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Charismatic Anglicans Negotiating Liturgy: An Ethnographic Study of worship in two non-liturgical Anglican networks

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An Ethnographic Study of worship in two non-liturgical Anglican networks

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Abstract

This study concerns the phenomenon of what will be called 'non-liturgical Anglicanism'. The practice in Anglican churches of completely or largely replacing the formal and legally prescribed liturgy of the Church with a series 'worship songs' is something which has grown in Britain since the 1960s. Whilst there are some studies reporting this phenomenon and commenting upon it, this present thesis enquires more deeply into the reasons underlying this shift. It explores in particular two networks within the Church of England which lead the way in this trend, plants or grafts from Holy Trinity, Brompton in Kensington, and the New Wine Network, which originated at St Andrew's Chorleywood. It demonstrates the link between both these networks and the Vineyard Churches which originated in Southern California and which have influenced and radically transformed the theology and praxis of worship in many Anglican congregations. A review of the literature which traces the evolution of this change is followed by case study research into several churches which have made this shift, explaining the policies and the reasons behind them. Fieldwork consisted of Participant Observation at public worship in churches from both these networks, and interviews with leaders, as well as a Focus Group. There is also an examination of the legal issues involved, and how leaders attempt to negotiate them. The data are reported and then analysed, and two final chapters critique this non-liturgical policy. The oft-expressed view that 'worship songs are the new liturgy' is examined in detail and found wanting, and the study reaches the conclusion that in adopting a non-liturgical policy, churches are in fact in danger of accommodating to the secular culture. Through their non-liturgical policies many churches are deliberately ignoring the riches of Church tradition, and these omissions are, it is suggested, detrimental to the formation of life-long disciples and the development of a 'spirituality for the long haul'. The study closes by proposing a different and more helpful way forward, which takes seriously the benefits both of a liturgical approach and charismatic sung worship.

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Declaration

This work has been submitted to the University of Durham in accordance with the regulations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It is my own work, and none of it has been previously submitted to the University of Durham or in any other university for a degree.

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My wife Chris, for your support during this project, and for paying for it! I dedicate this work to you, with my love.

Abbreviations

ARM	Anglican Renewal Ministries
ASB	*The Alternative Service Book 1980*
BCP	*The Book of Common Prayer 1662*
CCP	*Celebrating Common Prayer 1992*
CPAS	Church Pastoral Aid Society
CW	*Common Worship*
ECY	*Enriching the Christian Year 1993*
LHWE	*Lent, Holy Week Easter 1994*
HTB	(Not italicised) Holy Trinity Church, Brompton Rd, Kensington
HTB	(Italicised) The network of churches planted from HTB
LXX	The Septuagint
NW	New Wine Networks
NPfW	*New Patterns for Worship 2002*
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament or Hebrew Bible
PoG	*The Promise of His Glory 1994*
RCIA	Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
RCL	Revised Common Lectionary 1994
SoW	A Service of the Word
T&S	*Times and Seasons 2013*
UPA	Urban Priority Area

1. Introduction

Rationale for the Project

This research project was born out of more than 35 years of involvement in the worship of charismatic Anglican churches. There has always been a tension between 'liturgy' and 'liberty' in worship, even perhaps as far back as Old Testament times, where the spirituality of the 'prophetic' and 'priestly' strands differed significantly (De Vaux, 1961, 325-330, 345-357). Morison concludes his study of this tension:

> It is only in accordance with human nature for the priesthood to be conservative, being by its very nature an unelastic body. The attempt to restrain the Spirit within the personages of the official cultus was also a failure. But this much is certain, that it was to the Prophets that Israel owed its greatness as 'the holy nation' by means of whom the world was to be taught religion. If the Priest was only a foil to the Prophet, he was something. But he was more than that in intention, and probably often also in fact. The Prophet's complaint against the Priest is not that he is essentially valueless, but that he has degenerated from his true function to bring God to the people, and the people to God. (1910, 245)

Indeed this tension between 'official' and 'charismatic' has not yet been solved, and continues to play out today. It is perhaps especially sharp in the worship of Anglican churches which have been touched by charismatic renewal, but are also keen to maintain their denominational loyalty and heritage. The two streams of influence, one from the traditions of Anglicanism and the other from various independent charismatic churches, seem to pull the church in two different directions. Cartledge puts this starkly: for Anglicans, because of the legalities of the Church of England

> any charismatic engagement with the issue of worship must consider the question of liturgy. Yet many Charismatics consider that liturgy is of the letter and that the letter kills, whereas the Spirit gives life. The influence of John Wimber upon the Church of England meant that not only were Vineyard choruses in vogue but authorized liturgy was abandoned. Instead, the Vineyard liturgy of songs and choruses followed by a sermon and then a time of ministry has become the norm in many Anglican churches, thus making them indistinguishable from the Vineyard denomination, except perhaps for the building. (2000, 276)

