto & Snyder 1995). Research among student volunteers in Pakistan simplified the VFI into four dimensions: affiliation, beliefs, career development and egoistic motivations (Butt et al., 2017). This study reaffirmed the importance of peer approval previously noted among Chinese student volunteers (Law et al., 2011) Given the cultural differences between the Chinese and Pakistani students and volunteers at The Chapel in North West England, who were considerably older, the results are difficult to correlate, however the importance of peer approval is not confined to adolescents.

2002), organisational commitment (Chacon et al., 2007), reciprocity, reactivity, and recognition (Esmond, 2004). Volunteers also offer their service out of a sense of social responsibility, desire for social justice, or gratitude e.g. for support they have received or for their material goods and social status (Musick & Wilson, 2008). A similar dynamic sustains below market rate salaries among faith based and non-profit organisations which attract employees by articulating "elaborate spiritual and moral values" (Bassous, 2015; Clarke, 2006, p. 845).[28] It seems that "religiosity", when defined as attendance at and engagement in corporate worship, "may provide the way, and value-expressive volunteer motivation the will to volunteer" (Okun et al., 2015, p. 860).

The relationship between religious participation and volunteering can be mutually re-enforcing. Baylor University (Myers et al., 2008, p.380) conducted a study involving almost 5,000 lay Christians across thirty-five congregations in the USA, of whom 946 individuals were actively involved in volunteering. 74% of respondents said that volunteering had "strengthened their faith", this effect was most pronounced among volunteers who said they had a sense of God's personal presence and guidance, and among those who were more engaged with church practices such as worship attendance, prayer, and Bible study (which were used as a proxy measure for religious maturity). The authors overstate their case based on incomplete data collection and may have overgeneralised their results based on questions relating to difference which made assumptions of cultural normativity, which might have deterred some respondents (Knight, 2011, p. 401). This is reflected in the tentative conclusions they make about the value of volunteering in bridging cultures.

The drivers for volunteering cannot be discretely categorised into altruism or ego as both are interrelated (Klug et al., 2018). Lucy describes her reasons for volunteering at the Chapel as "completely selfish". She began volunteering after praying over-night

[28] In accepting below-market salaries employees may be considered to be volunteering a portion of their labour. See also Ellen Netting et. al. (2006), Christensen and Ebrahim (2006), Jay Wenger and Terrence Yarbrough (2005), and William Brown & Carlton Yoshioka (2003).

with a group of friends for a woman she believed to be dying. The woman lived and, according to Lucy:

> The consultant said she is the only patient he's ever had to survive a burst bowel and not have a [colostomy] bag. So, we wanted somewhere to do that again. To find God in that space. There was something about praying together, we wanted to do it again. That's why we joined The Chapel, not for any other reason.

Altruistic behaviours can be triggered by a crisis, as when volunteering spiked after the 9/11 attacks, not only in disaster response but in all types of activities (Penner et al., 2005). Nevertheless, Lucy says she has stayed at The Chapel because of "what we get out of it… it's just so exciting to be a part of what God does".[29] Religiously inspired volunteers typically report higher satisfaction when their religious motivations relate to their personal relationship with the "transcendent" than among those who participate as an institutionally "normative" activity (Martos et al., 2011, p. 86). Although, when individualistic spirituality is divorced from organised religion, this reduces the likelihood of volunteering (Okun et al., 2015). While most interviewees participate one night per month at The Chapel, Lucy attends almost all sessions as her personal spirituality increases her desire to volunteer.

Participants in this study worship at Anglican churches and volunteer in a range of settings primarily; St. Martin's church, Christian festivals, governance in faith based and non-faith schools, and non-faith community projects. Institutional religiosity increases propensity to volunteer more than individualised spirituality (defined as an individual sense of divine transcendence not linked to a religious tradition) (Saroglou & Muñoz-Garcia, 2008) with Protestants more likely to volunteer their time to secular

[29] Although the volunteers did not cite the mental or physical benefits of volunteering this can be associated with better health and wellbeing (Jenkinson et al., 2013; Mak et al., 2022), particularly among older volunteers (Matthews & Nazroo, 2021). Altruistically motivated volunteering is positively correlated with lower levels of depression, better health outcomes and improved social integration (Piliavin & Siegl, 2007) and older volunteers with other-centred motivations demonstrate lower morbidity compared to those who volunteer for selfish reasons (Konrath et al., 2012). Christian Smith and Hiliary Davidson (2014) argue that generosity, including volunteering, is positively related to happiness, health, and sense of purpose. They describe this as the "paradox of generosity: giving we receive, grasping we lose".

projects than other denominations (Musick & Wilson, 2008, p. 93). In the UK, the relationship between religious attendance and volunteering is strongest among Protestant Christians, particularly Anglicans (Aksoy & Dengeman, 2024). In part, this may be because institutional religious beliefs promote generosity within a social network, which affirms such behaviour (Monsma, 2007). Volunteering may or may not be world engaging, for example Evangelical Christians offer more time to volunteer activities than any other denomination but this is predominantly within their own church (Musick & Wilson, 2008, pp. 94-96). My participants describe volunteering as a "sacrifice" of time (Da; Lucy). Usually, leaving home at 7pm on a Saturday in the knowledge they won't return until 3am Sunday "really does seem like too much hassle" (John). Since 2020, only two of my participants have left the project, both owing to relocation, such persistence is common among religiously motivated volunteers. People who identify as religious (defined as participation in institutional religious ritual (Burris et al., 2011)) are more likely to volunteer than those who do not (Lam, 2002, p. 414; Wilson & Janoski, 1995), to persist in volunteering for longer (Clerkin & Swiss, 2013, p. 18; Denning, 2019, p. 18), and to give more time to volunteering (Forbes & Zampelli, 2014).[30] In addition, commitment to volunteering is higher among volunteers who practice Bible-reading, prayer, or meditation (Lam, 2002; Wuthnow, 2004, p. 103).

Volunteers who take part in faith-based projects often do so as an expression of their religious commitments and feel they receive a spiritual benefit from volunteering. Indeed, "religion has a transcendental social capacity that encourages religious service attendees to engage with other people and causes beyond their immediate social environment" (Son, 2023, p. 16).[31] Volunteers at The Chapel conform to this pattern, offering their time as a demonstration that their beliefs are credible.

[30] A review of the impact of religious affiliation on volunteering across 53 countries found a high correlation between religious attendance and volunteerism in religious and secular contexts (Ruiter & De Graaf, 2006). Joonmo Son and John Wilson (2021) demonstrate a causal link between religious attendance and both secular and religious volunteering, and they suggest that religious volunteering can lead to increased church attendance. The effect on church attendance is not replicated in secular volunteering. Participants in my study were regular church attendees prior to volunteering at The Chapel and did not spontaneously report any change in attendance.

[31] Based on quantitative analysis of the British Household Panel Survey Dataset 1997-2008.

3.2 The Chapel as a paracosm

Viewed through the lens of Tanya Luhrman's (2020, pp. 25-26) work in religious anthropology across a wide range of faiths, The Chapel may be regarded as a "paracosm" (or imaginary game) designed to make God appear more real. Before opening to the public, the team (ten to twelve people) gather for a briefing. The leader, Peter, a forty-something manager at a multinational firm, outlines some health and safety considerations. He offers a short period of training on common issues (how to exit a difficult conversation and the policy on paper cups) then the team turn their attention to God, singing Spirit Break Out inviting the Holy Spirit to "break out, break our walls down, Heaven come down" (Bryant et al., 2010). No lyric sheets are provided, most volunteers know the words. Peter wishes the team "Happy Christmas" (it is November), reminding them that at midnight the church enters Advent, he then reads from his phone, offering a biblical reflection he has prepared for this evening. He suggests it is "fantastic that in heaven it is Christmas every day", then challenges the team to consider "which Jesus will we be waiting for?" an infant or a mighty king returning to claim his throne as heaven and earth reunite? He tells volunteers, "Jesus promised: surely, I am with you always" and "tonight we are an introduction agency, what better time than Advent when people are already waiting for what we have?" He invites the team to pray, they close their eyes and bow their heads.

After a brief period of silence, Peter initiates extempore prayer: "Thank you Lord that you are with us always and we carry the gift within us. We ask that the power of the Spirit fills this building. Without the Holy Spirit we are nothing. Fill us with your power, give us words of knowledge, protect us, and keep us safe. Amen". The team grunt in assent or murmur "Yes, Lord". After a brief pause, volunteer Alice, a student in her twenties, says:

> We pray for the people outside, that the waiting world would notice this building and be drawn in by your Holy Spirit, though they don't know why they are drawn in. People who have encountered you before, people who

need healing, people who need to be reminded of your love in their lives. Amen.

Another pause, volunteer Anna, who works in education says, “We acknowledge we are your hands and feet. Direct us in where we go, what we do and say. Help us to listen to your will. Thank you that you are always there for us. Amen”. The second team leader, company director James, continues, “Thank you for the opportunity to open. Thank you that your Holy Spirit is here. We invite even more of your Spirit to be here, that people would feel you. And we ask your blessing on each of us here each night. Amen”. When nobody else interjects, the two leaders glance at one another and say, “Amen”. The team looks up, Peter informs people of their position on the rota for the first hour and asks everyone to lock their coats and valuables in the vestry prior to opening to the public.

The expectation that God will act in real time is also written into the church’s fixtures and fittings. One sign announces, “All I need is coffee and a little bit of Jesus”. Another invites visitors and volunteers to “expect a miracle”. Nightlights illuminate bottles decorated with biblical verses including their references such as: “The word became flesh and dwelt among us… (John 1:14)”. The prayer table invites people to ask for God’s help by writing on a blackboard or lighting a candle. Booklets presenting Bible verses in a contemporary artistic form lie open revealing: “Everyone who asks receives, everyone who seeks finds, and to everyone who knocks the door will be opened” (Luke 11:10). Posters behind the candle stand declare “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12), “I am with you forever” (Matt 28:20) and “God is able to bring hope into your life even when everything seems hopeless”. Volunteers attach confidential prayer requests on post-it notes onto a prayer board next to The Chapel’s values. A path of white silk scattered with fairy lights leads to a neon cross propped against the altar. Worship music plays softly. Later, a woman, accompanies herself on an acoustic guitar, as sings contemporary worship songs, she croons, “Your Spirit’s water to my soul, I’ve tasted and I’ve seen, come once again to me” (Redman, 1995) and “Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word, I ever with the and thou with me Lord” (Assad, 1912/2016).

At 2am the chapel closes to the public, the team pack away fairy lights, cups, posters, and drapes, then gather to de-brief. Most volunteers appear keen to share their experiences of the evening. One relates a conversation with a head teacher, who was on a night out with a friend. The head teacher said that his wife had faith, but he was unsure whether there was a God. The volunteer tells the rest of the team that they had felt "prompted" to say, "God will touch your life, don't close the door". This surprised the head teacher who replied, "My grandma used to say that". The murmur from the team suggests they also attribute significance to this coincidence. Most volunteers say they enjoy such conversations, and the pleasure visitors express at finding The Chapel open. John speaks about a woman "struggling" to know what her expression of religious belief is, who says she feels an "overwhelming… peace" at The Chapel. He feels she "doesn't understand but feels safe and embraces the feeling". This generates related stories of visitors expressing gratitude to volunteers for listening and for their time in The Chapel. When no more stories are offered Peter invites volunteers to read the prayers left on the prayer table and write their own, suggesting, "We look at The Chapel as being for others but it's for us too". He encourages them to "pray for others or for yourself". This is followed by requests to order new batteries and teabags. Finally, Peter inquires, "Does anybody wish to pray?" The silence suggests not. "I'll start, Lord Jesus thank you for this evening at The Chapel. Thank you for this opportunity to serve you. Thank you for all those lives that have been touched by you. Help us to remember that this is your work". Peter prays people "remember what they experienced and meet others to help them continue on their journey" before thanking the team and asking who needs a lift home, or to be accompanied to their car.

In chapter two, I explained the high concentration of volunteers at The Chapel who worship at St. Martin's and participate in New Wine festivals. This communal experience of worship means that volunteers already share what Luhrmann (2020, p. 21) describes as a "faith frame … a sustained, intentional, deliberative commitment to the idea that there are invisible beings who are involved in human lives in helpful ways". As the previous description illustrates, volunteers at The Chapel articulate and enact their faith story of a benevolent God who acts in real time through their biblical reflection, worship lyrics, prayer, visual decoration, and story sharing. Luhrmann

(2020, pp. xi-xv) proposes that believers hold a "faith frame" alongside an ordinary perspective on life. This faith frame is made real through detailed storying founded in "vividly imagined worlds" in which they interact with their deity. Luhrmann argues the shared experience of inhabiting a faith story creates a "paracosm" in which the faith frame feels more real to believers. Just as, in her example, a Tolkien fan may draw on the stories of Middle Earth to make sense of their own life (pp. 25-26).

A paracosm is an imaginary world, embodied in narrative and ritual, which is simultaneously private and shared (p. 27). Paracosms are generated for, and by, participants through their agreement to abide by "the rules of the game" (p. 23). Believers engage in "serious" "play" within the paracosm, acting as if the gods they believe in are real despite contradictory evidence (Luhrmann, 2020). As they play, believers learn to interpret discontinuous thoughts through the faith frame, interpreting these as communication from God (Luhrmann, 2018; Luhrmann, 2012). Playing this game gives rise to sensory experiences which render the faith frame personally salient to the individual:

> I call these acts of real-making "kindling," because they are small events, like the twigs and tinder from which a great fire can be lit… the kindling processes through which invisible others come to feel real changes people and that the change becomes a powerful motivation for their faith. (Luhrmann, 2020, pp. x-xi)

These imaginative landscapes, while individually unique, are also "deeply communal" founded on shared "rules of engagement" which validate the individual's experience within the more generalised faith frame (2020, pp. xi-xv). She describes the cumulative effect of these practices over time as "real-making": God becomes more real to the believer (p. 154). Within the paracosm of The Chapel the signage, song lyrics, briefing meeting and end-of-night reflection set the rules by which this game is played, re-enforcing volunteers' expectation that God's Holy Spirit will act in real time.

As I showed in the introduction, one challenge for missional ecclesiology is to shape the church to help lay Christians overcome the cultural bias against supernatural explanations to find out and join in with what God is doing. The Chapel has found a way

to achieve this by creating a paracosm where the faith frame is made explicit in prayer, visual decoration, and song selection. The opening prayer and Bible reflection remind volunteers of the rules for the game of believing that God is active in real time. By joining with the prayers, volunteers demonstrate their agreement to play. At the end of the evening volunteers share stories of their experience and interpret these, in accordance with the faith frame, as evidence of God's presence in real time. James Smith, reflecting on Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* (2007) describes how it is possible to puncture the "brass ceiling" of the immanent frame creating "skylights open to transcendence" (Smith, 2014, p. 80). I suggest that the paracosm of The Chapel offers one such skylight and that it might be possible to replicate this in other Christian witness and service projects.

Luhrmann (2020, pp. xiv-xv) does not take a position on the ontological reality of divine beings, instead she suggests her research illustrates the process through which believers come to experience gods as real. While my participants would be offended to hear their religious convictions dismissed as play, albeit a serious form, one of the advantages of Müller's methodology is that it encourages cross disciplinary insight. As an anthropologist, Luhrmann addresses the question of which sociological and psychological processes make gods appear real for believers. Given the dominance of the immanent frame, her theory calls for greater consideration of play and its role in helping believers to find out and join in with what God is doing.

3.3 Serious play

Play is more than a childish pursuit of entertainment, in *The Grace of Playing: Pedagogies for Leaning into God's New Creation*, Courtney Goto (2016b) outlines how play helps believers to engage in the life of the Triune God. As a religious educator seeking to "teach love", Goto (2016a, 2016b, p.4) works to equip her students to promote social justice and peace by modelling their lives on the example of Jesus. She does this by engineering play-filled ways for students to relate to one another and to strangers (Goto, 2016a). One exercise invites students to offer a drink or biscuit to

unknown shoppers while dressed as clowns. The students were asked to reflect on their responses to the gratitude and rejection they received. Goto observes that:

> The most revealing test of loving the stranger is to be in a situation that invites it, and with the help of others, noticing how one actually responds and critically reflecting on the cultures, processes, and structures that shape our response. (2016a, p. 411)

She suggests that playful interactions "interrupt and keep us off kilter so we can recentre ourselves" and bring about change (Goto, 2016b, p. 13). Through play, Goto believes her students learn to "seek and find, by creating with the Spirit, what matters in the moment" (2016b, p. 133).[32]

Volunteers' experiences at The Chapel may be similarly conceptualised as play-filled opportunities to show love to strangers beyond their usual social circle. Volunteers reflect on and interpret their experiences through storytelling, for example during the closing briefing. The stories they tell are a meaning-making construction of their experience, made in relation to background organisational narratives (Clandinin, 2017). Viewed through the Charismatic Anglican faith frame, the coincidental use of "don't close the door" becomes evidence of God's action in real time. Thus, the reward for such playful risk taking is "God interrupting" becoming "revealed unexpectedly in the midst of relating to one another, although we may not consciously seek it" (Goto, 2016b p. 128).

Reflection on experience, through telling stories, leads some participants to alter their understanding of the faith frame. James related a conversation with a Roman Catholic man who told him, "I can't come in; I've had a drink". James encouraged the visitor to enter, joking the church would be foolish to open late on a Saturday if they wanted to exclude people who had been drinking. On entering the building, the visitor became distressed saying he was being "disrespectful" to God and left. Reflecting on the incident during the closing meeting, James felt he had imposed his own theology on

[32] Olive Drane (2011) also employs clowning to promote reflection on success and failure through the lens of the Easter resurrection story. She maintains, "The role of the clown is to identify where God is at work and come alongside to introduce others to that place and then step aside so that God can work".

the visitor and pondered how to make people feel welcome without pressuring them to compromise their beliefs. James was clearly troubled by the experience, recognised his contribution to the situation, and reflected on alternative action to avoid repeating this. Such insight cannot be manufactured, however the conditions under which it is more likely to happen can be created by generating opportunities to play and reflect (Goto, 2016b, p. 2). Consequently, the teacher's role is to facilitate "authentic" and "creative" ways for students to relate to one another and their leader(s) in an environment where playful risk-taking and the "decentring experiences" this brings are prized (Goto, 2016b, p. 121). Just as Goto (2016a) links play with risk and a willingness to experiment with expressions of love, particularly where this may challenge existing assumptions in the classroom, the paracosm of The Chapel similarly creates a space in which lay Christians can play with and reflect on their faith frame in real time.

Like Goto, Root (2022, p. 188) prizes play for its ability to create moments of encounter with divine love, he maintains that "without play the world is seen only as a thing to have, not to be with and love" and that it is only through loving the world that Christians "encounter God" (2022, p. 198). For him, play bypasses the focus on numerical growth often prevalent in church congregations and instead "seeks to encounter persons" (2022, p. 189). Like Goto, Root identifies play as a means of creating connections in which divine love may be glimpsed.

Where Luhrmann defines play as a form of mental conditioning through which believers come to experience gods as real. This does not preclude the possibility that their experience is valid. Goto and Root assert that play is theological since it creates conditions in which it is possible to be surprised by divine love. In chapter four, I will describe the form that volunteers' play at the chapel takes, and the stories through which they interpret their experience of playing. What is unusual about The Chapel, in contrast to the congregational setting Root envisages or Goto's classroom at a theological college, is that volunteers play within the paracosm in the hope that visitors will temporarily join in the game and experience God for themselves. To aid this, The Chapel positions itself as a bridge between the Church and the night economy.

3.4 Connecting the Church and the night economy

Volunteers believe that The Chapel "works... because it's not a we-all-sit-down-and-do-a-service thing. It's an experience thing. We just say "welcome, experience God how you experience God" (Jane). To facilitate this, The Chapel creates a space that links the church and night economy without completely conforming to the norms of either.