This study is concerned with two particular groupings within the Church of England in which the worship has moved significantly away from the traditional and liturgical, and leans heavily on the worship styles of non-Anglican traditions, particularly the Vineyard movement. Many charismatic Anglicans have reached the conclusion that liturgy is an unhelpful ingredient in churches which are seeking numerical growth through evangelism, so that the traditional liturgy of the Church has been largely or completely replaced by sung worship of a particular style, using 'worship songs'. The purpose of this research is to understand better how and why this idea has taken root, and to question whether or not this shift is a positive and helpful one. Of course the terms 'positive' and 'helpful' are open to much deeper exploration, but a normative critique will ask whether the

abandonment of liturgy is detrimental for the work of the Church in the spiritual formation of disciples and communities who are growing into the likeness of Christ. It is not the intention of this thesis to argue at length for this as a guiding criterion, but such a task for the Church is strongly implied in biblical passages such as Matthew 28:16-20, Colossians 1:28 and Galatians 4:19. Its method, unlike many explorations of charismatic worship, is actually to ask church leaders why they have chosen to go down this route, in order to understand and then to critique their decisions in the light of theological reflection.

Researcher Context

Having been brought up in the Baptist denomination, in a church which was very liturgical (although not formally or deliberately so), I joined the Church of England at the age of 21, having sensed a call to ordination within that denomination. Like McGrath I joined with great zeal, 'more appreciative of the virtues of the tradition … than those who were brought up in it, and for whom familiarity has dulled perception of its merits.' (1993, 1) In particular I fell in love with its liturgical forms, which were completely foreign to me as a Baptist. Very quickly I became immersed in charismatic renewal, and during my first curacy I began to function as a 'worship leader' in the sense that charismatics would use the term, that is as a guitarist and up-front leader of singing. But it was during my second curacy, in the late 1980s, in a renowned charismatic Anglican megachurch, that I began to explore in more detail how renewed worship styles might work *within* a liturgical context rather than *instead* of one. The church, although heavily influenced by the recent exposure to Vineyard worship through the annual visits of John Wimber, maintained a clear Anglican and liturgical focus, and attempted to do so creatively. During this period I wrote a book on the combining of liturgical worship with a more charismatic song-based style (Leach, 1989). It began life when my vicar asked me to write a simple one-sided sheet to introduce a new curate to our worship praxis, and the material quickly expanded to become a book. My own views on the subject were, and remain, clear, in spite of some elements from that book over which I have become less certain. Following my curacy I sought, in my first incumbency, and indeed in all subsequent parishes in which I served, to root charismatic renewal firmly in the Anglican tradition, seeking to remain both creative and legal. There was a significant turn-around in the culture of the church during my first post as vicar, and also significant growth, both numerically and in discipleship and Christian service. After my first incumbency it was my privilege to serve for five years as Director of Anglican Renewal Ministries (ARM), a para-church organisation which existed 'to encourage appropriate expressions of charismatic renewal within the Church of England.'[1] My tenure of this post was a significant one since it contained as its mid-point

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[1] Our strapline at the time.

the launch of *Common Worship* (*CW*) in 2000, and much of my work with ARM was spent encouraging charismatic Anglican churches to use the permissions and resources of *CW* to the full. I have tried to continue this policy, and for most of the 21 years I have spent in parish ministry, I have led churches which have seen numerical growth, and growth in depth of discipleship, whilst still maintaining a liturgical ethos as a framework for charismatic renewal. Because of my refusal to dichotomise liturgy and the Spirit, and because this policy did not seem to inhibit growth and health, I find it difficult to agree with the frequently expressed idea that only through a wholesale abandonment of Anglican liturgy will the church see growth: my own ministry in the past has proved this assertion incorrect. Over time, therefore, my own thinking has gradually become more critical of the modelling of Anglican worship around a non-liturgical, Vineyard-based philosophy, which has become the style of choice for many charismatic Anglicans, and the apparent belief that this policy is the only real way to go for charismatics. I have watched from a distance as the church of my curacy, and many like it, abandoned almost all of the Anglican liturgy and ethos which formed their heritage, and based their services instead around the singing of 'worship songs', mainly coming from non-Anglican charismatic sources. I have been interested for some while in the reasons for this shift, and this piece of research has given me the opportunity explore more deeply. What is unique about this present study is that through fieldwork it has sought to listen to the voices of church leaders to hear what they are claiming as the rationale for their abandonment of liturgy, rather than merely describing or decrying this shift.

The Research Questions

My research question, therefore, may be articulated simply: What is the relationship between *HTB* and *NW* churches and formal Anglican liturgy?

This leads to three sub-questions:

> Is the abandonment of formal liturgy a helpful and faithful development in Anglicanism?
> Do worship songs make an adequate replacement for liturgy?
> Can there be worship praxis which is both charismatic and liturgical and which is more faithful to the gospel and more effective in forming long-term disciples?