The project receives funding from churches alongside payments from the City Council and Police Commissioner. Large donations carry a risk that an organisation's objectives may be distorted by the donor's aims and policies (Heuertz & Pohl, 2010). Project leaders recognise the tension inherent in balancing civic and Christian influences. They consciously resist pressure to conform too closely to either:

> People who wanna do the Healing on The Streets end of the spectrum think that we are only half Christian and always want to push us to do more prayer. I feel it's aggressive... People want us to do a church service, teaching. People try to put on whatever their normal for church is... Christians feel more comfortable if it looks like church. [33]

> Safe Space wanted a space where they could take people who were too drunk to go home, or possibly medically unwell. We were approached on several occasions to be that space. The team were just like, that's just not us, totally not, absolutely not under no circumstances... that will turn us into a medical facility and we're not a medical facility. We said, If you get people who are sad and need to talk then you send them to us. If we find people who are potentially medically unwell then we will send them to you, and we'll be friends. But we're not the same. (Cate)

[33] Healing On the Streets (2016) practitioners set up chairs in public places and invite passers-by to receive prayer for physical healing. Those who accept sit on chairs and are prayed for by small teams of Christians in the expectation of miraculous healing. Over 700 churches in seventeen countries practice healing on the streets of their towns and cities. Full details are available at healingonthestreets.com.

Safe Space offered substantial funding to The Chapel.[34] This was declined as the leadership team believed that aligning the project so closely with the council's objectives in securing the safety of people enjoying the night economy would compromise its Christian focus.

Project leaders also resist encouragement from the vicar of St. Martin's church who provides the use of the building, and individual volunteers, to introduce religious services:

> Church in the daytime, there's an order of service, there's a liturgy. Even in a church that says it hasn't got a liturgy there is one... I've been in those churches. Mary will always start going Oh Lord, Lord. That's liturgy if you ask me. [At The Chapel] there's no vicar, no one at the front with a dog collar on, no sitting in rows. People think church is services. People in rows being judged, being made to feel bad about yourself. That's a lot of people's expectations of church, and their experience of church, sadly. The Chapel doesn't have those things. (Anna)

Anna and Cate recognise that Christians feel more comfortable in a structured environment, such as a worship service, where they understand what is expected of them. While physical space is clearly structured at The Chapel (altar, nave, café space, kitchen), time is not. Visitors are offered non-alcoholic refreshments at a café table in an overtly religious setting. Some wish to speak to volunteers, others chat to one another. Around a third of visitors light a candle. Some visitors come in believing it is a bar and walk out immediately, seemingly embarrassed. A few come in to use the toilet facilities, many of these stay. The absence of religiously structured time, usually expressed in service sheets, hymn books, corporate prayer, Bible study, or collective worship, often surprises visitors.

[34] Safe Space provide funding for qualified medical professionals (typically paramedics) who treat people presenting as unwell within the night economy. This relieves pressure on nearby Accident and Emergency Services and reduces waiting times for those in need of emergency care (MAKE & Portman Group, 2017). The service is open from around 10pm until 4.30am most Saturday nights. 55% of service users require assistance due to intoxication, 21% due to a medical condition, 16% are vulnerable, and 13% require assistance due to drug use.

By balancing elements associated with the night economy (for example opening times, city centre location, and visual cues such as neon lights and door staff) with religious cues (the church building, candles, and signage) The Chapel creates a "liminoid moment" (Turner, 1974). Victor Turner first used the term liminal (Turner, 1969, 1977), building on Arnold van Gennep's research into rites of passage (1960). Turner identified three stages in tribal rites of passage: separation from the community, a liminal threshold stage (often entailing a genuine risk to personal safety), and subsequent reintegration into the community with a transformed status. Liminal experiences typically engage with "spiritual phenomena" (Turnbull, 1990, p. 74) and can, as Turner (1969, 370) demonstrates in his evaluation of the "hippy" movement, disrupt the established socio-economic order from a position of liminality. Turner has been criticised for his assumption that experiences of liminality are linear and therefore necessarily resolved (Thomassen, 2015, p. 47). In recognition of the importance of liminality in effecting change, Turner's definition has been extended to include experiences of being at a physical, temporal, or spatial boundary where two world views are juxtaposed and the potential for radical transition is heightened without material risk (Howard-Grenville et al., 2011). As such, liminality helps to describe how "human beings in their various social and cultural contexts deal with change" (Thomassen, 2015, p. 40).

In his later work, Turner (1974) identified "liminoid moments", alluding to the capacity of art or leisure generate moments of creativity or uncertainty. Unlike liminal experiences, liminoid activity does not entail risk. Instead, it offers an elective "break from normality, a playful as-if experience" which does not necessarily result in "resolution of a personal crisis or change in status" (Thomassen, 2015, p. 42). A liminoid experience enables its participants to "play" with "the elements of the familiar and defamiliarize them" (Turner, 1974, p. 60). If Christianity is an invitation to enter into a different narrative of reality (Brueggemann, 1993, 2005), then I suggest The Chapel may be best understood as a liminoid moment in which volunteers play at communicating their faith frame beyond the Christian community. The faith frame is articulated among volunteers through their practices of worship and prayer before and after The Chapel is opened to the public. During public opening times volunteers

sustain the paracosm, seeking to offer visitors a liminoid occurrence in which they might briefly join the game.

Anna reflected that the liturgy and social norms of religious services create barriers for non-Christians, who cannot interpret them:

> Any knowledge is power. The parent of the child who's not doing what everybody wants them to do [is] "a crap parent" – well they're not. They've either been told they are, or they feel like one. Either is powerful…
>
> Church is full of that. All of those things are power, all of those things are barriers. The Chapel removes stacks of them… Think what it hasn't got. [It] puts people more on an equal footing. There's less expectation that they will know what they're supposed to do 'cos we don't know what they're supposed to do either.
>
> I wonder if that's why people feel able to go into The Chapel whereas they don't feel able to come in in the day. Because there's less going on where they feel that they haven't got the knowledge. Anyone can light a candle. Anyone can talk. Anyone can drink coffee.

Churches, as power structures, internalise the privilege of the dominant group re-enforcing the identities of both the powerful and the marginalised. As a liminoid event, The Chapel eliminates some of these, reducing the social risk for volunteers of playing at ways of communicating Christian commitments with people who do not share them. John finds it "easier" to talk about "your own faith at The Chapel with strangers" he says he finds the experience "helps you in your own thought development and understanding".

Other Christian organisations also recognise the power of liminality. Street Pastors, a Christian organisation that trains Christians to patrol the streets of their night economy, attempt to bring "the church onto the streets" (Isaac & Davies, 2014, p. 210). They provide practical assistance including bottles of water for those who are dehydrated by alcohol consumption, flip flops for those who have abandoned high heeled shoes, or space blankets for warmth. Volunteers are not allowed to

proselytise, but giving out water, flip flops and blankets, while of practical value, is primarily used to instigate a conversation about religion. This tactic is foundational to the organisation's strategy of engineering "encounters" between the church, in the form of Christian volunteers, and those participating in the night economy (Middleton & Yarwood, 2015, p. 512). This should not be understood as a bait and switch marketing strategy, instead Street Pastors seek to offer a performance of faith which creates a "liminal space of understanding" (Middleton & Yarwood, 2015, p. 501).

Just as visitors to a gallery may be unmoved by the artwork, not every visitor or volunteer experiences The Chapel as a liminoid moment. Inhabiting the paracosm requires a particular focus. I noted my frustration in my journal:

> 11.30pm: Chapel feels deserted. I suddenly realise how tired I am. The competing music of The Chapel, the karaoke at the pub and the busker is exhausting. I feel disconnected, I don't belong here. It's hard to believe I used to find The Chapel life giving. I just want to sleep. I remember that the tiredness and the boredom are also a part of The Chapel, stare at my empty coffee cup and pray. Slowly, the noise subsides into the background and the exhaustion in my head eases. Two volunteers at the door chat to one another ignoring the couple who peer cautiously inside and scurry past. The former Chapel leader inside me is irritated.

I found the loss of my participant role, coupled with the responsibility to take detailed notes of my observations, made it difficult for me to experience The Chapel as a liminoid moment during participant observations.

Similarly, people participating in the night economy choose whether to enter the liminoid moment of The Chapel or not. For some, the experience is closer to one Matthew Engelke (2012) labels "ambient faith", in which a visible representation of the sacred, is offered "without comment", for members of the public to engage with, or ignore (Engelke, 2012, p. 167). Engelke describes how The Bible Society launched a Christmas art exhibition of "Angels in Swindon" in partnership with the local council, businesses, and a school. The angels were located in a shopping centre and the organisers navigated similar sacred/secular tensions to those experienced at The

Chapel. The Bible Society sought to create a "spiritual middle ground - trying to entice this public, in a roundabout way, to make links between the angel kites swaying in the air and their own nascent or fluorescent faith in spirits" (Engelke, 2012, p. 163). Equally, lots of people walk through the doors of The Chapel, realise it is a church rather than a bar and leave immediately. Those who stay may use their time for reflection, others may just be "sitting there and drinking a cup of coffee" (John) or too drunk to remember anything of their experience the following day (Cate, Anna). Entering into a liminoid moment requires attention, some visitors and volunteers may be oblivious.

Despite the risk of being ignored, existing studies demonstrate that liminal experiences can lead to attitudinal and behavioural change. Jennifer Howard Grenville, Karen Golden-Biddle, Jennifer Irwin, and Jina Mao (2011) construct workshops as "liminal phenomena" to promote sustainability in sportswear manufacture catalysing a shift in culture. They design low risk opportunities to experiment with new ideas through role play and exercises in "what-if thinking". These workshops are conducted as liminal experiences since participants experiment with a narrative of sustainable technologies without the real-world constraints of implementation. Initially, sustainability was dismissed as too "tree hugger" and attempts at organisational change likened to "turning around the Titanic" (p. 521). After attending the workshops, participants became ambassadors for sustainability throughout the organisation (p. 533). Howard-Grenville et al. attribute their success to "un-problematising what is unfamiliar" (p. 530). They show that participants who experiment with a narrative of "sustainability as innovation" overcome their preconception of "sustainability as risk" (p. 522). Their study shows how facilitating structured play within a liminal space (workshop) reframes participants' perception of sustainability, shifting it from a threat to an opportunity. [35] Similarly, The Chapel, as a liminoid moment, provides a space in which to play with an alternative narrative of

[35] Multiple studies demonstrate the potential of liminal structures to seed change. See Jacky Swan et al. (2016), Ola Henfridsson and Young in Yoo (2014), Barbara Czarniawska and Carmelo Mazza (2003), and Christina Garsten (1999). In addition, liminal spaces are used in sports tourism to help seed economic or environmental benefit for the host nation (Duignan et al., 2020; Welty Peacey et al., 2015; O'Brien & Chalip, 2008; O'Brien, 2007).

reality (the Charismatic Anglican faith frame rather than the immanent frame) without material risk.

Thus far, I have shown that The Chapel operates as a paracosm in which volunteers play at believing in a Charismatic Anglican faith frame. In the following chapters, I provide further detail on this faith frame and show how playing within the paracosm changes volunteers' attitudes to communicating their religious beliefs. But, as the contrast between Engelke and Golden-Biddle's study shows, there is a significant difference between playing in a liminoid moment and experiencing ambient faith, with its potential to be ignored. The difference lies in the way The Chapel incorporates the principles of service learning.

3.5 Transforming volunteering into service learning

The Chapel was originally launched by a tutor and her team of students from the Spirit College. As an education project, it had the twin aims of providing Christian witness to the city and training students in faith communication. David Kolb (1984) operationalised John Dewey's (1938) theoretical foundation for service learning in his Experiential Learning Cycle which outlines iterative cycles of action and reflection. Experiential learning is the "knowledge" resulting from "the combination of grasping and transforming experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 41).[36] Students test new concepts in an encouraging environment, with structured reflection which enables them to make meaning from the experience, leading to increased confidence and competence (Parks, 2011, pp. 108-109). In confessional religious education, service-learning assists in spiritual formation (Parks, 2011, p. 113), integrates faith and classroom learning (Schaffer, 2004, p. 136), and enables students to enact their Christian values (Helm-Stevens et al., 2018). The experience can be uncomfortable, university faculty members admit to anxiety at the loss of control over student learning, and students describe feelings of intimidation, yet it is the experience of disorientation when applying knowledge in a new situation that creates the conditions for learning (George-

[36] Service learning is differentiated from volunteerism, which is primarily service oriented, and internship which focuses on building career-specific skills (Ferrari & Chapman, 2014).

Paschal et al., 2019, p. 55). Disorientation or new experiences do not necessarily lead to service learning. Seminary students report experiencing moments of crisis when theory and practice conflict, reflecting on these experiences can induce personal transformation or create a paralysing sense of being overwhelmed (Campbell-Reed & Scharen, 2011). Robert and Joseph Priest's (2008, p. 68) analysis of 5,270 students participating in short term Christian missions reveals a "complete disconnect" between missional theory and praxis. While Carolyn Dirksen's (2020, p. 78) study of Pentecostal students revealed a "saviour motivation that nullifies the cultural humility necessary for personal transformation" alongside an underlying tendency to view service as a tool of evangelism.

For volunteering to deliver service learning, volunteers need structured opportunities to experiment in applying their knowledge, and to reflect on their experiences, translating theoretical principles to practical situations (Celio et al., 2011; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Myers et al., 2008; Myers, 2020). Christian volunteers who receive structured opportunities to reflect on the meaning of their volunteering are more likely to agree that "Every day I see evidence that God is active in the world. As I grow older, my understanding of God changes, and I have a real sense that God is guiding me". (Myers et al., 2008, p. 380).[37] The importance of connecting academic theology and lived experience has led to an increasing emphasis on reflective practice in ministerial education (Heywood, 2022). Because of its heritage in theological education, The Chapel has been structured to incorporate practices of service learning and theological reflection more commonly associated with ministerial education than Christian witness and service projects.

At The Chapel, the theoretical principle of "finding out what God is doing and joining in" (Williams, 2003, para 13) is intrinsic to the faith frame. It is clearly articulated in Peter's opening prayer which thanks God that he is "always with us and we carry the gift within us" and in prayers inviting the presence and person of the Holy Spirit. Anna's prayer that the team would "listen" to God's "will" and that God would "direct… where we go, what we do and what we say" assumes this is possible. The same theoretical

[37] This study proves correlation but cannot indicate whether higher religiosity leads to greater self-reported benefits of volunteering or vice versa.

principle runs through the visual decoration and song lyrics. As volunteers interpret events through the faith frame they express confidence that they experience the presence and leading of the Holy Spirit at The Chapel. The leadership team encourages volunteers to share these reflections during the team briefing at the end of the evening. Clear objectives (the faith frame) and opportunity to reflect on their experience transforms my participants' experience of volunteering into service learning. They overcome the cultural conditioning of the immanent frame which usually makes it difficult to perceive divine action (Root, 2019, p. 270) and express confidence they can find out and join in with what God is doing in real time.

3.6 Conclusion

In the introduction, I proposed that the root cause of the difficulty in mobilising lay Christians to find out and join in with what God is doing as an inability to perceive God's action in real time (Root, 2019, p. 270). Then I showed how volunteer projects can be configured to deliver service learning arguing that The Chapel's explicit faith framing fulfils the first criteria for effective learning: articulating the theoretical principle being tested. The Chapel does more than articulate a theory. Because religiously motivated volunteers offer their time as an expression of their values, Christian witness and service projects have an inherent capacity to operate as a paracosm in which they experience God as real. The Chapel draws on volunteers' desire for value-expression through practices of prayer, team briefing, visual decoration, and song lyrics to communicate a faith frame that emphasises the immanence of God. Volunteers play at communicating this faith frame to visitors, although they do not describe their activity as play and might be insulted by the term. Such play is not to be equated with childishness or leisure instead, as Goto shows, through play it is possible to glimpse divine life. Using Müller's post foundational methodology, I place these insights alongside Luhrman's model which outlines the processes through which believers come to experience gods as real to show how the physical space and processes at The Chapel are designed to create a paracosm in which believers can play with a Charismatic Anglican faith frame.

Paracosms are created by and for believers. Unusually, The Chapel provides a liminoid moment between the church and the night economy, inviting visitors to join in the game albeit temporarily. Joining a paracosm takes effort, for some The Chapel might be better described as an expression of ambient faith with which volunteers and visitors can engage or ignore. For those who engage, as Howard-Grenville et al. show, liminal experiences of playing can initiate attitudinal change. Since The Chapel articulates an explicit faith frame and encourages volunteers to reflect on their experience during the closing debrief, it fulfils two important criteria for effective service learning: outlining a clear theoretical framework and creating space for formal reflection in order to make meaning from their experience. I now consider what my participants learn about communicating their religious commitments by playing within the paracosm of The Chapel.

Chapter 4: Missional capital

Having demonstrated that The Chapel is structured to provide service learning in faith communication I now conceptualise this learning as missional capital, a form of social capital which underpins volunteers' confidence in discussing their religious commitments in their workplaces and communities. Missional capital is not unique to The Chapel, it describes the consolidation of volunteering experience with my participants' existing theological commitments to strengthen their conviction that they can "find out what God is doing and join in" (Williams, 2003, para 13).

I start by introducing social capital and its constituents: bonding, bridging, and linking capital (Putnam, 2000; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Next, I outline existing conceptions of social capital in religious organisations. Then, I draw on volunteers' experiences to show that missional capital at The Chapel is founded on bonding capital, links of trust and friendship, which give volunteers confidence to play within the paracosm of The Chapel. Volunteers play by interpreting emotional responses and coincidences as evidence of God's action in real time. This strengthens the theological capital (Ward, 2008) element of missional capital, which is drawn from volunteers' involvement in Charismatic Anglicanism, leading volunteers to express confidence that they can find out what God is doing and join in when they are at The Chapel. I describe their belief in partnership with God as the linking capital element of missional capital.

Finally, I illustrate how bonding, theological and linking capital elements within missional capital underpin practices of listening, prayer and story sharing which create bridging capital. While recognising that bonding and bridging capital can oppose one another, I show that bonding capital at The Chapel supports bridging capital by drawing on communication practices that are common within the ECM. Missional capital refers to this combination of linking, theological and bridging capitals, underpinned by bonding capital.

4.1 Social capital

Social capital theory illuminates the positive and negative impacts of organisational belonging on individual efficacy. This makes it a useful interpretive lens through which to view the impact on volunteers of taking part in The Chapel. John Field (2016, pp. 1-28) offers a concise overview of the development of social capital from the 1960s when the definition of assets, which was initially conceptualised in material and fiscal terms, was extended to include human capital (labour and skills) and subsequently social capital (the economic impact of social connections). He names Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, and Robert Putnam as the primary influencers who define social capital (p. 4). For Bourdieu (2006 [1986]), social capital accumulates through education and networks of social connections nurtured, intentionally or unintentionally, for mutual benefit. Bourdieu's social capital secures the power base of elites and disguises underlying inequity (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 119). However, for Coleman (1988) while social capital is be created by elite groups it can be extended to benefit those outside the group. He shows how attending a Catholic school provides a public good by including children from a low socio-economic background within a network of relationships from which they are otherwise excluded. Coleman locates social capital within normative reciprocal relationships among closed peer groups whose self-interest is best served by in-group cooperation. Field (2016, p. 10) suggests that where Bourdieu is sensitive to the detrimental impact of social capital on those who are not part of the privileged elite, Coleman's optimistic portrait of social capital as a means of extending privilege to underprivileged groups neglects the extent to which these structures (such as education) usually re-enforce, rather than challenge, the existing distribution of power and resources.

There are three forms of inter/intra group social capital; bonding capital, bridging capital, and linking capital (Putnam, 2000; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Robert Putnam (2000, pp. 23-24) defines bonding capital as relationships of trust between people of similar age, gender, socio-economic or ethnic backgrounds and bridging capital as relationships which cross these divides. Putnam (pp. 11-12) suggests that bonding capital provides social support while bridging capital helps to reduce violence and intolerance between different ethnic or religious groups. The tension between

bonding and bridging capital helps to explain situations where individual (or in-group) benefit conflicts with the good of others creating inter/intra group tension, supporting behaviours that limit organisational effectiveness, or promote criminal activity (Baycan & Öner, 2023). Michael Woolcock and Deepa Naryan describe relationships between groups with limited resources and more powerful partners who facilitate access to these as linking capital (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000, p. 237). Linking relationships can benefit both partners through a reverse flow of linking capital, for example when (relatively powerless) faith groups that promote social justice offer benefits to (comparatively powerful) civil institutions by critiquing dominant policies to encourage more equitable models of economic and political participation (Baker, 2011).

While participation in religious organisations is associated with bonding, bridging, and linking capital (Baker, 2011, p. 172) it also delivers specific forms of social capital variously described as religious, spiritual, faithful, devotional, or theological capital. Religious capital was initially defined as "skills and experiences specific to one's religion, includ[ing] religious knowledge, familiarity with church ritual and doctrine, and friendships with fellow worshippers" (Iannaccone, 1990, p. 299). This encompasses both proficiency in a religious culture acquired through instruction and the emotional attachment developed through experience (Stark & Finke, 2000, p. 108).[38] In 2006, Chris Baker and Hannah Skinner (p. 4) subdivide this overarching definition identifying religious capital as "the practical contribution to local and national life made by faith groups" and spiritual capital as that which "energises religious capital by providing a theological identity and worshipping tradition, but also a value system, moral vision, and a basis of faith". Thus, spiritual capital provides the underlying motivations or the "why", which manifests in the "what" of specific

[38] Rodney Stark and Roger Finke (2000) demonstrate that emotional and cultural investment is difficult to transfer, resulting in stability of religious or denominational participation. They highlight the importance of friendships in religious selection and switching observing that, for Mormons, cold calling has approximately a 0.1% conversion rate after multiple contacts with the same individual whereas evangelism to non-Mormons attending the home of a Mormon has a 50% success rate. Despite this, in subsequent work with Kevin Dougherty, Finke argues that religious capital should exclude forms of social capital, such as friendship, which are available in non-religious organisations (Finke & Dougherty, 2002). The narrowness of their definition is unhelpful in this research which seeks to demonstrate the importance of combining social capital, which is specific to religion, and more generally produced social capitals such as bonding and bridging capital.

religious capital behaviours (p. 5). Spiritual capital may be "vertical", that is "externalised and hierarchical" arising from external structures of authority, for example in the perceived infallibility of scripture, or "horizontal" such as that provided through peer support (Baker, 2011, p. 181). The concept of spiritual capital has been extended to include "secular spiritual capital (SSC)" (Baker & Miles-Watson, 2008), which separates individualised values from belief in a transcendent other. SSC might be more accurately described as beliefs, values and attitudes, a term Baker and Power (2018) use in later work.[39] Economically founded models of religious capital potentially "instrumentalise faith communities" limiting their value to their contribution of civic goals such as the delivery of welfare services, enforcing a "publicly acceptable version of religion which can be palatable to the secular mind" (Dinham, 2012, p. 75). This approach reduces the definition of social capital to mean "anything in the social which can be productive for markets" (Dinham, 2012, p. xiii). In addition, conceptualising religion in terms of social capital might risk positioning it as a "means to reach particular ends", ignoring that religion also shapes the "ends" or goals sought (Woodberry, 2003, pp. 2-4).

While concerns about the instrumentalization of faith to serve capitalism are valid, spiritual capital is not intrinsically hostage to market forces. Spiritual capital may inspire transformation, including critique such as speaking prophetically against injustice, alongside providing material assistance for victims (Palmer, 2013, p. 10). For example:

> Volunteering, simple hospitality, and reluctance to assume that power is always the right way to achieve results, are all alternative ways of providing capital that can "bond", "bridge" and "link" but not necessarily in measurable and predictable ways. (Baker & Skinner, 2014 [2006], p. 11)

Spiritual capital is therefore intrinsically rooted in "dimensions" of faith: "transforming people, valuing stories, believing God is at work, acknowledging feelings, introducing self-emptying and forgiveness, accepting the rejected, seeing people as capable of

[39] Spiritual Capital, sometimes conceived as values beliefs and attitudes, can improve community or organisational performance (Maidl et al., 2022; Neubert et al., 2017; Park et al., 2020; Stokes et al., 2016).

their own solutions" (Dinham, 2012, p. 83). While spiritual capital, as a wide term, risks eradicating the uniqueness of religious motivation between different religious groups (Montemaggi, 2011) it can be addressed in ways that recognise "nuance and complexity" (Woodberry, 2003, p. 3). Volunteers' experience at The Chapel and their adoption of the narrative of God's real presence could be described as spiritual capital, providing the rationale for the religious capital of volunteering their time. Separating religious and spiritual capitals, supports communication on shared goals in a language of values which may help the collaborative working between multi-faith groups and government bodies that Baker and Skinner seek to facilitate. However, it necessarily divides motivation from the outward expression of faith. In this study, such division is unhelpful as I am seeking to understand the phronetic knowledge, the wisdom inextricably linked to praxis, which underpins volunteers' confidence in communicating their religious beliefs.[40]

Catholic and Protestant faith-based organisations employ the terms "faithful" (Church of England, 2006, p. 3) or "devotional" (Pena, 2011, pp. 42-43) capital to describe how individuals and congregations live out their religious commitments. Faithful capital is defined as "language and actions" in which "love, hope, judgement, forgiveness and hospitality combine to form a distinctive story… that challenges dominant definitions in public policy" (Church of England, 2006, p. 3). This story is expressed in practices which demonstrate "longstanding commitment", and "patience and perseverance" of local congregations in the face of "fallibility and failure" (Church of England, 2006, p. 3). Elaine Peña's (2011, pp. 18, 42-43) study of volunteers and visitors at the Shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe demonstrates how "devotional labour", ranging from prayer and worship to cleaning and fundraising, creates relational networks which give rise to service learning in the form of "devotional capital". Devotional capital, according to Peña, refers to a set of beliefs about the shrine, developed through devotional labour, which are circulated through local and international networks as visitors share stories of their "transformative experiences" (Pena, 2011, pp. 42-43). While devotional capital is principally used in

[40] See Bonnie Miller Mclemore (2012) for a consideration of embodiment and phronetic wisdom in practical theology drawing on Don Browning (1996).

Catholic studies to describe lay expressions of religious faithfulness, in particular the socialisation of religious piety by women (Maldonado-Estrada, 2019), Bielo (2020, p. 744) identifies devotional labour (although not devotional capital) in a Protestant context in his research into volunteers and visitors to the Garden of Hope in Covington, Kentucky. Like Peña, Bielo highlights the importance of storying as a means of interpreting devotional labour. Volunteers at the Garden of Hope share stories about the history of the garden in order to frame visitors' experience creating "the expectation, anticipation, and potentiality that a desired spiritual intimacy will be actualised" (2020, p. 745). In this chapter I will show that missional capital is the result of creating and inhabiting the paracosm through similar practices of devotional labour and story sharing. However, I differentiate missional capital from devotional or faithful capital because of volunteers' explicit claim that they participate with God.

Ward, exploring the variation in responses among attendees at charismatic worship events, coins the term "theological capital" to describe the means through which believers participate in the divine life of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. Ward attends to the processes through which Christians "internalise" doctrinal teaching by engaging in activities, such as participation in collective worship, that mediate divine life. He describes theological capital as "internalise[d] theology" combined with an "animating and transformative force" which "shapes identity" (2008, p. 119). [41] Peña and Bielo make no such claim for devotional labour (or the social capital it forms) which appears to be limited to behaviour and story sharing which define and disseminate site-specific religious beliefs. Theological capital explicitly attends to the mediation of divine life within the believer by the power of the Holy Spirit, I have therefore selected the term theological capital as the best description for the element of missional capital describing volunteers' internalisation of the faith frame at The Chapel. It is differentiated from missional capital as Ward's definition of theological capital places this as an individualised experience which facilitates connection with

[41] Stephen Pattison (2009, 145) critiques theological capital arguing that Ward does not address the question of how Christians, who would claim to participate in God's own life, have also engaged in "arbitrary and harmful stances towards their fellow human beings". Ward's definition of theological capital does not account for or diminish human complexity. His study seeks to explore one process through which believers participate, however imperfectly, in the life of the Triune God.

the Holy Spirit whereas missional capital seeks connection with divine life through resonance with another's experience. Ward concludes that the challenge for the church is to develop theological capital beyond the church (Ward, 2008, p. 190). My research at The Chapel unveils one process that may help, it starts with bonding capital.

4.2 Bonding capital: Strengthening the paracosm

Bonding capital is founded on, among other things, an individual's trust and confidence in a group's collective efficacy (Onyx & Bullen, 2000). This trust "entails a willingness to take risks in a social context based on a sense of confidence that others will respond as expected and will act in mutually supportive ways, or at least that others do not intend harm" (Onyx & Bullen, 2000, p. 24). I suggest volunteers' transition from attending other churches to becoming members of St. Martin's Sunday congregation, coupled with their trust in one another and their willingness to offer support to one another, are evidence of strong bonding capital among participants in this study.

The Chapel is structured to strengthen bonding capital between volunteers. The minimum staffing level of ten volunteers means that team members spend around half their time talking to one another between visitor interactions, sometimes more.[42] While many conversations between volunteers are superficial, or focus on practical issues, volunteers also discuss and pray for personal situations. During my observations, these included addiction, poor mental or physical health, difficulties at work, and concerns about family and friends. When volunteer Claire expressed ambivalence about a forthcoming interview, Anna prayed:

> Father, listening to Claire, and all the things she has shared with me I just lift her to you… Father thank you for this opportunity she has to meet people

[42] The Chapel team collectively offer 45-54 working hours per evening. While on average The Chapel receives 100 visitors per evening this varies from 20-30 visitors during January and February up to almost 200 visitors on a busy evening after summer festivals. Most visitors spend less than half an hour in the building, some spend much of this time with friends or in personal reflection rather than with a volunteer, and volunteers are often in conversation with a small group of visitors rather than one to one.

> you would have cared for… Lord at the end of the day it's about the needs of [organisation] and I pray that the right person would get the job. And I pray that Claire would know that whether she gets it or not… Lord, fill her with your Spirit over this next week and in the interview, fill her again and again. Let her know your presence and your peace, and may your will be done. Amen.

Sharing and praying for one another's concerns is both an expression of trust in and means of strengthening relationships between volunteers (bonding capital). Viewed from the perspective of Luhrmann's mode such conversations re-enforce the faith frame and help sustain the paracosm. In the introduction, I located The Chapel at the intersection of the ECM and Charismatic Anglicanism. While the ECM is complex and shifting (Reed & Zbaraschuk, 2018; Terry Shoemaker, 2022; Todjeras, 2019) Congregations aligned with the ECM tend to create community through "relational practices intended to create structures of everyday religious experience", elevating relationships and dialogue as precursors of "authentic" faith (Bielo, 2012, p. 266). At The Chapel, volunteers reflect on the validity of the faith frame in their own lives by sharing stories and praying for one another, practices commonly used within the ECM.

Leaders intentionally pair new team members with experienced volunteers. According to Cate, Marie "started off being really unsure and we were always thinking, 'So if we put her on somewhere we're gonna have to put some support in'". Cate now views Marie as "a core team member and I don't worry about her at all. There's been quite a few people like that, that have sort of changed and found confidence by being with us". Leaders do this deliberately:

> When Jesus was doing miracles, the disciples gave out the bread and so they felt like they'd done the miracle. And Peter walks on water 'cos why not do it together? Whenever you hear the stories, Jesus does the same thing in his attitude to people. He doesn't put people down, he doesn't belittle them, he lifts them up. That's how I try to be with people. It doesn't work all the time but that's the principle of it. It's the same with the way The Chapel works, putting a safe structure round people. You get this group of people

> who are really good at chatting to people, and you put them in a safe structure with all the risk assessments and everything so that they can look after the stuff they're good at... It works because we can build the structure that makes everything safe. (Cate)

Pairing volunteers teaches new team members to use The Chapel's model for holding and interpreting visitor interactions, re-enforcing the faith frame. Marie says the support of the team gives her courage to talk to people about God since "you're in a safe place, you've got your own gang round, all like-minded, all doing the same thing" (Marie). Ailsa feels the experience of being part of the team makes her "a bit braver" in discussing her Christian beliefs. Several volunteers say they feel reassured that other team members will help "if anything get[s] too deep or philosophical" (John). However, for Anna, it is the recognition that other volunteers are "not a team of spiritual giants. It's just some people that rock up and lots of us aren't very good at quite a lot of bits of it" that gives her confidence to speak about her religious commitments. Thus, the bonding capital element of missional capital gives volunteers confidence to play within the paracosm. I now consider the game played at The Chapel and how this nurtures the second aspect of missional capital; theological capital.

Given The Chapel's inception as an ecumenical project, it is surprising that most participants in this study worship at St. Martin's church. A strong connection to place is not unusual in volunteering; volunteers at a Tall Ships Race reported an enduring connection the ships which proved stronger than their connection to other volunteers after the event finished (Owen & Chambers, 2021). Only Peter, who has never worshipped at St. Martin's church, criticised The Chapel for failing to build relationships between team members. At the time of our interview, The Chapel had been closed for six months due to the Covid-19 pandemic and Peter was considering leaving the project. He had been shielding and expressed feelings of isolation from work and church alongside detachment from The Chapel. Peter subsequently left the church he had been part of for more than twenty years to worship with another volunteer from The Chapel, this was not at St. Martin's. He continues to volunteer once a month at The Chapel post pandemic suggesting his dissatisfaction was temporary and situational. Peter's experience shows that while bonding capital is helpful in giving

volunteers confidence to play at narrating their experiences through the faith frame within the paracosm, participants exhibit various levels of bonding.

4.3 Theological capital: Finding out what God is doing

Volunteers maintain there is something about The Chapel that requires visitors to "come and see it for yourself" (Matilda). Although, Pentecostal and charismatic expressions of church are diverse, encompassing 400 million worshipers and multiple denominations, they share a common expectation that, following an identifiable conversion experience, Christians "can and should expect to encounter the Spirit in dramatic ways" (Gabriel, 2020, p. 167). Volunteers at The Chapel believe that visitors share in less dramatic Spirit-encounters without a prior conversion experience. This theological capital element of missional capital is expressed in the only one of The Chapel's formal value statements cited by volunteers: "It's God's mission, we just put the kettle on and see what he does" (Cate, John):

> When you look at [The Chapel] on paper it should be a waste of time. [But] it isn't. Why is that? God's the difference there [I] think. All we do is we open the doors of St. Martin's. We have some fairly nice people there and we play some music which in the grand scheme of things you probably wouldn't pay £20 to come and listen to. And people come in and have profound experiences of God. They come in, they feel peace. They have conversations they've never had with anyone before. There's this start of a healing process… You look at the setup which is: give someone a cup of tea and some biscuits [and] I don't see there's any reason why that should happen. [But] it does… Every night, every time we open there's a story that means that you don't mind staying up to two in the morning. (Cate)

Volunteers narrate their experiences within a faith frame which expects God's presence to cause "unlikely people" to experience "moments of kindness, mercy, or grace" (Cate). Most volunteers describe this as an experience of the "presence of God and maintain that visitors "meet" or "encounter" God (Jane, Cate, Lucy, Matilda).

Cate's emphasis on individual experience is common within the ECM which prioritises experiential, personal, and co-creative encounters with the sacred (Packard, 2016). Such expressions of belief have come to dominate evangelical testimonies, including those within the Charismatic Movement (Bialecki, 2017, p. 178). This expectation of experiencing God's presence resonates with the theology of worship, encounter, and intimacy that Ward (2005) identifies within the Charismatic Movement. Ward (2008) shows how this charismatic theology is circulated through worship lyrics and conferences, such as the New Wine festivals. Many of The Chapel's volunteers attend these conferences and the associated worship songs are routinely played at The Chapel and during St. Martin's Sunday service. Within the paracosm of The Chapel, my participants interpret visitors' emotional reactions and experiences of coincidence as evidence of God's real time activity. I describe this as the theological capital component of missional capital.

4.3.1 Emotional responses to God's presence

The theological capital part of missional capital at The Chapel is sustained by interpreting visitor's emotional reactions as responses to an experience of God's presence. The Chapel's volunteers place particular significance on experiences of surprise. Anna relates the story of a young woman who entered the chapel reluctantly, after her mother lit a candle:

> This mum burst into tears in front of the candles and she said, Oh you must light a candle to this girl. And so, she lit a candle. As she lit this candle she went hhhh [loud intake of breath] I feel all emotional! [She] wept in front of the candles [saying], Ooh I don't know what's happened to me. I don't know … I think she must have just had a bit of a Holy Spirit encounter and she didn't know what to do with it at all.

Anna's story illustrates the dominant view of volunteers: that visitors experience God's presence at The Chapel, and that this is manifested in a feeling of "peace" (mentioned by 9/10 respondents), a strong emotional reaction, or tears. Later that evening, the young woman returns with people from the neighbouring pub saying, "I've told them

they must come in and they must light a candle because it's great". She also confronts one passer-by who was explaining that he did not believe in God saying, "Don't you say those things" and forcibly pulls him into the chapel to light a candle. As Anna interprets the woman's actions through the faith frame she reflects on her own behaviour, contrasting her personal reticence with this young woman's enthusiasm, she observes, "There's a challenge in it for us, to make sure we're still encountering [the Holy Spirit] and not just going through the motions". Jon Bialecki (2017, pp. 96-121), researching Vineyard congregations in North America, shows that Christians within the Charismatic Movement commonly attribute positive moments of surprise, such as healing, prophecy, tongues, or deliverance, to divine communication. He ascribes such God-experiences to a build-up of "affective energy" that overspills from one person to the next to generating a "collective identity" (Bialecki, 2020, p. 107). The Chapel contrasts with Bialecki's study, there is no formal service or ministry time in which such energy can accumulate. Instead, I suggest the physical space of The Chapel invites visitors into "sensual engagement" by "tapping a spiritual channel" in a manner more closely aligned to The Bible Society's exhibition of Angels in Swindon (Engelke, 2012, p. 157).

Visitors do not always respond positively, Da, reflecting on an incident where a visitor required restraint and was remanded into police custody, concluded that "God was there, God was definitely there, he fought that battle". The visitor later apologised and explained he would seek grief counselling as his visit to The Chapel led him to recognise the impact a recent bereavement was having on him. Jane, reflecting on the same incident, concludes:

> In those difficult situations [visiting The Chapel is] a bit of a catalyst, where there's a lot of pressure. And I think that God is in that because he's either bringing people realisation or starting a healing process for people.

Some studies demonstrate Christians within charismatic and Pentecostal churches attribute negative interruption to the devil (Webster, 2013), or God's correction, for example, when John Wimber believes God says he is "not impressed" with Wimber's church (Bialecki, 2017, p. 59). By contrast, volunteers at The Chapel interpret negative

emotions (such as anger or grief) as evidence that God is initiating healing. In Mark Cartledge's (2010, p. 141) study of an Assemblies of God congregation in Birmingham, healing holds a primary, even "sacramental", significance for Pentecostal Christians as they assume that God communicates his love to those who do not profess any belief in God through healing physical ailments (p. 134). Cartledge suggests this has potential to be extended to include healing relationships beyond the church community. Volunteers rarely pray for physical healing at The Chapel, however they tend to attribute any type of reaction to divine intervention, viewing many responses as evidence of God initiating emotional healing.

Volunteers attribute visitors' reactions to the presence of God even if the visitor would refute this:

> I always feel like God has been with people, and meeting with people, whether they realise that they've met with God or not. Because sometimes people say, Oh there's something about it. We go Oh it's God. And they go, Mmm yeah whatever [in a dismissive tone]. (Jane)

Anna and Jane interpret visitors' experiences by drawing on The Chapel's faith frame. This is anchored in what Daniel Albrecht and Evan Howard describe as a typically Pentecostal "orientation to experience" and an "expectation" of God's action in real time leading to an "affective ability to notice the nuances of the Spirit" through "intuition" and "gifts" including healing and prophecy. Albrecht and Howard define pentecostalism as a "prophethood of all believers" founded on the conviction that God will personally issue revelation to all believers and act in "power", sometimes leading to "doing business with God" through physical, emotional or relational healing (2014, p. 241).