Clearly some of the terms in these questions will need some definition, and it will be necessary to review some literature which examines the roots of several of the influences which gave rise to this situation, and in particular the Vineyard movement from which both these networks sprang. It will

also be necessary to explore what is meant by 'liturgical' worship, since all worship is in some sense liturgical.

The area in which I am researching, therefore, is one I have inhabited for nearly 40 years, in which I have had the privilege of leading, both in individual Anglican churches and also as Director of ARM. The local church to which I belonged for most of the period of this project was a plant from Holy Trinity Brompton (HTB), which I attended as regularly as my diocesan duties allowed. It has no evolved history, but was planted with a particular philosophy and praxis already firmly in place, when a team of 12 took over a residual congregation of nine. I have chosen not to use that particular congregation as one of the case-studies for fieldwork, feeling that it was a little too close to home, and while it cannot help but inform my observation of worship within the *HTB* network, I am aware that information from this church was not rigorously collected during fieldwork, was not subject to research ethics, and is therefore evidence which is inadmissible in a project such as this. The charismatic Anglican tradition within the Church is that which has formed and nurtured me, so I am not going in as an 'outsider' to see what I can discover: rather I am seeking a more rigorous explanation of why this culture behaves as it does, so that I might attempt a theological critique. This is an explanatory study rather than an exploratory study, in the terminology of Yin (1994, 3), but also both an emic study, in that I count myself a member of the culture which I am exploring, but also an etic study in that I come to it with some objective distance in order to be able to critique it. My personal conviction is that the loss of the deliberately liturgical from Anglican worship is an unnecessary and unfortunate development. This point will be argued at the conclusion of this study, but being aware of this personal point of view has made me even more determined to listen fully and appreciatively to the views of those with whom I have talked during this research.

Situating the Research Project

The task I am undertaking in this research is essentially one of practical theology. Having been trained in the 1970s under a regime of what Green (2009, 177) calls 'conventional theology', with its discrete areas of Biblical Studies, Church History, Philosophy and so on, I shall explore what it means to undertake a study which begins not from a biblical text, or a pre-existing body of knowledge, or scholarly thought, but rather from an 'event' or 'situation'. My 'situation' for this study is what I have called 'non-liturgical Anglicanism'. I shall explore further what Practical Theology looks like, how it works, and how it might be critiqued, in chapter 3 below.

Defining a key term

Clearly the word 'liturgy' is an important term in this project, and it is necessary to define it carefully, since in popular usage it has several different meanings. Gordon-Taylor tells us that 'The nature and definition of liturgy has been extensively studied, yet, while many discussions of definition can be found, no single definition can do justice to its many aspects.' (Day and Gordon-Taylor, 2013, 12) Chupungco agrees: 'Liturgy is a rich complex – I should say a happy confluence – of theology, history, spiritual insight, and pastoral care.' (2010, 51) And Jungmann adds:

> No complete agreement has been reached about the definition of the liturgy … because different elements may be stressed in the group of ecclesiastical institutions which are generally classed as liturgical. (1975, 851)

One helpful attempt at a definition, though, comes from Micheel: 'What is liturgical worship? Liturgical worship is "a worship style that retains the core of the historic Christian liturgy, employs the church year, and emphasizes the Sacrament."' (n.d.)[2] The word itself, λειτουργια (*leitourgia*), began in the Greek world as public service rendered for the good of the community. This is often mistranslated as 'the work of the people', and Earey (2018, 13) suggests it would be better rendered as 'public works'. The Liturgical Commission report *Transforming Worship* gives another nuance to the term:

> Since the 1960s, the understanding of liturgy as 'the work of the people', has been connected to a supposed derivation of liturgy from the Greek words *laos* and *ergon*. However, James Barr has shown that this is false etymology: 'The meaning was not what "the people" did corporately, but certain public services rendered by individuals from their private means.' (James Barr, Semantics of Biblical Language (London, 1961), p. 149.) In other words, in the ancient world, a liturgy was a public work (a new aqueduct, a set of tragedies) given by wealthy citizens for the good of the whole people: a *leitourgia* is something done for the people, not by them. (2007, 11)

In the Roman world these public works would include religious rituals, which were believed to be for the benefit of the community as the blessing of the gods was sought. In the LXX the word is used of a priest performing his priestly duties, and in the NT the word is used for example of Zechariah (Luke 1:23) as he finishes his period of Temple ministry. Later, as the Christian Church began to identify its leaders with the Old Testament priesthood, the term came to be reserved for the Eucharist, which is the definition which Jasper (1972, 224) gives us almost exclusively.