Volunteers believe that it is easier to notice such moments of revelation at The Chapel, although they expect these to be present everywhere:

> I believe quite strongly in the Quaker idea that there's that of God in everyone, [in] the interplay of that of God in the speaker and the listener… It seems more focused in the encounters in The Chapel than you might

> realize in other areas of life for some reason possibly mostly because of the unexpected element (Matilda).

For Matilda, such moments are hallmarked by expressions of "surprise" and "gratitude". Anna, Jane, and Matilda demonstrate the theological capital element of missional capital, in their conviction that emotional reactions (of volunteers or visitors) prove that God is active at The Chapel.

Only John chose not to cite the narrative that visitors encounter God's presence. He suggests The Chapel provides space for reflection, giving the example of a couple whose daughter had been arrested on drug charges, they:

> Hadn't intended to come in… and their world was sort of [falling] apart … They found The Chapel in the earlier part of the evening and spent most of the night sitting, listening, sobbing, talking… they were incredibly open and expressed a lot of views about how much The Chapel had actually helped them try and process and understand what was happening… [It] wasn't the Saturday night they had expected.

While John notes the visitors' affective response, feels an empathetic connection them, and identifies an element of surprise, he does not link this to an experience of the presence of God. John has been part of The Chapel for a decade, he describes it as serving visitors in practical, emotional, and spiritual ways. When asked if he thought God was involved at The Chapel he responded, "I bloody hope so, of course he is," but did not elaborate. Like other participants, he emphasised the need for someone wishing to understand The Chapel to "sit, and watch, and see" implying that The Chapel could not be adequately described in words and needed to be experienced. Despite John's long-standing participation within the paracosm he attributes the visitor's response to personal reflection rather than divine intervention. He expressed discomfort when asked to reflect on God's presence or absence in the story he told saying he found it difficult to "articulate" his beliefs.

4.3.2 Coincidences interpreted as evidence of God's real time intervention

The theological capital within missional capital leads most volunteers to interpret coincidence as evidence that God is active in visitors' lives. Whether, through coincidental timing (Peter), or, the coincidence of visitors meeting volunteers with shared life experiences, such as baby loss, or living with a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder (Cate). Volunteers tell coincidence stories and give examples of emotional responses as evidence of God's intervention in visitor's lives. These stories often conform to a pattern Root (2017, pp. 208-209) describes as "xyz stories" which explicate moments of "resonance" in which divine love is glimpsed as Christians become truly present in solidarity with people who are hurting. For example, Marie describes how, during a visit to a neighbouring city, "love surged up out of me, I felt like it was coming from Jesus" when she noticed a young man she believes to be a drug dealer. Later in the same week she met the father of a drug addict at The Chapel. The father said his son was "in big trouble" because he was in debt to a drug gang for a considerable sum of money. The son had asked for financial help and the father was struggling to make payments. The father continued, "If they find out I've told you they'll kill me". This is "x" in Root's model, the hopeless situation of isolation and suffering. Marie responds to the father by inquiring:

> Have you ever asked God for help? He said, I asked Him this morning. I prayed God will you help me? I said, where did you find yourself this evening? And he'd just lost his friends and wandered in there, and he was telling me all of this, and I said, I'll pray for you but I'm sure if you ask God he will help.

Marie identifies two coincidences, or "y". Firstly, that the man had prayed for help and then found himself at The Chapel. Secondly, that she felt she experienced God's love for a drug dealer in the same city where this man's son was in trouble through drug debt. She interprets these as "z" evidence of God ministering into the father's situation. She reflects:

> I don't believe in coincidences as much as I used to before I became a Christian. Very often, I think, things aren't meant as coincidences… so many

> things are not coincidences they're meant to be.

Ailsa similarly drew the conclusion that coincidences could be labelled as "God-incidence(s)" examples of God's activity in real time. It was common for volunteers to describe visitors' unintended visit to The Chapel as evidence of God creating the circumstances to "interrupt" (Anna) people's night out by bringing them to The Chapel. Such attribution of coincidences as signs of God's immanence are common within the Charismatic Movement (Bialecki, 2017, p. 121; Luhrmann, 2012; Webster, 2013).

Viewed as a paracosm, it is apparent that The Chapel supports service learning in the theological capital element of missional capital by encouraging formal and informal storytelling during which volunteers reflect on emotional reactions and coincidences interpreting these as evidence of God's intervention. Volunteers play by telling xyz stories to one another informally during the evening, formally during the closing debrief, and sometimes in their prayers. Storytelling is a reflective process for making meaning from experience and creating identity (McAdams, 2019; McAdams et al., 2006; McAdams & McLean, 2013). For Root, re-telling xyz stories makes meaning from experiences of empathetic connection by articulating them as a "call" to action from the Holy Spirit, heard in the voice of one who is suffering, to join in God's ministry (2021, pp. 205, 211). Root shows how congregations that retell stories in this way learn to perceive God's intervention in real time (p. 210).

Storytelling contributes towards creating the theological capital element of missional capital because, as Choan-Seng Song shows (2012, pp. 63-69), stories hold an intrinsic theology, particularly those which communicate love or engender empathy, since:

> Human beings need God to be able to do theology. They also need each other to be able to do theology. Furthermore, they need other things in God's universe to be able to do theology. Theology is a living enterprise. It is done by the living God, by living human beings, and by the animated creation. In telling stories and by listening to stories, we are engaged in story theology, trying to fathom the divine and human meanings deposited in

> layers of stories and above all in the depths of stories (p. 159).[43]

Indeed, Rhonda Cooper (2018, p. 157), suggests that, in palliative care chaplaincy, "stories are all we have to fight off illness and death", since stories can create a "powerful spiritual experience for both the hearer and the speaker" such that the chaplain sometimes stands as proxy or "story catcher" representing the divine presence (Cooper, 2018, pp. 156-157). Where Root limits xyz stories to experiences of hopelessness, at The Chapel volunteers use xyz storytelling to narrate God's presence across a wide range of visitors' experiences. In contrast to Luhrmann (2020), who suggests detailed storying makes the paracosm appear real, for Root, xyz storying prepares a congregation to recognise and participate with the presence of Holy Spirit in ministry. I suggest the xyz stories retold at The Chapel form story theology through which volunteers believe they to identify God's redemptive presence at work in visitors' lives.

Because of the bonding capital element of missional capital volunteers have confidence to experiment with story theology by telling xyz stories that articulate their belief in God's intervention in real time to one another. This is not unique to The Chapel, Alcoholics Anonymous groups similarly form an empathetic community of storytellers and storyhearers, as hearers connect their own experiences with those of the teller, they begin to reframe their own stories of suffering and vulnerability using a paradigm (or, as Luhrmann would describe it, faith frame) of personal agency (Waters, 2015).[44] The Chapel supports service learning in the theological capital element of missional capital by creating a formal opportunity (the closing meeting) during which volunteers to make meaning by sharing stories (story theology) of their experiences during the evening, stories are also told informally between volunteers.

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[43] Song emphasises story over doctrine and focuses on the need for theology to provide alternative stories of liberation constructed by those whose voices have been marginalised. He prioritises stories of liberation from outside the Church, leading to criticisms of universalism (Lee, 2023). Likewise, the ECM with its focus on individualism and creating safe spaces tends towards synchronism at the expense of gospel faithfulness (Guest, 2017). The Chapel works to counter this tendency towards universalist or synchronistic story theologies through a consistent articulation of the faith frame.

[44] See also, *Implicit Religion Journal for the Critical Study of Religion* vol 22.2 which is devoted to Religion, Spirituality and Addiction recovery. This issue shares several case studies which show the impact of the faith-framing experience (often through storytelling) at AA and other addiction recovery programs which take a spiritual rather than explicitly Christian approach.

4.3.3 Trust in the absence of corroboratory evidence

The theological capital developed through story theology encompasses counterfactual instances where the visitor demonstrates no visible reaction to attending The Chapel. Volunteers acknowledge that there are "lots of people it doesn't make the blindest bit of difference to" (Cate) since many visitors display no perceptible emotional response. The story-theology volunteers create of God's activity at The Chapel, evidenced in coincidence and displays of emotion, interprets such negative instances as opportunities to trust in God:

> God's word never returns empty. I just think whenever somebody engages with God that is time well spent. The result might not be immediate or visible, but I think it does something (Anna).

> We don't have anything on paper to say that we've made any difference to anyone and so we have to just trust God that there are lots of people whose lives would have a story [from The Chapel] in them (Cate).

This trust is underpinned by rare stories where volunteers hear what happened to a visitor after visiting. A volunteer from The Chapel, working at St. Martin's church café during the daytime, reported overhearing a man say, "this is the place". The man then explained, presumably to his wife, that during his stag night he had been teased by his friends that he was only going to have sex with one woman for the rest of his life, was he sure he wanted to give up his freedom? He decided to cancel the wedding. Then he came to The Chapel, sat alone for half an hour, did not speak to anyone, and left. The man said the time in The Chapel had given him a sense of peace, he remembered he loved his fiancée and wanted to commit to a life-long relationship with her. This story was repeated several times by different people when I volunteered at The Chapel as evidence that God was active in visitors' lives irrespective of the volunteer's ability to perceive it. The theological capital element of missional capital underpins volunteers' confidence in God's real time intervention with or without emotional responses or coincidences. This lays the foundation for their belief that they participate with God during their time at The Chapel which I consider as a form of linking capital.

4.4 Linking capital: Joining in with what God is doing (part 1)

Linking capital describes relationships between local communities and organisations with "formal or institutionalised power or authority" such as banks, or politicians, which facilitate access to otherwise inaccessible resources (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004, p. 6). The availability of linking capital depends on the quality of relationship formed between those with and without access to resources (Szreter, 2002, p. 580). The term is commonly used in development projects in which linking relationships may prove positive or negative (Titeca & Vervisch, 2008). For example, discussions aimed at promoting pro-social value systems, among Muslim communities in Banjar, Indonesia. concludes that "linking capital serves as a communication channel system to protect and promote interpersonal relationships" (Syaharuddin et al., 2022, p. 367). The relationships studied might be more accurately described as bonding capital as they exist within a closed group and are offered reciprocally for mutual support. Nevertheless, the authors' claim that the objective of linking capital is building communication channels to access a more powerful resource for the purpose of protecting and promoting interpersonal relationships is a helpful starting point for considering the linking capital element of missional capital. Through which volunteers' belief that they partner with God through the experience of ministering to visitors.

Jane says that she developed this skill at The Chapel:

> At the beginning, I sort of did things because I knew they worked on Sunday. Now I do things because I know they don't work on a Sunday. It's given me more confidence to listen to God and trust that he knows what people need to hear. And that if I get it wrong that's okay - he's got a handle on it.

Peter believes, "There's only three of you in this conversation you, them [the visitor] and the Holy Spirit". Likewise, for Cate, "God is present in The Chapel, and we are trying to work with the Holy Spirit to help people to see him. But it's primarily God doing his thing". Peter and Jane are not alone, Christians within the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement expect to receive both ordinary and supernatural spiritual gifts ranging from encouragement to miraculous healing (Gabriel, 2020). Likewise

Evangelical Christians develop practices of “attentive listening” through which they experience God as present (Strhan, 2015, p. 137) and believers at Vineyard Churches are taught to attend to discontinuous thoughts and interpret these as communications from a divine other (Luhrmann, 2012).

Volunteers admit that relying on an invisible power to act in real time feels risky:

> Sometimes you get a bit of an idea about it's this thing that I need to say. It’s all quite vague and, when you talk about it, it sounds random. But the thing is that when you watch it over a period of time you can see the result of it. The problem with it is it's a bit like smoke. It's a thing, but it's not really. You can't see it and so to make your whole group about that is then very vague… so we open up and it could be a complete waste of time, and we could get bored. So, you have to trust that God will [do] stuff. And it will be something where you look back and beautiful things have happened. (Cate)

While this experience of vulnerability is uncomfortable, volunteers regard it as a necessary precondition for joining in with what God is doing. Anna says the people who visit The Chapel “terrify me in real life”. Nevertheless, she feels that “being placed in a position where I haven’t got the answers has actually strengthened me” because “there is something in those things that makes you more able to receive what God has for you”.

Volunteering equips my participants with the linking capital part of missional capital which reframes vulnerability as dependence on God. The Chapel’s volunteers experience this as a relief from the responsibility to know how to respond to visitors. Peter manages his feelings of vulnerability by praying for God’s intervention:

> Give me the words - what to say. Give me the words not to say. Make what I say be relevant… Help me if I need to pray, help me ‘cos I can't do it. Make them your words not mine.

As he approaches a visitor his silent prayers intensify, “I don't know what to say. [I] don't know what's going on. Just tell me what to do. Lead me. You know I’m empty fill me up. Tell me what you want to do”. This process instils him with confidence that he

is “led by the Spirit” to engage in conversations about God with visitors. While praying with a couple whose marriage was struggling, both visitors laid their heads on his shoulder while they cried. He explained, “For me it was a Holy Spirit moment ‘cos I can't tell you what I said ‘cos it wasn't me. [I’m] not boasting. It wasn't me because I’m absolutely useless at everything”. Similarly, Anna notices that “sometimes you’ll say something” which appears to resonate with a visitor. She describes this as “word of knowledge type stuff on a very low level”. The linking capital element of missional capital at The Chapel is expressed as a firm belief that God guides volunteers during visitor interactions. Christian Smith (2017, pp. 4-5) defines religion as a series of “prescribed practices” believers engage in to benefit from an alignment with “superhuman powers”. He argues that because human experience is uncertain, cognitive and psychological biases which support the “causal attribution” of lived experience to superhuman power. For my participants, the linking capital they gain by internalising The Chapel’s faith frame of participation with God gives them confidence that although they might struggle to find the right words or behaviours they will receive supernatural inspiration.

The linking capital developed by internalising The Chapel’s faith frame of participation with God (revealed in Cate’s and Peter’s story theology above) also relieves volunteers of responsibility for outcomes. Cate and Marie separately repeated the analogy of seed sowing:

> I think we've had maybe one or two people in ten years who’ve got over the threshold from being not Christian to Christian. And nobody in The Chapel. But we are kind of sowing seeds. [The] bible talks about scattering seeds. It talks about things being yeast, and growing in the background, and being a bit subversive. We are basically giving people the opportunity to go into a church when it is a good experience. (Cate)

She accounts for the lack of visible results with a narrative of visitors’ personal agency suggesting “it's never quite our business, because it's their life and God”. Seed sowing is a common metaphor, in Bielo’s 2009 (p. 116) study members of evangelical Bible study groups frequently cited it when discussing seemingly failed evangelistic

attempts. Bielo's Evangelical Christians use seed sowing within a narrative requiring non-believers to "hear the Gospel message" multiple times before conversion. At The Chapel, the language of seed sowing is commonly used by trustees and leaders to mean that God co-ordinates a series of opportunities for visitors to know divine love extending before and after the liminal moment of The Chapel. Their Annual Report states, "we are seed sowers, participants in God's mission; trusting that God has planned our visitors' next step, knowing that we are not likely to see it".

Superficially, the linking capital developed at The Chapel may appear to be a form of individualistic vertical capital through which volunteers draw on church teaching to interpret their experience. However, as Michael Woolcock (1998, p. 185) recognises that in a successful organisation:

> Top-down resources and bottom-up capacity building need to be in a dynamic and cooperative relationship in order to assemble the range of people and materials capable of overcoming problems or to take advantage of opportunities.

His model is predicated on the state working regenerate economically disadvantaged communities. Given that the Church of England exists in long term decline, the linking capital volunteers develop at The Chapel operates in a reverse-flow (Baker, 2011) informing their relationship with to The Spirit College and the Church of England locally and nationally. Volunteers' conviction that they are able to find out and join in with what God is doing fuels their refusal to: engage in officially-sanctioned forms of evangelism they define as "cringey" (Anna); report statistics to the national church identifying the number of individuals to "cross the threshold" (Cate) into congregational membership; or incorporate Bible Study or similar formal teaching within the paracosm. Volunteering at The Chapel has thus empowered these lay Christians to behave as "church members [who] do not merely rely upon the skills of experts but also invoke their own skills and experience to produce religious satisfaction" (Iannaccone, 1995).

The Chapel was launched by the Spirit College in 2010. In 2014, following a dispute between The Chapel's founder and the College, volunteers chose to create an

independent charity. Victor Turner (1969, p. 373) illustrates how the immediacy of the close relationships formed between members of a group existing in a liminal space can lead to behaviour that challenges the bureaucratic structures underpinning socio-economic order and lead to social change. In his example of the "hippy" movement, he observes that power accrued by those on the margins can prompt demonstrations of hegemonic domination which in turn solidify communitas (a type of bonding capital) within the marginalised group inspiring further acts of rebellion in a seemingly endless "dialectic". At The Chapel there was no subsequent escalation, the lay leadership team worked to manage the process of separation amicably and continue to provide occasional placements for students from The Spirit College. Separation from The Spirit College removed The Chapel's access to the College's financial and human resources which increased bonding capital as lay volunteers became involved in leadership. Financial supporters of the project offered their time as trustees, some volunteers created a leadership team to effect operational decisions, while others offered their skills in seeking grant funding. Roger Finke and Kevin Dougherty (2002) note that while seminary-trained church leaders typically demonstrate close professional ties with their organisation non-seminary trained leaders tend to "reflect and magnify" the religious capital of their congregations. They suggest that this is "because the demands of serving as a lay-minister are often so high, few with tepid commitments would even desire the position." It seems likely that The Chapel's opening times from 9.30pm until 2am on a Saturday night might attract exceptionally committed volunteers. Finke and Dougherty suggest that high levels of embeddedness within the local congregation hinder non-seminary trained leaders in offering a prophetic challenge to their congregation. They also observe that locally trained leaders spend 50% more time in prayer than leaders trained in seminary (6.6 hrs per week vs 4.4 hrs per week) but do not comment on whether these leaders are correspondingly better equipped to offer a prophetic challenge to the structures of authority within their denomination.

In 2015, a representative from the leadership team of The Chapel was invited to join the leadership team at St Martin's Church and to sit as an ex-officio member on the PCC, possibly as a result of their increased contribution to the financial and missional

objectives of the church following independence from The Spirit College. As Woolcock (1998, p. 168) rightly states, "the very success of collective action itself influences the various types of social relations co-ordinating that success in future". The Chapel's integration into the leadership structures of St Martin's church led to collaboration on policies to combat drugs and antisocial behaviour, and support vulnerable visitors, in which The Chapel were acknowledged as experts due to their experience of managing these risks. Because The Chapel's volunteers believe they can find out and join in with what God is doing they feel empowered to select their own leadership and governance processes. When considering the limitations of post Covid restrictions the leadership team expressed concern that these would negatively impact The Chapel and debated whether to open or to remain closed until all restrictions had been lifted since it is difficult to have a meaningful conversation at a distance of 2m while wearing masks. When they decided to re-open it was through recommitting themselves to the oft-repeated value that "its God's mission, we just put on the kettle" reiterating that "we've just got to trust God" because The Chapel "was never in our control anyway" (Cate). In addition to empowering volunteers to help shape The Chapel and influence St Martin's church, the linking capital element of missional capital also lays the foundation for the final element of missional capital; volunteers' ability to normalise conversations about their religious commitments with people beyond the faith community: bridging capital.

4.5 Bridging capital: Joining in with what God is doing (part 2)

Volunteers internalise and circulate the theological capital element of missional capital through story theology. They share stories that attribute emotional responses and coincidences to God's action in real time and express trust in God's intervention in the absence of such confirmatory evidence. This leads to the development of linking capital, which is expressed as confidence in direct, if vague and unpredictable, access to direction from God through words of knowledge, and the narrative of seed sowing which relieves volunteers of responsibility for outcomes. I now show how the bonding capital, theological capital, and linking capital elements of missional capital give volunteers confidence to play with practices of listening, prayer, and selective story

sharing as a means of faith communication, arguing that this gives rise to bridging capital.

4.5.1 Listening and prayer

The Chapel's emphasis on listening rather than telling reduces volunteers' anxiety in communicating their religious commitments. Anna feels:

> Much less worried about talking to people because I've done it enough times now to know that I don't need to worry about it. At one time I would have been thinking, "I will not know what to say" whereas now I know I don't know what to say and it doesn't really matter because they'll probably say most of it anyway and I'll just sit there going "mmm mmm". Most of the time you don't say very much at all. They say most of it and then at the end of it we go, "Can I pray with you?"

Volunteers at The Chapel express confidence that God has compassion on the visitor's circumstance and will intervene. Their offers of prayer, either aloud or in silence by lighting a candle, are usually accepted. Within the Charismatic Movement prayer is routinely used as an expression of personal and divine "care", coupled with an affirmation of expectancy that God will respond (Cartledge, 2003, p. 26). Volunteers' prayers are an expression of their story theology, recounting the faith frame that God hears/sees and will act and inviting God's blessing and protection on the individual/situation (Lucy).

The experience of hearing another's story and articulating the story theology of God's care and compassion, either in prayer or to other volunteers at the end of the night, impacts volunteers. They deny that volunteering is altruistic since they "get something out of it" (John), although they find it difficult to define what that something is:

> [Volunteers] look tired but they have a glow. Everybody wants to talk at the end of the night "this happened, this happened, this happened to me. It happened to me. I got this feeling, I got that…" That's your reward. That's where you get more back than you put in. (Peter)

They describe taking part at The Chapel as a "privilege" (Anna). This includes the "privilege" of hearing visitors' stories (Peter, Matilda), of being able to pray with visitors aloud (Peter) or in silence (Matilda), and the privilege to "maybe have a hand in enabling" visitors' experiences (John) which supports bridging capital.

At The Chapel, linking capital means that believers do more than stand proxy for the divine, they believe they encounter God's presence during visitor interactions. Root describes hearing stories as an embodied experience of connection to the divine through ministry:

> We share in hypostasis through story itself. This is why hearing another's story is an incredible act of ministry; in hearing another's story we are given the revelation of his person. And when personhood is shared through ministry, Jesus Christ is concretely and really present. (2017, p. 208).

Root's example of ministry echoes stories shared by volunteers at The Chapel, such as Marie's experience with the man whose son was in debt to drug dealers.[45] For Root, such ministry is God's own act of incarnation "sharing in the life of another for the sake of love and communion" (p. 119) providing a "doorway into divine action" (p. 210). By sharing stories of such experiences Christians create potential for mutual understanding and transformation through the process of giving and receiving ministry (Root, 2017, p. 210). Volunteers believe they partner with God as God is present in the stories and experiences of visitors. In terms of missional capital, theological capital, linking capital and bridging capital are inextricably linked.

4.5.2 Story sharing

If a volunteer identifies coincidences of experience, they may tell part of their own story, interpreting this within the faith frame. Peter described one such conversation:

> Visitor: I feel like killing myself.

[45] Root (2017, p. 209))gives the example of a taxi driver retelling his impulse to accompany a woman as she went to identify her husband's dead body, interpreting this as ministry through solidarity with another in suffering experienced in unexpected presence of a stranger.

> Peter: Really, how serious are you about this? What's your struggle? …
> Visitor: You don't know what it's like.
> Peter: Well yeah, I do. I got so desperate one day that on the way home from work I stopped the car and tried to jump off the motorway bridge.

Peter told me, "I wouldn't necessarily tell them that. But, you know, I've been there I understand the journey that you are on. I wanted to get away from it all". Once, he related his story to a visitor explaining how a stranger had pulled over in their car, talked Peter down from the bridge and followed Peter as he drove home to ensure he arrived safely. Peter ends his story saying he had "no idea who [the stranger] was, what he was doing. I can't even describe him to you. Just an angel". In his retelling, Peter incorporates the faith frame of God's intervention.

In its prioritisation of listening and storytelling, The Chapel demonstrates its alignment with the ECM where congregations routinely seek to create space in which to foster religious discussion (Gerardo & Ganiel, 2014, p. 39). Dialogue may result in the sharing of experience narrated to highlight God's agency, such as Peter's suggestion that he was saved by an angel, or in an offer to pray. Gerado and Ganiel found that Christians in the ECM prioritise listening, not as a prerequisite for converting others to their perspective or to focus on commonality, but to "shar[e] unpretentious and uniquely private experiences". Through dialogue ECM congregations "craft their own biography in a way that foregrounds statements on the nature of spiritual life" and "celebrate" the creation of "safe spaces for non-conforming dialogue" (Gerardo & Ganiel, 2014, p. 86). They find Christians within the ECM frequently enact a "strategic religiosity", shaping their speech and actions to conform to their context as they create a "legitimated religious self" within their ECM community (2014, p. 60). Gerado and Ganiel describe this as a process of religious formation. If, as Nelle Morton asserts (1985, pp. 90-91), "hearing each other into speech" empowers the speaker to "access their own wisdom more deeply" then maybe part of what volunteers receive in these interactions is the ability to articulate their own "ordinary theology" (Astley, 2002) through which they understand their own religious experience afresh.[46] As volunteers

[46] Jeff Astley (2002) uses the term "ordinary theology" to describe the theological reflection of Christians who do not have formal theological training or qualifications.

hear visitors' stories and interpret them within the faith frame they identify connections with their own faith-narrative, strengthening bridging capital and re-enforcing theological and linking capital. Participants initially expect visitors to be hostile or disinterested in hearing how volunteers incorporate the faith frame into similar life experiences, story-sharing at The Chapel shows them that this assumption is false. However, the relationship between bonding and bridging capital is complex and not inherently positive (Patulny & Lind Haase Svendsen, 2007).

4.5.3 Bridging and bonding capital

> I always come away just thinking wow. Yeah, I don't have all the answers. All I can do is listen, offer to pray if somebody wants prayer. But meet real people as well, when people feel that they're in a safe place talking to somebody they trust a bit [and] their guard is down with the alcohol (Da).

Da explains how similar conversations in an earlier project offering refreshments to clubbers on the city's streets prompted him to rethink how he communicated his religious commitments. As a result, he believed that the volunteers who participated "grew" in their Christian faith. Over half of my participants found the experience of volunteering at The Chapel caused them to question their preconceptions. For Cate, it "challenges your faith… messes with you, and changes you", John finds it difficult to respond to situations of suffering which defy easy answers. Anna feels that volunteering at The Chapel "challenged me a lot about what I think is going on and what we should be doing". They regard such experiences as a positive stimulus for developing their faith. Anna admits to "struggling" with some members of the team, reflexively considering the challenge this brings to her self-perception:

> Sometimes the reasons I've struggled with them are the very reasons I would be outraged that I struggle. Because they're reasons of power. But then often [that's] how God works isn't it? "here's this mirror, look into it, be appalled!"

Jane hopes that visiting The Chapel also challenges visitors' preconceptions about Christians.

The outcome of these interactions is unpredictable since there is potential for a trade-off between bonding and bridging capital, or "bonding capital gone wrong" where group members feel under threat (Bramadat, 2005, p. 205). For example, the 9/11 attack on the twin towers in New York, bonding capital united the in-group against outsiders, framing the wider community as "hostile" and precluding the creation of bridging capital (Bramadat, 2005, p. 205). Notwithstanding the risks of goal conflict and isolationism, religious bonding social capital can also extend outwards in sympathetic engagement with people across socio-economic and ideological boundaries (Bramadat, 2005, p. 204). Matthew Guest, Kristin Aune, Sonya Sharma, and Rob Warner (2013, pp. 189-193) show that volunteering gives students exposure to people who are homeless, elderly, disabled or practising other religions. This helps students create bridging capital by building awareness of "others different from themselves" (p. 191). Balancing inter-group and intra-group needs is difficult. Guest et al. demonstrate how bonding capital among Christian students, while providing friendship, can be socially divisive since it "reinforces… existing patterns of segregation" (Guest et al., p. 192).[47] Research among community healthcare practitioners in America also shows that those with stronger organisational links demonstrate more professionalisation, however increasing organisational attachment reduces community allegiance (Saint Onge & Brooks, 2021, p. 312).

At The Chapel, Peter overheard volunteer Rachel speaking to a couple who came in to light a candle in memory of their baby who had died three months previously. Rachel said, "If you want to see your baby again you've got to believe in Jesus". The woman started crying and her husband looked shocked. Peter's eldest son died at birth twenty years previously. He said, "Being within earshot of that hurts. That just hurt, just the thought of it really hits you". Peter joined the conversation offering support and gestured to a leader who removed Rachel. Rachel's determination to voice her theology to a grieving couple inflicted emotional and spiritual abuse. She was offered

[47] Likewise, religiously motivated volunteering generates stronger bonding than bridging capital in the Netherlands (Vermeer & Scheepers, 2019), Finland (Yeung, 2004), and the USA (Wuthnow, 2002).

retraining and paired with a more experienced volunteer. Unfortunately, she remained unable to adhere to The Chapel's values of creating safe spaces and inclusion. Rachel was tightly bonded to the social norms of her church community and an evangelical street evangelism project in which she had participated for several years. Despite retraining, she was unable to develop the necessary communication skills to bridge between her existing propositional approach and the discursive style used by The Chapel. Rachel expressed anger and confusion when she was asked to leave. This incident highlights the importance of clear faith framing and of monitoring implementation in structuring Christian witness and service projects as a site of service learning.

High levels of bonding capital among religious groups, coupled with explicit faith framing, can be associated with higher levels of bridging capital if church teaching and individual practices of prayer provide "cognitive framing" promoting group norms of altruism and empathy with marginalised groups, although church teaching might equally support "intolerance, and racism" restricting the benefits of religious social capital to in-group members (Lewis et al., 2013, pp. 332-334, 343). Although, pro-social behaviour is more strongly correlated with participation in activities that promote bonding capital such as prayer groups, Bible studies and church social events, than with personal adoption of the cognitive frame (Lewis et al., 2013, p. 339). I suggest the seed sowing narrative and associated linking capital creates a cognitive frame (faith frame) which promotes bridging capital because it relieves volunteers of responsibility for outcomes. As illustrated by volunteers' willingness to prioritise listening and recognise they "do not have all the answers". At The Chapel, the Charismatic Anglican faith frame coupled with communication practices from the ECM promotes bridging capital through the narrative of seed sowing which enables volunteers to present their beliefs through listening, prayer and selective story sharing rather than in direct propositional statements.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have considered existing definitions of social capital in religious groups and located my research within this. I define missional capital, as a combination of theological, bridging, and linking capital, underpinned by bonding

capital. I have shown how the shared experience of inhabiting the paracosm of The Chapel creates bonding capital. This gives volunteers confidence to play with theological reflection through storytelling (story theology) re-enforcing their theological capital. Theological capital consists of both intellectual beliefs and the divine animating presence of the Holy Spirit, which enables volunteers to believe they partner with God (linking capital). Linking capital reframes the experience of vulnerability as one of dependence on God and relieves volunteers of responsibility for outcomes. This gives them the confidence to play with practices of listening, prayer, and story-sharing which give rise to bridging capital. This is not a linear relationship as bonding, theological, linking, and bridging capital are interrelated in ways that may re-enforce or undermine one another. For example, conversations my participants have with people who are not Christian may complexify the volunteers' experiences of the paracosm causing them to reflect on the interaction between the faith frame and experience. The overall impact of missional capital at The Chapel is that volunteers believe that they are able to find out and join in with what God is doing in real time. I now consider the impact this has on volunteers' practices of faith communication beyond The Chapel.

Chapter 5: Liminality competence

In Chapter four, I showed inhabiting the paracosm of The Chapel, and its faith frame drawn from Charismatic Anglicanism, helps my participants to believe that they can find out and join in with what God is doing. I also demonstrated how pairing this faith frame with communication practices prevalent within the ECM creates missional capital leading lay Christians to express confidence in communicating their religious convictions while they are at The Chapel. In this chapter, I illustrate how missional capital extends beyond the project, equipping volunteers to communicate their Christian beliefs in their workplaces and communities.

I begin by showing that participants in this study express anxiety about discussing their religious beliefs beyond their Christian community. They fear they will be seen as imposing their views on friends and colleagues, they believe they have inadequate theological knowledge, and some struggle to articulate their beliefs. Nevertheless, they describe The Chapel as a unique space where these concerns are suspended and suggest that the experience of volunteering enables them to reduce the social risk of discussing their faith in their communities and workplaces. Next, I demonstrate how playing within the paracosm of The Chapel, and the missional capital this creates, helps volunteers to initiate conversations about Christianity beyond their faith community. Rev'd Canon Dave Male, Director of Evangelism and Discipleship for the Church of England (2019, p. 1) suggests that lay Christians lack confidence and do not feel equipped to communicate their beliefs to those beyond their faith community. He argues the "primary role" of Church Leaders is to help lay Christians to pray for people beyond the church, to articulate their beliefs, and to live in a way that reflects these. He makes the point that "telling is not training", church leaders need to create opportunities for lay Christians to practice these skills and nurture an "expectancy" that they can partner with God's work in their community (p. 3). I argue that structuring The Chapel to facilitate service learning creates such skills and expectations, and that other Christian witness and service projects as sites of service learning might be designed to be similarly effective.

As volunteers share stories, infused with story theology, missional capital helps them to create ways to talk about their religious commitments that evade common socio-legal barriers to proselytising, demonstrating a "liminality competence" (Borg & Söderlund, 2015) in faith communication. Elizabeth Borg and Jonas Söderland select this term to describe consultants who skilfully transfer their knowledge by working as technical advisors across a range of projects and organisations. The current focus on incarnational ministry within missional ecclesiology recognises the benefits of liminality in church planting (Hirsch & Altclass, 2009). My research demonstrates that there is potential to teach a similar liminality competence to volunteers at other Christian witness and service projects. I also reflect on the risks of configuring volunteer witness and service projects as sites of similar service learning. I suggest that, notwithstanding these risks, structuring volunteer witness and service projects as sites of service learning might contribute towards the Church of England's (2022) "Everyday Faith" objective by equipping lay people to communicate their Christian convictions.

5.1 Barriers to faith conversation

Six of the ten volunteers in this study regularly attend New Wine, Spring Harvest, or Soul Survivor conferences, where "treasure hunting" is promoted (Dedmon, 2007, 2012, pp. 7-9). Treasure hunting is an evangelistic strategy activity that encourages Christians to pray for God to reveal words of knowledge and insights which are subsequently used to engage strangers in discussions about Christianity, for example by offering to pray for miraculous healing (Dedmon, 2007). As Cate explains:

> Soul Survivor [describes] walking down the street asking God who do you want me to speak to? [God replies] The woman in the red coat. When you see the woman in the red coat, who's a complete stranger, you go over to her completely out of the blue. And you'll say something like God speaks. I think God wants to talk to you about your daughter. And then there'll be this whole conversation. She'll end up breaking down in tears and praying and it'll be a life-changing experience for her.

> [That's] terrifying, utterly, utterly, terrifying. So, I can see God's doing stuff. 'Cos if you can do that on a regular basis and you're changing all these people's lives good on you. But for me it's not [that]. I would love to do it and I am too scared. It's just like, no. That person's got their life. I'm not gonna be the person that goes and interrupts that.

Believers within the Charismatic Movement routinely pray for and share messages they consider to be divinely inspired (Cartledge, 2017, p. 34) this is often linked to prayer for healing (Cartledge, 2018). Despite receiving encouragement in, and instruction on, treasure hunting, and experience in enacting these techniques in conversations with other Christians, Cate rejects treasure hunting as an evangelistic strategy because she believes it is wrong to inflict her beliefs on other people.

Volunteers express a similar discomfort with traditional evangelistic techniques such as street preaching or cold calling. As Anna put it, "I've watched street evangelists and cringed. I've just cringed so much as a Christian". Cringing is rooted in volunteers' fear of being perceived as "imposing your views" on friends or colleagues (Jane). Cate believes churches pressurize lay Christians to evangelise:

> A lot of things in churches are about. You've got to tell people about Jesus, you've got to have these conversations, you've got to convert people, you've got to do all this sort of thing. I really, really struggle with that.

When Marie felt uncomfortable taking part in an outreach project knocking on doors and sharing evangelistic tracts on an estate near her home. She was mocked by her group leader for being "chicken" and responded by saying:

> I'll show you who's a chicken! I marched straight over to this house, knocked on the door [and] talked at that young man. I think he was letting it all wash over him. That was the first time - now I make myself listen… You've got to care about the people you talk to. Not just, how can I put this? Not just sell God. You've actually got to care about that person.

Marie now prefers to "listen instead of just talking".

Marie, Cate, and Anna also reject evangelistic approaches which they believe require them to impose their religious views on others. Gladys Ganiel and Marti Gerado (2014, p. 135), find that ECM congregations in Northern Ireland similarly dismiss direct evangelistic methods and seeker focused megachurches as "aggressive and inauthentic" (p. 135). Likewise, ECM congregations in the USA resist conservative evangelistic practices such as street preaching or cold calling (Bielo, 2011, p. 119). British Evangelical Christians express similar concerns, Strhan (2015, pp. 93-103), researching an Evangelical congregation in London, finds that church leaders teach of a theological obligation to participate in a "spiritual battle" to save the "lost", provide practical training in evangelism, and teach that Christians should expect opposition (pp. 93-94). Despite this, Strhan's participants feel embarrassed "sharing the gospel" in their workplaces (p. 99). Stories of congregation members receiving reprimands for workplace evangelism such as setting up a Bible study group fuel this reluctance. Conversations relating to sexuality, morality, male leadership, and the validity of other religions where evangelical teaching conflicts with middle class values of mutual tolerance cause particular tension. One of Strhan's participants reported feeling shocked and upset when a gay colleague asked, "do you think I'm going to hell?". Another, when asked directly for her view on same-gender relationships, responded "I have views on it" without elaborating, describing herself as "a bit chicken about it" (p. 101). Strhan's Evangelicals prefer to conduct evangelistic conversations by cold calling a nearby council estate, a technique they would not use with their middle-class friends or colleagues for fear of embarrassment, ostracism, or reprisal. Despite explicit teaching on personal responsibility for evangelism from church leaders, communication training, and the support of small group structures, Strhan's Evangelical Christians find communicating their Christian commitments within their own socio-economic groups difficult. Sometimes, they are even reluctant to say they attend church for fear of being regarded as bigoted (p. 90, 102). Like Ailsa at The Chapel, many of Strhan's Evangelicals describe themselves as "rubbish" and underconfident in evangelism (p. 102).

In Strhan's (2015, p. 99) study, Evangelical Christians mitigated the social risk of rejection by cold calling strangers beyond their geographical and socio-economic

circle. While most volunteers at The Chapel find it easier to discuss their religious beliefs with strangers, a minority express anxiety:

> I'm not socially adept at all. I mean a lot of those people that come into The Chapel, [they're] the sort of people that terrify me… In any other circumstance I would be frightened of them, and I wouldn't go and sit in the pub with them I wouldn't go outside getting drunk on a Saturday night and they wouldn't want me with them anyway. (Anna)

Some volunteers express concern about speaking to people they believe they have little in common with, for a small minority this is one facet of a general social anxiety.

Volunteers are also concerned by their self-perceived theological inadequacy or inability to explain their religious commitments. John believes he "would struggle in talking about a deeper sider of faith and my understanding of faith. It's an articulation thing, or even a personal understanding". His self-image conflicts with the way other volunteers see him. As Cate explained, "there's a few people, like me, who aren't very comfortable chatting [to visitors]. John's one of them, occasionally you hear him caught up in these conversations and you're like, "you're really good at this". Peter describes himself as "frightened to death" of saying or doing something "wrong". He showed me a 281-day streak of daily Bible reading on his phone but was apologetic saying he didn't read his Bible enough:

> I feel a second-class Christian. I don't know enough. I look at other people and feel they know so much more than me… there are loads of Christians out there that can memorize the book, the chapter, and the verse.