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[2] Micheel, J. (n.d.)
https://essays.wls.wels.net/bitstream/handle/123456789/3310/MicheelLiturgical.pdf?sequence=1 [Accessed 28 Feb 2020] quoting from *Christian Worship: Manual*, (1993) Milwaukee: NPH, 112

However, in the milieu of this piece of research no exact definition of the term will be necessary, since it has become common currency. Earey discusses this in depth, and begins by listing some common assumptions which are often made about liturgical worship:

> It comes from a book or card (or screen);
> The leaders wear some kind of robes;
> There are words for the congregation to say, as opposed to sing;
> Days have special titles (for example Lent 3);
> A particular kind of building is used, with particular pieces of furniture;
> There are symbolic actions and special objects are used.

He concludes

> It's no wonder that we often think of liturgy as a 'style' of worship. Other things being equal, we expect it to be towards the more formal end of the spectrum, perhaps a bit 'churchy' in its language, and fairly elaborate in its ceremonies and in the décor of the building. (2018, 14)

This is certainly a common image of 'liturgy', and not just among the churches which are the subject of this study. But Earey analyses this term more fully and suggests that it is commonly used in several different ways (*Ibid.*, 15-18).

'The Liturgy'

He begins with 'The Liturgy', a term which suggests that there is only one. This allows the common division of churches into those which use 'the liturgy' and those which do not, a division which is far too simplistic. He notes that the use of 'the liturgy' usually refers to the shape or *ordo*[3] of an act of worship, usually the Eucharist, and that in the Eastern Churches 'The Liturgy' simply means the Eucharist.

'A Liturgy'

By contrast 'A Liturgy' is often used to mean some kind of structured form of service, or a part of a service. This may be a discovery from the official texts of the denomination in question, but may equally be something recently discovered from the internet or some other informal source, perhaps from a collection of 'liturgies'. It may be used as a one-off, and is used as a choice, not because that is how we regularly worship, or how we are legally required to worship. 'A liturgy' is simply a possible ingredient in a postmodern *bricolage*.

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[3] This term will be discussed more fully in chapter 5.

'Some Liturgy'

Thirdly, we may hear people refer to 'Some Liturgy', by which they mean ingredients in worship which are not merely songs, but pieces we may *say* together (or responsively). This is the way that the term was most frequently used by interviewees during this research.

'Our Liturgy'

Fourthly, Earey suggests, people may refer to 'Our Liturgy', the sum of activities (and possibly equipment) which are used in any given church to make worship happen. He comments

> Your 'liturgy' may or may not be written down, but you will know what it is, and that it exists, when someone changes it. In some ways your liturgy is like the rules of a game … they may be unwritten and assumed, and everyone plays the game happily until there is a dispute. Accusations of cheating or 'spoiling' the game reveal the presence of unspoken assumptions about the right way to play. (*Ibid.*, 18)

He then develops a helpful way of thinking about 'liturgical worship' which will 'allow us to encompass the specifics of "the liturgy" along with the generalities of "a liturgy" and "some liturgy", holding them all together.' (*Ibid.*, 19).

'Exo- and Endo-Liturgy'

He suggests that the 'structures and expectations' of corporate worship are like the skeleton which gives structure, strength and stability to a body, but notes that different animals have their skeletons in different places. Some have endoskeletons, where the bones are internal and hidden, while others have exoskeletons which are on the surface and within which the organs of the body are encased. So a plaice would be in the first category, and a lobster in the second. This, he suggests, is a picture of kinds of churches which wear their liturgy on the outside for all to see, as opposed to those which have liturgy and structure but keep it hidden under the surface. Whilst this research will conclude by suggesting that one kind of skeleton is in fact better than the other, the real issue is about churches and groupings with endoskeletons in an exoskeleton denomination, or, to use Earey's (*Ibid.*, 24) terminology, endo-liturgical churches in an exo-liturgical denomination, and why they have chosen to place themselves in such a position. It is worth making the point that this study has no argument *per se* with Vineyard Churches, House Churches or New Churches. Rather it discusses the issues around congregations which, while notionally remaining within the Anglican Church, nevertheless worship as though they were from non-liturgical denominations.

Exploring what positives one might gain from a deliberately liturgical approach, Earey includes a clear structure or *ordo*, solidarity with a wider section of 'Church' than just the local congregation, and a use of the rich resources from other places and times (*Ibid.,* 26-8). He suggests that it is helpful to see a clear liturgical structure as scaffolding rather than as a cage or prison. It can provide a framework which facilitates spontaneity, allows rich, deliberate and joyful use of traditional material, and, paradoxically, guards against 'vain repetition' which is so often the characteristic of so-called 'Spirit-led' extempore prayer and worship. And one advantage of exo-liturgy, of course, is that it makes things easier to examine, assess and perhaps adapt. Endo-liturgy, because it is used in a hidden and unexamined way, can far more easily become a dead tradition.