Peter's insecurity reveals a lack of confidence rather than a lack of knowledge or skill. He led Alpha courses for more than a decade and frequently followed these with informal Bible study in the pub next door, often extending into theological debates in the car park after closing time. He acknowledges that his colleagues and other team members at The Chapel view him as an expert. Before Da joined The Chapel he launched a student-run Christian witness and service project serving drinks to people waiting in taxi queues between 11pm and 3am. This experience "challenged my faith

and what I believed in". He found theological terms such as redemption, sin, and salvation meaningless outside the Christian community and sought training to communicate his beliefs. The lack of confidence Peter, John and Da express in articulating their religious commitments contrasts with their professional responsibilities. All three men have attended church since childhood, yet they describe themselves as underconfident in articulating their Christian beliefs, and view The Chapel is a special case where such concerns are suspended.

5.2 Normalising faith conversation

5.2.1 At The Chapel

> It's hard to describe [volunteering at The Chapel] but it's such a lovely thing... Don't be scared to do it. When I said I'd do The Chapel I was expecting to be told no. ... I remember thinking, you don't want me; I can't do it. I think anyone can do it. Even if you think you're rubbish at everything like I do. (Ailsa)

My participants describe The Chapel as a special case where they overcome their usual concerns about sharing their beliefs. They do this by combining their Charismatic Anglican faith frame with communication techniques popularised by the ECM. Peter initially decided not to volunteer at The Chapel believing, "I don't know enough. It's something for vicars to do, clergy, [or] Readers. I have no place there". He now views his lay Christian status as a strength in connecting with visitors at The Chapel because he thinks it shows that Christianity is part of a "normal life".

At The Chapel, volunteers offer their beliefs within a narrative of their experience rather than as a proposition. In contrast to the woman-in-the-red-dress story in which Christians "interrupt", "go", or "talk", prayer and religious discussion at The Chapel "evolve" in a way my participants find "normal", which doesn't require them to transgress the usual rules of social interaction in the workplace (Cate, John, Peter). Again, this is common among ECM congregations which tend to prioritise dialogue to create intimacy in relationships and promote individual contribution and reflection (Packard & Sanders, 2013, p. 447). Volunteers suggest this is particularly important for

people who are “really hurting” (Ailsa). Marie related one conversation with a man who expressed anger that his wife had died of cancer. The man asked “how could God do that? She's been faithful all her life. Why didn't He look after her?” Marie apologised, realising nothing she could say would help him “feel better”:

> Suddenly I said (I don’t think it was me, but), tell me did she find comfort in her faith when she was ill? And he was saying, oh yes, she did. The priest came round to see her, yeah. Oh yeah. She used to pray, and she used to talk about God. I never said anything else, I just let it sink in. I think it came from God. So, I didn't see him again. I was just hoping he went away with a little bit less hate in him. (Marie)

The linking element of missional capital gives Marie the confidence to ask if the woman had been comforted by her faith since she believes her question was inspired by God. The bridging element of missional capital enables her to communicate her belief through a question rather than a propositional statement, allowing the visitor to draw his own conclusions. Gerado and Ganiel (2014) show that ECM congregations across in the USA, UK and Northern Ireland value conversation highly, seeking to build spaces to facilitate mutual understanding based on their belief that they can “see the beauty of God in someone who might not even claim to know him” (p. 135). In the USA, Bielo (2014, Chapter 4) likewise finds that Emerging Christians regard exploring their questions, criticisms, and doubts through dialogue as central to their spiritual formation. In these congregations, dialogue and storytelling are understood as “meaning work” through which Emerging Christians develop their theological understanding in ways that maintain their individual autonomy within a collective framework. Within the ECM differences of opinion are valued as an opportunity to explore one’s own assumptions and presuppositions.

In chapter four I showed how, at The Chapel, volunteers selectively and indirectly present the faith frame through story, prayer, and conversation. As, for example, when Marie gently invites a grieving husband to reconsider his assumptions by inquiring about his wife’s experience of faith without imposing her perspective on him. Using story sharing open questions circumvents the social awkwardness volunteers usually

fear when initiating conversations about Christianity with those outside their Christian community. This technique is widespread within the ECM in which attendees develop theology from within the "messiness" of everyday life through dialogue, embracing the knowledge that this is contingent and incomplete (Packard & Sanders, 2013, p. 437).

Volunteers' anxiety about being able to explain their beliefs is alleviated through the linking capital element of missional capital. The Chapel's faith frame explicitly acknowledges that Christians do not have all the answers:

> Living with the Questions: We do not try to persuade people what to believe or provide easy answers to difficult questions. We seek to have humility and honesty when dealing with the complex questions of life and faith. We seek to live with the vulnerability that not knowing the answers brings.

Through the theological capital element of missional capital (and associated seed-sowing narrative), volunteers hope that God is doing "something" (Anna) in a visitor's life, as a consequence of their time at The Chapel, even if this is invisible. Da has volunteered in multiple outreach projects serving the night economy for more than a decade. He "still feel[s] out of my comfort zone" at The Chapel:

> It takes a while to warm up to the conversations. It terrifies me because I don't want to get it wrong… I always come away just thinking wow, yeah, I don't have all the answers. All I can do is listen, offer to pray if somebody wants prayer.

He believes that during The Chapel (and in a previous outreach project serving the night economy) he connects with the "real" person. The theological component of missional capital encourages him that "that's where Jesus would be. In the bars, hanging out with the so-called sinners, the tax collectors". Da uses his fingers to provide air quotes around the term "sinners".

Ailsa gets anxious in most social situations, but at The Chapel:

> I just float around chatting. Which in my normal day-to-day life is something I don't enjoy doing. But at The Chapel it's something I enjoy… If I'm out and

> about, I wouldn't strike up a conversation when I'm in a queue… [At The Chapel] I've had conversations with businessmen and army guy[s]. People I would never speak to in normal life, [our] paths would never cross.

She described "chatting" for an hour "not about anything big and wonderful" with a couple who entered the chapel to light a candle in memory of their son. The bonding element of missional capital Ailsa experiences at The Chapel helps her to play at bridging activities of listening. Ailsa felt she was "just letting her tell me about her son and how she'd been coping, or not coping". Later in the evening, Ailsa realised The Chapel's regular donation of short-dated cakes and pastries from a local supermarket also included flowers. She took some to the woman as the couple were having a drink in the Red Lion pub next door saying, "They're for you from The Chapel". The woman's eyes filled with tears. Ailsa, noticing that other people in the pub were staring, left quickly. Half an hour later, the woman's husband returned to The Chapel and thanked Ailsa. Ailsa describes this as one of her favourite moments even though "I've not really done anything; I've just listened and given you some flowers". The ability to communicate her Christian beliefs through listening, prayer and the gift of flowers helps Ailsa to overcome her social anxiety.

The ECM's relational focus and dialogical style work against the presumption that "shared belief systems require coercion" (Bruce, 2021).[48] However, this prioritisation of othopraxy over orthodoxy (Gerado & Ganiels, 2014) has attracted criticism. Don Carson (2005, pp. 28-32) argues that by switching from metanarratives to individual stories the ECM embraces pluralism and relativism at the expense of biblical faithfulness and replaces epistemological "rigor" with syncretistic "tolerance".[49] Carson conflates the discursive communication style of the ECM with rejection of

[48] Steve Bruce (2021, 427) presumes secularisation is an inevitable consequence of "the increasing cultural autonomy of the individual" based on his assumption that "shared belief systems require coercion". Jorg Stolz (2020) provides an overview of the factors driving secularisation while Detlef Pollack and Gergely Rosta (2017) offer an overview of relationships between modernity and Evangelical, Pentecostal, and charismatic expressions of Christian faith. Both argue economic insecurity and inadequate education lead to socialisation of religious expression and that in the face of growing globalization and religious pluralism the persistence of religious observance is a temporary phenomenon. Set against this, authors such as Graham (2017, 2013), Baker and Skinner (2006) reflect on the resurgence of public expressions of religion.

[49] See also John Bolt (2006) who assesses key voices within the ECM. Bolt suggests in responding to contemporary culture the ECM has lost continuity with the traditions of the church.

traditional church teaching. Scot McKnight (2007), a key voice within the ECM, maintains that most Christians who identify as part of the ECM regard Jesus Christ and the Bible as sources of truth. While he concedes a minority may display relativism, for the majority, willingness to engage in discussion is better understood as epistemological humility: "This is what I believe, but I could be wrong. What do you think? Let's talk". Such humility does not detract from the evangelistic work of "summoning everyone to follow Jesus Christ and to discover the redemptive work of God in Christ through the Spirit of God" (McKnight, 2009, p. n.p.). At The Chapel, volunteers remain within mainstream denominations and have not rejected traditional church teaching, as part of the recruitment process all participants provide references from their church leader and signed to demonstrate their commitment to the Nicene Creed. Nevertheless, within the paracosm of The Chapel, they play with humble forms of religious communication, inviting discussion about their religious commitments without seeking to impose these on visitors.

The ECM encompasses a wide range of experiments in ways of being church across denominations. McKnight (2006, pp. 11-13) categorises these congregations by their relationship to contemporary culture suggesting: some "minister to post-moderns" seeking to rescue people from contemporary culture; others "minister with post-moderns" communicating an eternal gospel message in ways that are culturally intelligible; still others "minister as post-moderns" wrestling with language which is inadequate to describe God and turning to praxis instead.[50] McKnight believes the majority of ECM congregations minister to or with post-modern culture:

> These sorts of emerging Christians don't deny truth, and they don't deny that Jesus Christ is the truth, and they don't deny the Bible is truth – but they might be gentle when it comes to their use of the word "truth". … [Since] the emerging movement thinks how a person lives is more important

[50]See also Ed Stetzer (2006) who groups ECM congregations into "relevants", "reconstructionists", and "revisionists": Relevants communicate conservative evangelical doctrinal commitments through culturally accessible worship and teaching; reconstructionists reject the form of traditional church, favouring incarnational or house church models, and hold a range of doctrinal positions, while revisionists actively question traditionally held doctrinal positions. Robert Doornball (2012) suggests a one-to-one mapping of Stetzer's typology to McKnight's.

> than what they believe, that orthopraxy is the most important thing. And that the power of a life forms the best apologetic for the way of Jesus. (12,16)

My participants minister to visitors through listening, story sharing, and prayer, believing their "faith is definitely real and evident when we have those conversations" (Da). Volunteers typically enjoy social approval for their generosity in donating time to strangers (Musick & Wilson, 2008, p. 98), my participants feel that telling visitors that they are unpaid and have an ordinary life beyond of the project lends credibility to their religious claims. The missional capital volunteers develop at The Chapel leads them to believe that if people beyond their faith community have a "good experience" (Cate) interacting with a Christian and recognise that Christians lead normal lives (Da) this will have a positive future impact on faith development (Cate), it also gives them the skills to facilitate such encounters.

Christians within the ECM aim to learn about the needs of their local community, build genuine friendships, and cultivate relationships to help them understand how to communicate the gospel (Bielo, 2011, pp. 119-120,133). For example, by running a coffee shop seeking to meet the needs of local people struggling with addiction or a youth project for middle class teenagers addressing the pressure to overachieve, because "being missional means seriously cultivating relationships— not before or after conversion attempts, but in place of them" (Bielo, 2011, p. 12). By contrast, while volunteers at The Chapel have long-standing relationships with one another, visitor connections are usually transient. There are a small number of semi-regular visitors (fewer than ten), the majority visit only once. Low numerical evidence of success is normalised through the seed sowing narrative. Jane, drawing on the linking capital element of missional capital, regards the lack of commitment to an ongoing relationship as one of The Chapel's strengths:

> What works about The Chapel is that it's not a space where we're asking people to do things. So, we don't go oh there's this rota that you can be on, and we'd really love to see you again next Sunday for this thing. We're here to give you space if you want it. But you can talk to us if you want to. So, it

> doesn't feel like we're trying to sign people up for anything.

Ailsa's act of listening to a mother's pain, lighting a candle in church, and offering soon-to-be-out-of-date flowers, or Marie's gentle question to a grieving husband do not provide a complete or coherent explanation of the gospel. Instead, volunteers hope that by providing visitors with a "normal interaction" with "Christians that they can talk to without being Bible bashed" demonstrates that "church can be just normal with normal people" (John). For example, by allowing prayer to "evolve out of a situation" (Cate), or through the explanation one volunteer offered that candle-lighting is like throwing a coin into a wishing well, except that someone is listening. They believe that taking a gentler communication approach makes The Chapel "uncringey" because it relieves the pressure for visitors to "come" and "do this thing that we are doing" and instead invites them to "be who you are in this space" (Anna).

5.2.2 Beyond the chapel

The experience of holding "normal" conversations about Christianity at The Chapel equips volunteers to hold similarly normal conversations with non-Christians beyond the project. For example, Peter is delighted when his colleagues ask whether he has been "out with the God squad" (meaning at The Chapel), because he believes it shows that his colleagues "see I'm not just a bystander". Instead of interpreting their lay status as a disadvantage due to a lack of formal theological training, volunteers come to view being lay Christians as a strength:

> You can talk to an ordinary person who's not been to vicar school. I think there can be a lot more trust. People can be a lot more open about what's going on in their lives. (Peter)

Likewise, Jane, who values professional training in her career, believes that:

> The nice thing about The Chapel, it's not just a bunch of vicars. It's people who live out their faith, their experiences with God. We aren't theologically trained. It's really nice to be able to talk this is my experience, this is what the Bible says.

Pentecostal and charismatic faith frames promote "religious generosity" in time and money alongside a conviction that Holy Spirit inspires and empowers ordinary Christians as evangelists and church planters. Consequently, Pentecostal and charismatic congregations are able to draw from a wider pool of "local talent" and "mobilise large numbers of local people in their institution-building efforts" (Robbins, 2004, pp. 130-131).[51] This is precisely the mobilisation that the Church of England (2019) is seeking to achieve, one step in effecting this is for Christians to normalise discussions about religion beyond the faith community.

In the past, Anna felt reticent in talking about Jesus at work. She found herself wondering:

> Why can I rave on and on about how wonderful a brand of washing powder is and yet find it really difficult to say, ooh Jesus is great to people? I've often caught myself being really enthusiastic about something I think is good, like a pen, and I've noticed myself doing it and thought what a shame I don't talk about Jesus like this… because sometimes we're quite reluctant, we're scared of what people think of us aren't we? Well, I can be.

Anna's concerns are well founded. Religion in Britain enjoys continuing public backing through government partnership with faith groups to deliver social services (Beckford, 2012) and legislative protection within the Equality Act (2010). Legally, in the UK, people who follow a particular religion "have no duty to be neutral but must not impose their beliefs on others" (Wintemute, 2014, p. 224). However, there are multiple legal cases demonstrating that employees who "active[ly] manifest" their religion in the workplace can be dismissed or penalised (Hambler, 2008, p. 131).[52] When a child's

[51]See Joel Robbins (2004) study of the Urapmin of Papua New Guinea for an illustration of how Pentecostal and Charismatic congregations reinterpret localised belief systems within an overarching Pentecostal and Charismatic framework.

[52] Hambler (2015, 4) defines "active manifestation" of religion as "the desire to articulate religious convictions to make an impact on others; for example, to seek to make converts to a particular religious faith or to rebuke the perceived 'sinful' activities of co-workers (such as involvement in same-sex or extra-marital relationships)". Hambler (2020) also draws attention to the implied risk that beliefs, such as those founded biblical texts might be ruled "absolutist" and found "incompatible with human dignity". See also Hambler (2022) for an evaluation of the legal arguments for and against proselytism as harassment in the workplace and Hambler (2015; 2023, 250) for a review of legal cases including a definition of "improper proselytism" (e.g. involving financial payment or abuse of power) such as offers

innocent comment, “well, you only love Jesus,” was adopted as a catchphrase among staff, Anna initially felt anxious. Later, when “nothing happened, I didn’t get kicked out,” she found the experience liberating since it meant “I could say anything and just say, “Well, you know me, I only love Jesus”:

> It became so much easier to talk about it. And actually, doing The Chapel had the same effect. Because people didn't want to know that I’ve been to church. But when I said I’ve been at church at two o'clock in the morning they wanted to know about that. So actually, I find it much easier to talk about Jesus having done The Chapel than I did before.

The interest Anna’s colleagues express in stories about her volunteering reduce her perception of the risk of talking about her religious convictions at work.

Likewise, John suggests “telling someone you go to church on Sunday morning really is a yawn moment”. He does not mention this to his colleagues. However, “Talking about a project to serve and support the city centre and open church up on a Saturday night… people wanna understand what and why”. He does this intentionally:

> You use it as an opportunity to let people know a little bit about your faith. Because when people naturally chat about what you've done at a weekend you build it in as a matter of course. Something that you have been doing without making it into anything other than [saying]: we went out to the beach for the day, we did The Chapel on Saturday night, and we cut the lawns on Sunday. Inevitably, people will explore a bit more, [asking]: what did you do on Saturday night?!… Which gives you an opportunity for people to understand a little bit more about where you're coming from.

John’s colleagues show interest in his volunteering that they do not exhibit for other forms of religious expression. He deliberately talks about The Chapel to signal his faith commitments in the hope that his colleagues will inquire about his beliefs.

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to pray or inquiring whether a service user attended church. This has been interpreted as “religious speech which may be offensive to others [and] tends to be regarded as … religiously motivated rather than a protected manifestation” of religion.

Jane wears an anchor at work, rather than a cross, to avoid imposing her beliefs on the vulnerable children she supports because, “I work in a secular environment, you can’t talk about faith… I work with loads of kids who desperately need Jesus and I can’t talk to them about it”. Jane explained her decision by saying that the children that she works with are “vulnerable” and “require consistency”. She cites the importance of professionalism which she equates with “impartiality” and adherence to guidelines. She feels that disclosing her religious commitments would “compromise the therapeutic relationship that we have and could cause problems”. Jane’s response suggests she has an awareness of the concern English and Welsh courts demonstrate for protecting “vulnerable” groups, such as children, from proselytism (Hambler, 2022, 372). With her colleagues, she is wary of having “non-work discussions” for fear of “wasting company time”. She thinks “it can be quite difficult working in a secular environment to talk about faith with people” so “the way I try and do it [is to] live it out”. She uses the interest her colleagues express in The Chapel to engineer opportunities to discuss her religious commitments:

> People at my job, they're always really interested in how The Chapel has gone. They would never ask me how was church? But they will always ask me oh you did The Chapel this week, how did it go? So, it's a really good opportunity to share my faith with people in a way that shows church isn't just about going in and singing some nice songs then going home. It’s a really nice way to discuss how I live out my faith… When I first describe it I often get people going ,really! That's a thing! Why do you do it? It’s nice, it surprises them. Whenever I've described it people have always had a really positive response.

Anna, John, and Jane unwittingly draw on ECM practices Gerado and Ganiel (2014, p. 166) describe as “co-operative egoism” through which individuals within the ECM curate their personal beliefs by engaging in relationships of care and empathy within their worshipping community. Christians participating within the ECM tend to “immerse” themselves in congregational activities they believe reflect their “core values” as a means of developing their own individualised “authentic, holistic Christianity” (p. 191-193). My participants extend a similar co-operative egoism in

their communities and workplaces. They hope to invite others to engage in similar relational self-reflection by narrating experiences which they believe show the validity of their Christian beliefs. As Peter explains, "I tell them about my faith, I can't tell them about theirs". These volunteers demonstrate a liminality competence in speaking about their religious commitments which enables them to avoid accusations of proselytising when communicating their Christian commitments at work or in their community.

Volunteers communicate their Christian commitments by sharing stories about the experiences they believe visitors have at The Chapel, interpreted through the faith frame. Jennifer Pals (2006) describes specific narrations which attribute a "causal connection" between personal growth caused by difficulty and a subsequent positive outcome as "springboard stories". Stephen Denning (2011, p. 63) recommends springboard stories as a tool to drive cultural change in an organisational setting. For him, effective springboard stories are "true" first person narratives, told about someone whose quandary is "typical of the audience", clearly outlining what would have happened without change, with an "authentically happy ending". Stories shared at and about The Chapel conform to this pattern by being true, first person and about shared struggles. Volunteers believe that the stories they share beyond their faith community show that faith is world engaging, while those shared between volunteers implicitly counter the dominant what-would-have-happened narrative that speaking about Christianity beyond the faith community is socially or legally risky or requires them to impose their views on others. The seed sowing narrative presumes an ultimate successful conclusion, in the interim a good experience suffices. In an organisational context, Denning (2006, 2011, 2012) suggest that springboard stories can be manufactured to:

> Enable a leap in understanding so that the audience intuitively grasps what the change involves and why it might be desirable, as well as pointing out how an organisation or community might change… It can enable listeners to visualise from a story in one context what is involved in a large-scale transformation in an analogous context. It can enable them to grasp the idea as a whole not only very simply and quickly, but also in a nonthreatening

> way. In effect, it invites them to see analogies from their own backgrounds, their own contexts, their own fields of expertise. (2012, pp. xvii, xix)

I suggest the stories volunteers tell one another at the end of the evening form springboard stories through which they encourage one another to believe that visitors appreciate discussing Christianity with someone who can relate to their life experiences and that their lay status is a strength rather than a weakness. In this way, the stories circulated within The Chapel serve as springboard stories, giving volunteers confidence in using the missional capital they develop at The Chapel to communicate their religious commitments within and beyond the project.

5.3 The gathered and sent church

Thus far, I have shown that The Chapel, drawing on its heritage of theological training, creates a paracosm in which volunteers play at sharing their Charismatic Anglican faith frame using communication practices popularised by the ECM. I described the outcome of this as missional capital, which enables lay Christians to communicate their religious beliefs within and beyond The Chapel. I now locate this within missional ecclesiology, arguing that service learning at Christian witness and service projects can be configured to support "liminality competence" (Borg & Söderlund, 2015) in faith communication. I suggest that the success The Chapel has had in equipping these lay Christians to articulate their religious commitments beyond their faith community indicates that other Christian witness and service projects might also be configured as sites of service-learning equipping lay Christians to demonstrate and communicate "Everyday Faith" (Church of England Renewal and Reform Committee, 2022; Church of England, 2023; The Church of England, 2022).

I began by situating this study in the field of missional ecclesiology, seeking to understand how Christian witness and service projects can help equip lay Christians to communicate their religious commitments. The church is commonly conceived as existing in two forms; gathered in worship or sent/scattered in witness to the world. Usually, the relationship between the two envisages the gathered church informing the sent witness of its members:

> In the practices of the missional church, scriptural formation will necessarily be the priority. It will find its most sublime expression in biblically shaped liturgical worship, the central act of the gathered church and the major form of its public witness. But it will pervasively shape every dimension of the community's gathered life through diverse ways in which the equipping takes place, resulting in the sending of Christians into the world as light, leaven, and salt (Guder, 2016, p. 32).

Although there is some recognition that the gathered and scattered forms of church might helpfully inform one another (Keifert, 2006).

The Church of England (2022, Oct 22) identifies the "gathered" church as groups which "meet" at a church, home, or "church activity", and the "sent" church as "the body of the church in the community: at home, in service, and in rest". This is of particular relevance because UK churches are frequently organised around a parochial system within which success is measured in the "health" of the surrounding community rather than church attendance (Guest et al., 2016, p. xiii). Following the publication of *Setting God's People Free* (Church of England, 2017) structuring the gathered church to equip lay Christians to witness to their religious beliefs as they live, and work scattered alongside those who do not profess a Christian faith has become a significant focus for the Church of England. It envisions churches as hubs of spiritual formation serving their wider communities, aiming to double church participation among children by increasing the variety of worship and to mobilise the laity to engage in mission through "Everyday Faith" resources (Church of England Renewal and Reform Committee, 2022; The Church of England, 2022). This has led to promotion of books such as Neil Hudson's (2019) *Scattered and Gathered: Equipping Disciples for the Frontline*; Sam and Sara Hargreaves's (2017) *Whole Life Worship: Empowering Disciples for the Frontline*; the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity's (2014) *Fruitfulness on the Frontline* Course. But this strategy is poorly understood by many existing congregations and church leaders require training and support to effect this change (Perrin & Osworth-Peter, 2021).

I suggest the binary typology which conceives of the church as either gathered or scattered obscures the potential of liminoid moments, such as The Chapel, which fail to conform completely to either a gathered or a scattered state and instead combine elements of both. As I outlined in chapter three, The Chapel operates as a liminoid moment. The Charismatic Anglican faith frame receives official endorsement through The Chapel's policies and processes and unofficial acceptance in the practices of volunteers. However, by forgoing some of the rituals commonly associated with the church gathered-in-worship and including elements usually associated with the night economy, in which the Charismatic Anglican paracosm is not usually supported, it offers volunteers and visitors the opportunity to inhabit a liminoid moment.

Liminality is well understood as a tool for facilitating church planting. In *The Forgotten Ways Handbook: A Practical Guide For Developing Missional Churches* Alan Hirsch, co-founder of Forge Mission Training Network and 100 Movements, and Darryn Altclass (2009) suggest that the identity of the church is most accurately captured in the image of pilgrimage, as God's people embark on a journey to the new land God has called them to inhabit (p. 170). This means that, that the role of church leaders is to leverage liminality to reawaken the "latent" missional "potential" of lay Christians and "shift from trying to *think our way into a new way of acting* to the process of *acting our way into a new way of thinking"* (p. 20), an apt description of service learning. They draw attention to the potential of service learning and experiences which combine communitas (a form of bonding capital) with liminality to effect attitudinal change.[53]

[53] Victor Turner (1969, p. 360) first identified that the discomfort of liminality presents "a "moment in and out of time," and in and out of secular social structure" during which individuals come to recognise that their common humanity transcends socio-political, legal, or economic boundaries. Turner labels this experience of connection "communitas". Communitas is an intense sense of comradeship, founded on the mutual recognition of shared humanity (Anghel & Grierson, 2020; Hayton, 2018). It occurs through sharing an intense experience while separated from ordinary life during which people create bonds of friendship and is particularly associated with sacred experience (McGinnis et al., 2008, pp. 76-77, 74 Hirsch's reflections on liminality and communitas are a subset of his overall vision for the church to recapture "apostolic genius" of the early church by recreating missional movements (Hirsch, 2006, 2010, 2016, 2019; Hirsch et al., 2012). Hirsch and Altclass (2009, 149-150) draw on principles of chaordic management developed by Dee Hock (1999) for the Visa network and allude to springboard stories for creating a shared vision. Hirsch assumes that these experiments in new ways of acting and thinking will necessarily lead to the development of new congregations with patterns of worship predicated on the needs of the local community, demonstrating the validity of Turner's argument that increasing community among liminal groups gives rise to new structures which disrupt the existing order.

By exploring experiences which are collective (gathered) and liminal (scattered/sent) Hirsch and Altclass (2009) highlight to the opportunity Christian witness and service projects offer to provide impetus for new church congregations.[54] Their focus is on planting new worshipping congregations, this requires a high level of commitment as participants leave their existing church and commit to the unknown (Hirsch & Altclass, 2009, p. 182). My research shows that a similar dynamic may help lay Christians who do not wish to engage in church planting to harness similar benefits, albeit on a more modest scale.

Church planting is resource intensive, according to the Church of England's own reporting Fresh Expressions of church usually run for around three years, of these, around 70% meet once a month or less. Fresh Expressions congregations are particularly vulnerable to changes in leadership, lack of interest, and in those which run for extended periods, leadership burnout (Nunney, 2020a, 2020b). By contrast, Christian witness and service projects are widely operated by existing congregations rendering the benefits of missional capital and liminality competence in faith communication more widely accessible. According to its self-reported statistics for mission, 77% of Church of England churches are involved delivering 31,300 social action projects. They hold responsibility for almost half, host a further 3,400 in their buildings, and work in partnership with other organisations to deliver 4,200 projects including lunch clubs and coffee mornings for older people, toddler groups, community cafes, and food banks (Eames, 2023).[55] Over 35% of the Church of England's worshipping population is aged 70 or more compared to just 13.5% of the general population in England (Eames, 2023, p. 7) and it is retired people who are most likely to engage in volunteering and gain most from their involvement (Mak et al., 2022; Matthews & Nazroo, 2021; Myers et al., 2013; Nichol et al., 2023). In addition, there is

[54] Volunteer studies indicate that communitas is more complex that Hirsch's model suggests; while it can increase affective commitment to the organisation (Curran & Taheri, 2021, pp. 1066, 1068) there is potential for this to be exploited (Laura Toraldo et al., 2019, p. 6341). Communitas may support or erode bridging capital, volunteers on historic railways who find participation in a community with shared interests protects them from the "ridicule" they experience in expressing their passion for the railway among non-enthusiasts (Wallace, 2006, p. 230). By contrast, in disaster relief studies, temporary communitas can occur among victims (bonding capital) and between victims and those providing assistance (bridging capital) (Uekusa et al., 2022, pp. 61-62).

[55] No comparator statistics are available prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, although social action and community outreach among churches has dropped by 10% since 2019 (Eames, 2023).

a strong reciprocal relationship between frequency of religious attendance and the rate of participation in activities led by religious organisations in the UK (Son, 2023; Son & Wilson, 2021), among Anglicans and other Protestants participation in religious services is strongly associated with volunteering, cooperativeness and, for Protestants, trust (Aksoy & Wiertz, 2023). Such high levels of involvement in Christian witness and service projects suggest that there may be a substantial benefit if liminality competence in faith communication I have identified at The Chapel could be replicated elsewhere.

Yet, experiences combining liminality and communitas do not inherently deliver service learning. Volunteers can be "well-meaning but often ineffectual and sometimes harmful" (Musick & Wilson, 2008, p. 520) and participants in service learning who believe they can "try things out without any serious repercussions" fail to recognise the risk of negatively impacting those around them in the pursuit of knowledge (George-Paschal et al., 2019). A study of volunteer tourists found that positioning volunteering as a learning experience risks "instrumentalising" host communities, particularly if interactions remain superficial and lack genuine relationality (Magrizos et al., 2021, p. 878).[56] During a sport-for-development programme working with hard-to-reach communities, university students who experienced liminality initially felt vulnerable and powerless. This discomfort forced them to experiment with new communication techniques to connect with the children in their care (Hayton, 2018, p. 870). The change in approach gave rise to "empathy, humility and [a] sense of togetherness creating a power-with dynamic". Unfortunately, over time, the trust generated through communitas re-enforced the students' leadership positions and perpetuated the status quo (Hayton, 2018, pp. 885-886). Equally, those who fail to adapt in periods of liminality may find themselves trapped in a "liminal hotspot" where "nobody can win" (Szakolczai, 2017, p. 231). As illustrated when Rachel, trapped in a liminal hotspot between the expectations of her church and The Chapel, inflicted pain on a grieving couple, other volunteers at The Chapel, and

[56] This study focuses on the experiences of volunteer tourists defined as western tourists who spend their holidays participating in majority world social or conservation projects in search of personal growth rather than host communities' growth (Magrizos, 2021).

ultimately herself. Although The Chapel's leaders clearly communicate and monitor the implementation of the faith frame, rejecting volunteers and funding sources which are incompatible with these, the possibility of harm cannot be eliminated.

Despite the risks, it is clear that taking part in the liminoid moment of The Chapel has helped my participants to overcome the barriers inhibiting faith communication in their workplaces and communities. Elizabeth Borg and Jonas Söderland (2015) conduct research among technical consultants whose careers consisted of a series of short-term contracts across multiple organisations and locations. They find that consultants who succeed under conditions of liminality conceive of their work as "knowledge transfer":

> [Consultants] actively make use of their belonging to different organizations by participating in different activities and taking on roles in both organizations, thereby increasing their social networks and their learning possibilities … they typically also make use of the possibilities that liminality offers. They likewise deliberately use liminality to broaden their knowledge. (Borg & Söderlund, p. 275)

Consultants who take a knowledge transfer approach successfully navigate the ambiguities of their liminal role. They synthesise knowledge gained from working in different organisations and use this to conduct a needs analysis in each new context. This helps them determine how they can contribute most effectively, acting as ambassadors for their engineering specialism (Borg & Söderlund, 2015, p. 270). I suggest that volunteering at The Chapel, and the missional capital this creates, gives rise to a similar liminality competence, one which enables my participants to act as Christian ambassadors sharing their beliefs beyond their faith community.

5.4 Conclusion

Volunteers at The Chapel say they are uncomfortable with traditional evangelical methods of evangelism which they perceive as imposing their views on friends or colleagues. Their attitude reflects a common resistance expressed by members of the

ECM to forms of evangelism which are perceived as coercive. Again, drawing from practices which are common within the ECM volunteers at The Chapel favour a dialogical approach. However, despite often lifelong church attendance, participants in this study say they feel poorly equipped to articulate their religious commitments, attributing this to a lack of confidence or a lack of theological expertise.

In contrast to the generalised anxiety they express about discussing their Christian commitments, the missional capital volunteers develop at The Chapel equips them to hold a "normal" conversation about their religious beliefs with visitors. This ability to talk about faith in ways that are socially accepted extends beyond the project as volunteers share stories about The Chapel in conversations with friends and colleagues. If their colleagues express curiosity, my participants elaborate by sharing "a little" (John) of their own religious beliefs because they feel this allows them to communicate their faith commitments while avoiding the social risk of being seen to impose their views on others. Their experience highlights the potential of projects, such as The Chapel, which operate as a threshold between the gathered and scattered expressions of church to generate a liminality competence in "normalising" religious discussion that extends beyond the project. It appears that that the experiences of volunteers at The Chapel calls for reconsideration of the potential to configure Christian witness and service projects as sites of service learning in faith communication.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations for practice

My research began with a question of missional ecclesiology, to examine how volunteering at The Chapel had influenced this group of lay Christians' understanding and practices of mission. I used Julian Müller's (2009, 2011) postfoundational practical theological method since this allows participants to narrate and interpret their own experience, locates these narratives in context, and juxtaposes insights from other disciplines on the basis of transverse rationality to generate a more complete description. I have drawn from volunteering (including service learning), social capital theory, and anthropology, in addition to practical theology to illuminate different facets of my participants' experiences. Reflecting on my initial questions I now see them as an attempt to understand how volunteering at The Chapel helps volunteers to overcome a variety of social and legal barriers to sharing their religious commitments.

In this chapter, I summarise my thesis, showing that missional capital explains how volunteers at The Chapel develop a liminality competence in faith communication which impacts their relationships beyond the project. I then demonstrate how my study extends Elaine Graham's (2013) work on performative apologetics and suggest that similar practices would strengthen the missional capital generated through other Christian witness and service projects. Next, I outline the importance of viewing the gathered and sent church as ends of a continuum rather than binary states since this highlights the potential of liminal spaces such as The Chapel. Finally I summarise the limitations of the present study and suggest areas for future research.

6.1 Summary of thesis

My research was prompted by my professional experience as a volunteer and team leader at The Chapel. I was struck by the contrast between the negative perception volunteers had of evangelism and their enthusiasm for taking part in, and sharing stories about, The Chapel. I began by situating this study in the nexus between faith based volunteering and missional ecclesiology. As I observed volunteers at The Chapel, listened to their stories, and reflected with them on their experiences I came to see that The Chapel delivers service learning in faith communication. Missional capital emerged from my research as a means of conceptualising this.

I began with a question of practical theology, identifying the Church of England's challenge of motivating lay Christians to unite their Sunday worship with their weekday lives. I posited that one difficulty lay Christians experience in "finding out what God is doing and joining in" (Williams, 2003, para 13) is the dominance of the immanent frame which prevents them from perceiving God's action in real time. Having identified The Chapel as a suitable case study, I then considered the interrelationship between religious participation and volunteering by reviewing literature on volunteerism which is primarily aimed at recruiting and retaining this valuable resource. This demonstrated the importance of value expression to religiously motivated volunteers and the potential for volunteering to strengthen religious belief.

Next, I assessed The Chapel through the lens of Luhrmann's (2012, 2020) anthropological research which answers the question of how believers experience gods as real (overcoming the immanent frame) from a non-confessional perspective. Using her model, I explored how The Chapel creates a paracosm, a shared imaginary world in which volunteers play at inhabiting a faith frame in which God is experienced as real. I showed how The Chapel shares a Charismatic Anglican faith frame which is re-enforced in prayer, song, story sharing and visual display. I also showed that the practices of faith framing (goal setting) and a shared paracosm (supportive environment) echo best practices in service learning.

I reflected on volunteer's experiences from perspective of theological education in which Goto (2016a, 2016b) encourages the use of "play" to facilitate "revelatory experiencings" in which they glimpse God, showing how The Chapel leverages liminality (Turner, 1974) to create an opportunity for volunteers engage in theological play with one another and with visitors. I explained how this play is transformed into service learning through theological reflection as volunteers support one another in narrating their experiences through the faith frame during the closing briefing at the end of the evening. Volunteers to play at "stepping out" in trust that "there's three of you in this conversation, you, [the visitor], and the Holy Spirit" (Peter). I then showed that this leads volunteers to perceive the "outworking" of the "interplay of that of God in the speaker and the listener" in a way that is "more focused" and thus more easily identified at The Chapel (Matilda). I also identified core faith framing narratives of

“putting the kettle on to see what [God] does” and “seed sowing” and explained how these help volunteers overcome common barriers to discussing their religious commitments beyond their faith community.

Then, I considered volunteers’ experiences from the perspective of social capital. I found that the bonding element of missional capital gives them confidence to play at discussing their faith with visitors within the paracosm of The Chapel since they believe other members of the team will help them if they run into difficulties. The bridging element of missional capital reassures volunteers that others are interested in finding out about their faith and gives them tools of listening, story sharing, and prayer with which they can communicate this. The theological and linking elements of missional capital convinces volunteers that they can access God’s help and guidance and relieves them of responsibility for outcomes. Furthermore, although my participants fear imposing their faith on others and therefore reject traditional evangelical strategies and the concomitant social and legal risks missional capital gives them confidence to tell stories about their experiences at The Chapel in their communities and workplaces to initiate conversations about their Christian beliefs.

I conclude that my participants play at combining faith commitments commonly expressed by lay Christians worshipping within Charismatic Anglicanism with methods of faith communication which embrace dialogue and plurality more commonly found within the ECM. My study shows that helps volunteers to overcome the immanent frame and believe that are “finding out what God is doing and joining in” (Williams, 2003, para 13). Müller’s practical theological method recognises that academic disciplines are each predicated on distinct assumptions, addresses particular questions, and illuminates different facets of experience. By taking an approach of transverse rationality, he refuses to impose false alignment, instead these perspective help to enrich the description and point to “alternative stories” (Müller, 2011, p. 5). If, as Root (2021, p. 194; 2019, 270) proposes the antidote to “cultural observation blindness” imposed by the “immanent frame” is found in present moments of relational “resonance” which connect the divine in the person of the Holy Spirit. Then, The Chapel illustrates the latent potential of Christian witness and service projects to teach lay Christians how to identify and communicate their

"best story" (Root, 2017, p. 210) of such moments so that they can speak of their faith in a way that is accepted both within and beyond their faith community. I offer this thesis as an alternative story, one which tells of how other such projects might also help "motivate the million" (Church of England, 2019) if they were structured to effect similar service learning in "finding out what God is doing and joining in" (Williams, 2003, para 13).

6.2 Evaluating the significance of missional capital

One implication of my research is that missional capital is not restricted to Charismatic Anglicanism. This is significant for lay empowerment across multiple denominations, possibly faiths. If spiritual capital is an expression of an individual's "theological identity" (Baker & Skinner, 2014 [2006], p. 4) then missional capital explains the relational outworking of this identity in bonding, bridging, and linking capital. Importantly for the church, this study illuminates one way to support the transition of lay Christians from religious consumers to "ambassadors for Christ" (Graham, 2013, p. 213). While this is a primary objective for the Church of England (2022, 2023), it is not without risk. There is evidence that some lay Christians who seek meaningful and world-engaging expressions of faith become dissatisfied with church bureaucracy and seek alternative spiritual support (Packard & Hope 2015).