In this project Earey's convention will be followed, of using the terms 'liturgy' and 'liturgical worship' for that which is explicit, deliberate and used proudly, rather than for the 'accidental' liturgy which inevitably appears in worship when deliberate liturgy is shunned. This thesis will also use the term 'liturgy' to mean a way of worshipping, rather than a possible ingredient in worship. In taking this approach it will also be following the meanings explained in the Liturgical Commission's report GS 1651:

> the words worship and liturgy are used in precisely distinct senses. If worship is the deepest response of redeemed humankind to God's loving purpose, then liturgy is the set of particular structured actions in which worship is expressed and by which worship is released. Liturgy is the occasion of worship.
>
> It will be helpful to keep the term liturgy free from connotations of formality or church style, as if it were a starchier or high-church synonym for worship. In our use of the terms, 'café worship' will be just as much a liturgy as a solemn Eucharist in the catholic tradition: the pattern and order may be quite different in the two, but both of them depend on a pattern and an order of some kind so that worship may happen. Liturgies are much more than texts: although words are an important part of liturgy, so too are movement and silence and music, and the way in which they are all articulated in space. (2007, 1)

This report also serves to remind that the liturgy is not merely about words, but also about space, time, ceremonial, gesture and silence, what chapter 4 will refer to as a 'liturgical approach'.

The shape of the thesis

The next chapter moves on to explore the literature which concerns the nature and history of non-liturgical Anglican worship, before chapter 3 gives an account of the methodological framework and the research methods used for this study. Chapter 4 reports data from Participant Observation, interviews and a Focus Group, which is then considered analytically in chapter 5. Two final normative chapters follow, the first zooming in on whether worship songs are able adequately to replace liturgy, and then zooming out to consider the purpose of the Church in disciple-making, and

the benefits which a liturgical approach might bring. A brief final section suggests some practical steps which might be made towards a re-appreciation of liturgical worship.

2. The Changing Landscape of Anglican Worship – Surveying the Literature

For most of the last 400 years the term 'non-liturgical Anglican worship' would have been an oxymoron. Since 1662 the only official Anglican forms of worship were to be found in the *BCP*, and worship which did not use them would have been almost inconceivable. Yet today it is perfectly possible to attend worship in an Anglican church in which no liturgical texts are used. Other liturgical ingredients such as attention to time and space, to the liturgical calendar, a desire for dignity and economy, the deliberate use of silence, and the importance of architecture, movement and bodily gesture are all apparently completely absent. How has all this happened? The aim of this chapter is to survey some of the literature describing factors which have directly or indirectly contributed to this change, in order better to understand why liturgy is often neglected. The two networks under consideration provide the clearest examples of non-liturgical Anglicanism. Their story is really the story of two local Anglican churches, Holy Trinity Brompton, Kensington (HTB) and St Andrew's Chorleywood. In fact a third focus, in the North, was St Thomas' Crookes in Sheffield, which, while enjoying friendly relations with both networks, has not given birth to an equivalent network. The stories of these two churches, and the networks which grew from them, are quite different from one another.

Holy Trinity Brompton

When John Wimber of the Vineyard movement in California, of whom more shortly, first came to HTB the vicar was Sandy Millar, who had previously served as curate under evangelical statesman John Collins. HTB had a long tradition as a bastion of evangelicalism, and Millar led the continuing renewal of the church. During his time he not only welcomed the ministry of Wimber, but also set about dismantling some of the more traditional Anglican practices in the church. An interesting piece of Participant Observation from 1990 gives an account of an evening service at HTB:

> The curate … welcomed all the visitors (Evensong is a "Guest Service" at the Church). He then led the congregation in an opening Hymn … it was Newman's "Praise to the Holiest in the Height"; it was sung with *brio*. The theology of the hymn seemed in tune with the theology of the rest of the choruses inviting Jesus the Healer to come, to remind worshippers of His redeeming love, and to make His presence known among the congregation. A lady singer led the congregation in praise, to the accompaniment of guitar, piano, and amplified bongo-drums. Hands were raised and palms extended heavenward, even those of the decorous matrons among the congregation, as voices swelled to join choruses.
>
> The service was not entirely divorced from the Anglican order of Evensong. Prayers were said for the Queen, and for the Christian life of the Royal family. Prayers were said for those in government -

especially for Soviet President Gorbachev, who, embroiled that weekend with secessionist Baltic states, would no doubt have been grateful. Public prayers were extempore - Evangelicals put a great emphasis on the Holy Spirit giving a form to their worship. (Robinson, 1990, 422)

Whilst this is an interesting snapshot of a church combining an Anglican ethos with charismatic worship songs, in time the praxis of the Vineyard, including its prayer ministry and worship styles, was imported wholesale, and in 1994 the church suddenly and dramatically became the epicentre of a new phenomenon which came to be know as the 'Toronto Blessing', a move which began in a Canadian Vineyard congregation, but from which Wimber later distanced himself[4]. The 'Blessing' was marked by dramatic manifestations, said to be the work of the Holy Spirit, including laughter and tears, shaking and falling to the ground. As HTB grew in visibility and influence, particularly through its evangelistic Alpha Course, a strategy of planting or grafting new churches emerged. Typically a dying or moribund church would receive a team from HTB, who would invariably bring new growth and vitality. These plants are almost exclusively into university towns or gentrified areas of London:

> Since 1985, HTB has initiated more than twenty church plants, including St Paul's Hammersmith, St Paul's Shadwell and St Peter's Brighton. Historically significant and beautiful Anglican churches – often facing closure – have been restored and are now home to vibrant, growing, worshipping communities having a significant impact on their local areas.
>
> In 2017, the Church Revitalisation Trust (CRT) was established to help build on this momentum of church planting in strategic cities across the UK.[5]

At the time of writing there are 38 such plants or grafts in Greater London, 36 in the rest of England, as well as plants abroad in Kuala Lumpur, Los Angeles, Malibu, Montreal, Nairobi and Pasadena. The goal is 'to be a catalyst for a momentum of church planting that will see 100 City Centre Resource Churches planted in strategic cities across the country, bringing revitalisation to the Church and seeing communities transformed'[6]. The website explains that the vision is

> To recruit and train outstanding clergy and leaders of the future in partnership with the model of St Mellitus College and other national theological colleges.
>
> To see City Centre Resource Churches become regional hubs for Alpha, the Marriage Courses, and social action programmes that will bless and regenerate their communities.
>
> To recruit and train 100 exceptional church leaders as well as worship leaders, youth pastors, children's workers, operations directors and social action workers.

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[4] Whilst outside the scope of this study, some reflections on the 'Toronto Blessing' can be found in Boulton (ed.) (1995), Hill *et al.* (1995), Hillborn (2001), and Porter and Richter (eds.) (1995).
[5] https://htb.org/our-story [Accessed 29 December 2021]
[6] https://crtrust.org/about/ [Accessed 29 December 2021]

Because of the nature of these plants, and the ways in which new clergy are trained and socialised within other *HTB* churches, there is a high degree of cloning (a term which it will be explained is rejected by *HTB* leaders), with the worship-style sharing many characteristics and values across the network, and having been highly influenced by the well-articulated Vineyard theology and praxis. The annual Focus summer holiday and the *HTB* Leadership conferences serve to reinforce the values and praxis of *HTB* across the network. As is the practice in the Vineyard, the 'senior pastors' are exclusively male, and are usually billed along with their wives on websites as joint leaders. Nothing in their literature says that ordained women are not acceptable, but at the time of writing I am not aware of any *HTB* churches led by women. It is certainly not mainstream Anglican practice to assume that clergy wives will automatically see themselves as *de facto* leaders within the churches in which their husbands serve. A much more detailed account of the history of the *HTB* network may be found in Moy (2023a).

The New Wine Network

Whilst the *NW* network began in a similar way, through David Pytches' friendship and sharing in ministry with John Wimber, the direction of its contribution to the wider Church has been very different. After Wimber visited in 1981 St Andrew's Chorleywood increasingly became a centre of resourcing for local church leaders, as did St Thomas' in the North. Regular leaders' days attracted hundreds of people to enjoy Vineyard-style worship, to hear testimony and teaching, and to receive Spirit-led prayer ministry. Pytches, who had become a bishop during his time in South America, expressed something of an ambivalence to Anglican style. He had earlier experienced problems with Anglican polity when, as a missionary in Valparaiso he embarked on a church-planting strategy. He had to

> take great liberties with Anglicanism. If we were to encourage the spontaneous expansion of the Church and have them self-supporting and self-governing, then the Chilean converts had to be encouraged to do things their way. This did not seem to be approved by our church superiors. (in Springer, 1987, 167)

This brush with 'the system' over evangelism and planting paved the way for further feelings of conflict with the Anglican Church over styles for renewed worship. He believes that

> ritual and liturgy maintain a healthy focus on the transcendence of God ... but [they] can also become horribly mechanical and deadening, smothering and inhibiting for spontaneous worship. Liturgy needs to be readily available but also needs to be a resource to use creatively and sensitively, never rigidly or legalistically (2002, 296).

(Note here that liturgy is something which one might include within worship, Earey's 'some liturgy'.)

However Pytches is also aware of the stultifying effect not just of Anglican liturgy but Anglican ecclesiology can have on renewal:

> When God blesses the Church with the new wine of the Holy Spirit, even today the old wineskin usually wants it to conform ... Most of the new wine from the revivals in Wales, California etc. in the first decade of the last century was obstructed in traditional church circles and channelled into new Pentecostal movements. Much of the new wine from the Charismatic revival of the 1960s flowed into the House Church Movement. Much, but thankfully by no means all of the Wimber new wine revival of the 1980s was eventually filtered off into the Vineyard Christian Fellowships ... In so many of these revival movements of the Spirit, the Anglican Church seems as a whole to have lost out again and again.

He notes also that

> Wimber was reluctant in agreeing to VCFs[7] in the UK, but eventually yielded to those younger Anglican clergy who were pleading to take it forward. They had not the heart to fight ecclesiastical battles over ... non-essentials ... of the traditional church at so many levels – battles they knew they could not win (2002, 358).

It is interesting, although hardly surprising, to see that the ambivalence in *NW*'s founding father towards Anglican liturgical worship seems to have become a characteristic of many of the churches which have joined the Network. The main emphasis has not been on creating a network through plants and grafts, but of inviting existing churches to 'sign up' and become *NW* network churches, and for their leaders and people to receive training and inspiration through events and the summer New Wine festival. The history of *NW* is helpfully written up in Harcourt and Turner (2019), and even Archbishop Justin Welby, in his foreword, makes explicit the influence of John Wimber: 'The inspiration for New Wine springs from the extraordinary ministry of John Wimber and his friendship with Bishop David Pytches.' (*Ibid.*, 2019, viii). Paul Harcourt, currently national *NW* leader, expresses the essence of *NW* churches, its essential DNA:

> Encountering the presence of God in worship, a desire for the spiritual gifts with which Jesus equips his Church for mission, prayer ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit, and an overflow of love to our communities through local churches. (*Ibid,* xii)

He goes on to tell the story of Wimber's first visit to St Andrew's Chorleywood in 1981 with his message 'God wants his Church back!' This visit resulted in some dramatic healings, conversions among young people, and, in time, a prayer ministry team of 250. But Pytches realised that this was not just for their church: 'David was clear: this had to go beyond the walls of St Andrew's' (*Ibid.*, 17). Rather than a church planting strategy he began to mentor other leaders, and before long Chorleywood was hosting the regular leaders' days mentioned above. In 1980 there was a joint conference with ARM, of which more shortly, led at the time by Michael Harper, but it was not an unmitigated success:

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[7] Vineyard Christian Fellowships.

> It became clear that ARM was potentially too Anglican for David and he realised he would need to start a new thing in order to propagate more quickly and more widely what God had put on his heart. (*Ibid.*, 23)

As with *HTB*'s Focus week, the *NW* summer holidays provided a key opportunity for local churches to catch the essence of their ministry. What began as a week away for members of St Andrew's Chorleywood soon became a huge festival, which deliberately sought to model the kind of ministry which was the hallmark of the *NW* movement:

> New Wine is really the legacy of the impact of John Wimber's ministry on St Andrew's Chorleywood ... The leaders were saying 'We're teaching our people about this but they want to see what it's like in practice.' In 1989 the opportunity came to bring churches together came about.
>
> New Wine [the holiday week] was always intended to be a family celebration which would model what would be possible in the local church.(Jackson, 2019, 50-1)

1989 saw the first *NW* summer festival near Bath. The organisers hoped for 1500 people, but actually attracted 3500, and by 2019 they saw over 20,000 participants. From the late 90s *NW* also organised leaders' conferences, as well as events for children, youth and women. The sister youth organisation Soul Survivor, both the annual festival and the Youth Church based in Watford, also had the effect of imparting Vineyard and *NW* values into a generation of young people[8].

These networks are the subjects of this piece of research, but the story must begin by tracing the journey which they, and many other churches, took towards non-liturgical Anglican worship. That journey is of course a complex one to describe. An apposite picture is that of a series of streams flowing through a particular landscape, with confluences as they meet and become one mighty river. This section examines six of these streams, the landscape through which they flowed, and then the resulting flood of change in Anglican worship. The six streams are the Liturgical Movement, the Family Service Movement, charismatic renewal, the Ecumenical Movement, the rise of 'Praise and Worship' and contemporary music, and finally the influence of the Vineyard Churches. The landscape through which these streams flowed and met with one another is that of culture change, and particularly the rise of Postmodernity. All these different factors have been highly significant in the evolution of Anglican worship over the past 50 years, and particularly so on the two networks which form the subject of this study. An exploration of these streams of influence and the landscape through which they flowed will enable us more clearly to understand the rise of non-liturgical Anglicanism.

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[8] For an account of Soul Survivor by its founder, now disgraced, see Pilavachi (2004). For a more scholarly reflection, see Ward (2003)

The Liturgical Movement

The first and perhaps the most important stream was the 'Liturgical Movement', although in fact the term actually refers to a wide and varied collection of movements. In their study Fenwick and Spinks note that 'We have had to be selective. Each Church, each country, has its own particular experience of the liturgical movement, and it has not been possible to chart them all.' (1995, vii) However for our purposes it is the movement in the Roman Catholic church during the twentieth century which has been most influential.