This thesis is generative for strategies of whole life discipleship. Elaine Graham (2013, p. 213) is a longstanding advocate of theological education to equip lay Christians to engage in discourse with those beyond their faith community. She conceptualises such "performative apologetics" as a form of religious social capital which enables Christians to translate "Christian practice and character that is authentic and faithful to the gospel" into "practices of citizenship" serving wider society (p. 139, 225). Performative apologetics is:

> grounded in biblical and theological tradition but capable of being understood by those outside its own boundaries, appealing to reason

> and experience to show that the values of faith make good sense and better practice. (Graham, 2013, p. 232) [57]

For Graham (2013, p. 229), lay Christians must remain "fully immersed in the community of faith which is where the exemplary vision of truth and goodness is nurtured" while simultaneously remaining "attuned to contemporary culture" in order to act as ambassadors for their faith frame. This is precisely where volunteers at The Chapel are located through their combination of longstanding church attendance and secular workplaces. Graham acknowledges that "actions speak louder than words" but identifies the "hesitancy" of the laity to communicate their faith verbally as the primary obstacle to performative apologetics, a gap she attributes to a lack of theological literacy among the laity (p.213). Graham's (2013, p. 214) "performative apologetics" create an invitation for those beyond the church to "imagine and live according to a different kind of reality". She suggests that the failure of the laity to engage in performative apologetics is due to a lack of theological literacy. She therefore proposes that the church invests in programmes of theological formation to increase this.

In studying the faith lives of volunteers my thesis contributes to performative apologetics, suggesting the focus on building theological literacy is too limited in scope. While missional capital includes an element of theological capital it is in combining this with the bonding, bridging, and linking elements of missional capital that volunteers learn to communicate their faith commitments in ways that are socially encouraged by their non-Christian peers. Because volunteers' experience within the paracosm is transformed through faith framing and reflective practice into service learning, they come to recognise that their lay status is an asset in making their Christian faith relevant and relatable to those beyond their church community. While The Chapel's volunteers describe themselves as "rubbish" Christians with inadequate theological knowledge (Peter), they have been regular, sometimes life-long, church attendees and recognise that this is not how they are viewed by their peers. It seems,

[57] Graham (2013) does not presume that a diverse range of theological practices and interpretations can be collapsed into one overarching Gospel presentation but instead argues for conversation actively encourages the perspective of those who are marginalised or excluded within by their faith community.

from this research, that these volunteers' lack of confidence in discussing their faith is not so much theological as socio-legal. It is rooted in the barriers explicated by Strhan (2015) and Hambler (2022), coupled with the church's expectation that they should "impose" their faith on their friends and colleagues via "cringey" evangelistic tactics. My participants believe they demonstrate their faith commitments in practical ways through volunteering and The Chapel gives them experience in using the tools of listening, story and prayer to explain how their Christian commitments inform their praxis. The missional capital they develop extends into other areas of their working lives and communities as a liminality competence in faith communication. This implies that, for lay Christians with extensive experience of inhabiting the faith frame within their church community the issue with delivering performative apologetics is not primarily a lack of theological literacy but is situated in the linking and bridging elements of missional capital. My research illustrates one way to help lay Christians to make the necessary transition from consumers of religious services to ambassadors for Christ.

One implication of missional capital is that empowerment of the laity may have positive or negative effects on denominational attendance. Lay Christians with higher levels of missional capital become used to expressing their faith in liminal conditions and may grow dissatisfied with remaining as passive consumers of theological goods distributed by clergy. As Turner (1969) illustrates, communitas when strengthened through liminality can lead to rejection of formal organisations and structures. Members of the ECM routinely craft their spiritual narrative as a repudiation of mainline denominations (Bielo, 2013), even while operating on the margins of, or attempting to reform, these (Bielo, 2017). Following revelations of abuse at Soul Survivor, Cate has switched from attending St Martin's church services weekly to taking part only as part of community building events and via The Chapel.[58] John, who had attended services at St Martin's every week and served as church warden for many years, did not return to Sunday worship after Covid although he remains involved in community projects, church weekends away and serves as a member of the PCC. Peter left the church he attended for decades, choosing to worship alongside one of

[58] See David Pocklington (2024) "Soul Survivor: Independent Review Report" for details.

the other volunteers at The Chapel in a church unrelated to St Martin's. Josh Packard and Ashleigh Hope (2015, p. 28) document the experiences of religious "Dones", mature Christians (most of whom have held a range of leadership positions across at least four churches) who exchange Sunday worship for "meaningful activity that engages their communities and builds relationship, things they find missing in the church" (p. 78). They find that Dones value community highly, often continuing to attend a church for an extended period of time despite feeling unhappy because these relationships are difficult to replace. Like members of the ECM, Dones seek authentic dialogue and reject methods of evangelism they perceive as patronising or judgemental because they desire integrity between the teaching of the church and the way that it interacts with members of its congregation and the surrounding community. They are dismissive of the church's focus on bureaucracy at the expense of time invested in discipleship. Cate, John and Peter are not done-with-church, but their involvement in Sunday Worship is waning while their commitment to The Chapel continues. This study highlights the importance of further research to understand how the missional capital developed through Christian witness and service projects impacts Sunday worship and what implications this might have for congregations.

6.3 Contribution to practice

The faith framing and reflective practices employed at The Chapel to facilitate service learning in missional capital are inexpensive and easy to implement. Graham (2013, p. 232) maintains that both action and articulation are necessary for Christian ambassadorship. I have shown that Christian witness and service projects have the potential to unite these through service learning. The use of explicit framing and reflective practice within the paracosm gives these lay Christians practice in 'bilingualism' communicating the insights of their faith traditions in ways that are appealing to those beyond it. As I explained in chapter three, volunteering is routinely used to facilitate service learning, particularly among theological colleges. Some of the most important characteristics contributing to missional capital, such as The Chapel's liminal position between the gathered and scattered church, and the creation of high levels of bonding capital, are innate to Christian witness and service

projects. Volunteering studies indicate high participation rates among people who self-identify as religious, many of whom offer their time as an expression of their faith values, and lay Christians from the Church of England are engaged in a wide range of volunteer projects (Church of England, 2006; Church Urban Fund, 2022; Rich, 2020). If other projects can replicate The Chapel's "liminality competence" (Borg & Söderlund, 2015) in faith communication then the volume and scale of existing Christian witness and service projects suggests these findings could make a significant contribution towards The Church of England's (2019) objective of "Motivating the Million" lay Christians for "speaking about and living out their faith in homes, communities and workplaces".

6.4 Implications for the gathered and scattered church

My research highlights the importance of considering the church gathered-in-worship or sent-in-witness as ends of a scale rather than binary states. This highlights the potential for Christian witness and service projects to operate as micro-experiments in missional ecclesiology which help lay Christians overcome the immanent frame. The purpose of missional ecclesiology is to shape the gathered church to equip individual Christians to witness to their faith as they are scattered in predominantly secular communities (Keifert, 2006, p. 37; Van Gelder & Zscheile, 2011). Efforts to achieve this generally conceptualise the church as either gathered or sent as illustrated by efforts to reform the gathered church to educate lay Christians for whole life witness. I suggest that gathering and sentness are better conceptualised as opposite ends of a sliding scale since Christian faith frames, and the paracosms these sustain, are officially/unofficially supported to a greater or lesser extent in different contexts. Christian congregations rarely exhibit theological uniformity as illustrated by Cameron's (2010) identification of four theological voices and are not usually restricted to members (including the curious and non-believers offering support to friends or family). Likewise, Christians are seldom completely isolated in the workplace, many participate in formal or informal structures of spiritual support

(Garcia-Zamor, 2003; Guillory, 2000).[59] Christian witness and service projects, such as The Chapel, can take advantage of their location between the two extremes by choosing to operate as liminoid moments and putting in place structures to help volunteers simultaneously illustrate and articulate their faith commitments.

Due to their liminal location, suspended between the gathered and scattered church, Christian witness and service projects have the potential to serve as micro-experiments in missional ecclesiology. Niemandt (2012) proposes that missional ecclesiology is an exercise in defining the church's relationships with God, between members, and with the surrounding community. Missional capital helps to illuminate the processes underpinning these relationships. Locally trained leaders usually demonstrate closer ties with their own community in comparison to seminary trained leaders who tend to have stronger professional ties within their denomination (Finke & Dougherty, 2002). Half of Christian witness and service projects are led by the church with the remainder either hosted in church or led in partnership with external organisations (Eames, 2023). Likewise Fresh Expressions of church, including those that grow out of witness and service projects, are frequently lay led or led in collaboration between lay and ordained leaders (Lings, 2016, 9). Thus, the liminal location of Christian witness and service projects has the potential to increase the bi-directional flow of linking capital as demonstrated by The Chapel's use of St Martin's building and its influence on St Martin's policies. In its healthy iterations, the liminal location of Christian witness and service projects, coupled with an increasing prevalence of shared lay and ordained leadership, reduces the gap between the church-gathered-in-worship and the church-sent-in-witness which correspondingly increases the potential for the virtuous circle Patrick Kiefert (2006) envisages wherein the communal and scattered expressions of church inform one another. This may not always be the case as illustrated by the 'dialectic' swings of power Turner (1969, p. 373) observes when communitas among liminal groups leads to rebellion (demonstrated in the 9/11 attack on the twin towers (Bramadat, 2005, p. 205)) which

[59] Helen Cameron (2010) attends to the tensions between the operant (phronetic), espoused (articulated by the group), normative (denominational), and formal (academic) theological voices. This may in turn differ from the ordinary theology held by individuals (Astley, 2013).

fuels subsequent oppression from structures of authority. This oppression re-enforces communitas among the marginalised group escalating their rebellion creating an irresolvable "liminal hotspot" (Szakolczai, 2017, p. 231).

Constructing Christian witness and service projects as liminoid moments for service learning also helps to address the problem of overcoming the immanent frame. A liminoid moment provides a space in which volunteers can play with alternative ways of communicating their faith to those outside their faith community. This play leads to moments of revelation as my participants interpret their experiences within the faith frame as moments of partnership with God. Hirsch (2009, p. 171) rightly attends to the need for the church to embrace liminality as an opportunity for growth through church planting. He instructs churches to "take risks" and "experiment" giving examples such as joint working with non-faith groups which create opportunities to build relationships of trust between those inside and beyond the church, and calls for church leaders to make services more accessible (pp. 182-183). Christian witness and service projects may also have an important role in training those lay Christians who are reluctant to engage in church planting to communicate their faith. Although, as Rachel's experience demonstrates, there is a risk that structuring Christian witness and service projects for service learning may instrumentalise the host community.

6.5 Limitations of this study

A post foundational approach to research explicitly recognises the crystalline nature of knowledge. This study illuminates one facet of The Chapel, namely the processes through which missional capital is formed among one small group of lay Christians within a single project. Further research is required to generate a more complete understanding of missional capital. This includes: Research to understand the impact volunteers have on visitors and colleagues, in particular to consider the risk of negative impact and how to mitigate this; research among other Christian denominations to understand the full breadth of missional capital; and research incorporating other academic perspectives. In addition, I recognise the limitations of

using the language of capital, more commonly associated with markets, in relation to the divine.

One of the limitations of my methodology is that it only addresses the experience of volunteers and further research is needed to understand the experience of visitors. Since it was not feasible to obtain informed consent from visitors at The Chapel, research into other projects without such restrictions, such as wellbeing cafés or food banks, is needed to address this gap. Equally, there is a need to test the validity of volunteers' assertion that their friends and colleagues are interested in stories about The Chapel and inquire in order to initiate conversations about faith. I have taken an appreciative approach in this study; I conducted the interviews from a position of unconditional positive regard and have sought to highlight narratives which de-problematise faith communication.[60] Appreciative approaches have a "positive bias" seeking to find what is successful within an organisation or context (Whitney et. al., 2003, 163). They do not seek to identify or resolve problems but instead highlight the "positive potential" of a situation. In consequence, this study does not address risks that are intrinsic to volunteers' Charismatic Anglican faith frame. As Luhrmann (2020) rightly observes, faith does not consistently protect believers from suffering. Nevertheless, Marie confidently asserts "I'm sure if you ask God he will help" to the man whose son is in debt to drug dealers and Peter does not express concern about the impact on the visitor of relating the story of the "angel" who saved his life. Both will have had experiences of prayer where God seemingly does not help or save, or at least not in the way the person praying hoped for. What if the visitor prays but no angel appears to interrupt their suicide attempt or protect their child? Reflecting on these stories as a prison chaplain in contact with women who have frequently been exploited and subjected to coercive control it is clear that more needs to be done to train volunteers to consider the impact their faith position may have on visitors whose circumstances render them vulnerable.

[60] "Appreciative inquiry is an approach to seeking what is right in an organisation in order to create a better future for it" (Coughlan et. al. 2003, p. 5). Rather than focusing on problems it highlights strengths aiming to implement best practice more frequently.

Further study is, therefore, required to understand how to limit the risk of spiritual abuse while maintaining space within which Christians can freely articulate their faith commitments without imposing these on others. Lisa Oakley and Ruth Kinmond (2014) define spiritual abuse as a "coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context" which "the target experiences... as a deeply emotional personal attack" this includes:

> manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision making, requirements for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform, misuse of scripture or the pulpit to control behaviour, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a "divine" position, isolation from others, especially those external to the abusive context. (Oakley & Kinmond, 2013, 25)

Their definition identifies spiritual abuse as an attack experienced by the recipient of abuse and explicitly recognises the power imbalance. This illustrates the importance of awareness of spiritual abuse at all levels of the church, not only that which is perpetrated by people with formal leadership authority. Oakley and Kinmond outline a series of practical steps to limit the damage of shame and blame within a Christian context. One of their recommendations is to improve post licensing training to address this area. Sadly, this has not been implemented to date and safeguarding training within the Church of England remains narrowly focused. Volunteers in this study believe they engage in an exchange of experience which appears to assume equal agency between volunteers and visitors so that they can share their experience without imposing their view on the visitor. Certainly, volunteers would be horrified if the visitor experienced their engagement with The Chapel as an instance of spiritual abuse. However, more attention is needed to the situational vulnerability of visitors, many of whom lack a wider experience of the Christian faith. For example, what if, encouraged by their conversation at The Chapel, the visitor concluded they should attempt to take their own life and find out whether an angel appears? It is unclear how best to maintain a space for open exchange and communication of faith experience while simultaneously protecting visitors who are vulnerable. Ultimately, as Rachel's experience shows, there is no risk-free way to facilitate play, but more research is

required to understand how projects like The Chapel can put in place practices to help identify and mitigate the risk of spiritual abuse.

Missional capital is a wide term, the specifics of which are driven by the faith frame and the rules defining the paracosm, further study is required to understand the full breadth of missional capital. All my participants were employed (or self-employed) at the time I undertook this study. Research among volunteers with other life experiences such as students, people seeking employment, those in receipt of disability living allowance, retired people, or parents taking a career break to raise their children would be informative. My study was limited to people who self-identified as current participants at The Chapel at the time I conducted my fieldwork. This may explain their positive attitude to the project. Future research into the perspective of those who left the project would provide a better understanding of the limits of missional capital. My single-case study considers the volunteer experience of Christians worshipping within the Church of England, from a Charismatic Anglican tradition who have adopted ECM communication norms. However, The Chapel's adherence to a seed sowing narrative falls short of the Evangelical church's requirement for evangelism to generate a personal commitment to Jesus as saviour and Lord (Stott, 1974a,1974b) and neglects four the Church of England's five marks of mission (Richards & Group, 2017); nurturing new believers, offering loving service, or seeking social justice and environmental protection. In addition, my focus on volunteering in church-based projects perpetuates investment in sustaining the gathered church and does not address the potential of lay mission in its widest sense. Therefore, research in other denominations, types of project, and geographic locations is needed to ascertain whether this liminality competence in faith communication can be replicated. For example, research from a Roman Catholic or Orthodox perspective or among lay Christians working in social justice projects, particularly those which are not driven through the church, would help to provide a more complete understanding of missional capital.

Research from other academic perspectives would similarly contribute to a more thorough understanding of missional capital. I have confined this practical theological investigation to the fields of volunteerism, service learning, social capital theory and

anthropology of religion. Further study from the perspective of other academic disciplines such as organisational psychology, change management, or chaplaincy would illuminate additional aspects of missional capital. Finally, as Dinham (2012) rightly observes, the term capital implies that faith can be reduced to an economic function serving purposes that are disconnected from the Kingdom of God. While I recognise this limitation, I maintain that if spiritual capital offers a key to understanding how spirituality "breaks out of institutions in ways that pervade wider spheres of influence" in a "liquid flow of ideas and values" (Guest, 2007, p. 197) then missional capital helps to illuminate the processes underpinning this in a way I believe is helpful for churches seeking to equip lay Christians to demonstrate and articulate their faith.

6.6 Conclusion

> Volunteering is key to the formation and maintenance of social capital at the local community level…[and] volunteers have the highest levels of social capital, including higher levels of trust, community participation and informal networks. (Onyx, 2016, p. 23; Onyx & Bullen, 2001)

In this thesis I have argued that The Chapel is structured as a site of service learning in which volunteers develop missional capital; comprising bridging capital, theological capital, and linking capital, underpinned by bonding capital. Missional capital enables participants to hold faith conversations with people whom they would otherwise regard as critical of or disinterested in their faith commitments both at and beyond The Chapel. It is my hope that my findings will resonate with other Christian witness and service projects in order that their volunteers might also serve as ambassadors for Christ.

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Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet

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Participant Information Sheet

Evaluating the impact of [redacted]: how does volunteering influence Christians' understanding and practices of mission?

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 us 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?
I am researching how volunteering helps Christians to live out their faith in their working lives and in their communities by using [redacted] as a case study. Researching your experiences at [redacted] will help me to identify how volunteering at [redacted] equips people to 'participate in God's redemptive activity in the world' and provide insights into ways of understanding Christian mission which support this. Since most thinking on Christian mission is written from the perspective of clergy, my study is specifically seeking to bring the perspective of lay people into the national debate surrounding the Church of England's 'Setting God's People Free' report. A written report will be produced at the end of the project. The findings from the study may be used to inform the future development of [redacted]

Why have I been chosen?
You have been chosen because you are a volunteer at [redacted]

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, without giving a reason, up until the time the researcher has processed the data. 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 Louise Annison (who is conducting the research) to contact you to invite you to an interview. At this interview, you will have the opportunity to raise and discuss your views and experiences relating to volunteering at [redacted]

Each interview will start with a period of silent prayer during which a candle will be lit both you and the interviewer will be invited to seek God's presence. The interview will last between ninety minutes and two hours. With your permission, the meeting will be audio recorded. No-one will be identifiable in 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?

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As a volunteer it is possible that you may welcome the opportunity to share and discuss your views and experiences. By taking part, you will be contributing to the discussion on lay engagement in mission through sharing your views, which will hopefully benefit the wider church in the future.

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:

Professor Wayne Morris
Director School of Humanities
University of Chester
Parkgate Road
Chester
CH1 4BJ
w.morris@chester.ac.uk

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?
[redacted] will be identified in the study. However, 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 into a report for Louise Annison's studies towards a Doctorate in Practical Theology at the University of Chester. It is hoped that the findings may be used to improve [redacted] Individuals who participate will not be identified in any subsequent report or publication.

Who is organising and funding the research?
The research is funded by researcher (Louise Annison) with contributions from the Church of England and St Luke's Foundation. The University of Chester will be involved in organising and carrying out the study.

Who may I contact for further information?
If you would like more information about the research before you decide whether or not you would be willing to take part, please contact:

Louise Annison
Holy Trinity Church,
Norris Rd,
Blacon,
Chester,
CH1 5DZ

Thank you for your interest in this research.

Appendix 2: Participant Consent Form

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Consent form

Title of Project: Evaluating the impact of [redacted]: how does volunteering influence Christians' understanding and practices of mission?

Name of Researcher: Louise Annison

	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.	☐
2. 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.	☐
3. I understand that it may not be technically possible to withdraw my data unless requested prior to publication.	☐
4. I agree to take part in the above study.	☐

Name of Participant	Date	Signature

Researcher	Date	Signature

1 for copy por the participant; 1 copy for the researcher