Any movement has what might be called 'origins' and a 'beginning'. The origins of the Roman Liturgical Movement may be situated in the upsurge of liturgical scholarship in the Benedictine Order, particularly at the Abbey of Solesmes under the leadership of Dom Prosper Guéranger. They can also be seen as part of the reaction of the Christian Church against the Enlightenment, a view espoused strongly by Trapp (1945). Fenwick and Spinks note that 'Nineteenth-century philosophies, which had no place for God, have been allowed full reign in twentieth-century societies' (1995, 1). However, they claim that paradoxically, and in spite of significant numerical decline, there has been a great upsurge in interest, scholarship and creativity in the worship of the Church during this period. Pope Pius X, in 1903, gave official encouragement to the growing interest in liturgical renewal, although urging propriety and restraint in liturgical music (*Ibid.*, 23). Other influences are generally thought to include the Maurists, Jansenism, Romanticism, and the Beuronese Congregation[9].

If these are some of the origins of the Movement, its beginning is usually considered to be an address to the Malines Conference in 1909 by Lambert Beaudin, subsequently published as *La Piété de l'Eglise* (*The Full Prayer of the Church*) in 1914. Beaudin, a Benedictine, urged the National Congress of Catholic Action to work towards a full participation of the whole people of God in the work of the church, and in particular its liturgy. From this beginning what we now call the Roman Catholic Liturgical Movement sprung. Often regarded as a campaign for liturgical change, it was actually far more about spiritual renewal, particularly in a church which was highly clericalized, and which was seeing numerical decline and social marginalisation. It was characterised by the 'call for full, conscious and active participation by the congregation in the celebration of the liturgy' (Day and Gordon-Taylor, 2013, 59). Fenwick and Spinks suggest that 'an important strand in the Liturgical Movement is a protest against individualism', both in society and the Church. (*Op. cit.*, 5) Day and Gordon-Taylor agree: 'The Liturgical Movement emphasised the corporate nature of worship, that it is an action by the whole people of God and not something performed on their behalf by the clergy'. (*Op. cit.*, 137) It was undergirded by the rediscovery of the idea, found in 1 Corinthians 12, of the Church

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[9] A fuller account of these roots of the Movement can be found in Crichton (1996) and Fenwick and Spinks (1995).

as the Body of Christ, and through the encouragement of participation, the layout of liturgical space (for example the west-facing position of the celebrant at the Mass) and other innovations, it sought to turn 'congregations into communities' (Fenwick and Spinks, 1995, 6). These authors suggest a series of rediscoveries and new emphases which shaped the Movement. They include the rediscovery of the Early Church as something of a model for worship, an emphasis on the Bible, shown both in the renewed emphasis on the Liturgy of the Word and the greater range of biblical themes worked out in liturgical texts, the centrality of the Eucharist, emphasis on the vernacular in language, and the rediscovery of other liturgical traditions. This latter was shown in the much greater willingness to learn and borrow from other denominations (*Ibid.*, 7-11).

Day and Gordon-Taylor note that

> "The work of the people" became a rallying cry as liturgical reformers fostered a move away from worship as the work of a few vested ordained leaders on behalf of a largely passive congregation of laity. (*Op. cit.*, 204)

Great emphasis was placed on the etymology of the Greek λειτουργια (*leitourgia*). Worship was the work in which the people engaged, as opposed to them being spectators of the work of the priesthood, although paradoxically, as we have noted, the term refers primarily to 'public service'. Only secondarily does it refer to the worship of the whole people of God. Despite Pius XII in his *Mediator Dei*[10] warning against false innovations and an excessive influence by Protestantism, the agenda of liturgical renewal was finally vindicated when, in 1963, the Second Vatican Council approved vernacular liturgy, ending the dominance of the Latin Tridentine Mass.

Clearly the concerns of the Liturgical Movement are important contributors to the mood of Anglican liturgical renewal since 1960. They brought an emphasis on accessibility, comprehensibility and inclusiveness, and individual spiritual renewal. While this movement appears to receive little attention among present day charismatic Anglicans, it shared, and in fact gave rise to, a set of emphases which are held dear among *NW* and *HTB* churches. It is also, Fenwick and Spinks would argue, in a close relationship with Charismatic renewal, our third stream, and they suggest that there are important, though not always obvious, links. They note first the difference between the human work of liturgical renewal as opposed to the Spirit-inspired renewal:

> With its emphasis on the presence and reality of God, charismatic worship is in part at least a reaction against the aridity of both the personal lives of individual Christians and the dryness of the public worship of many congregations. The movement thus constitutes a warning that no organisation, no structuring, no texts, no music, no minister will be of any use if they do not actually bring people into touch with God.

Nevertheless the two movements are related, and have some common concerns, such as Early Church worship, Scripture, and the Spirit, all within an informal and accessible style. They conclude

> The Liturgical Movement undoubtedly provided the 'seedbed' ... for charismatic renewal. The Liturgical Movement did not give birth to the charismatic movement, but it provided an incubator for its early development ... since the beginning of the century the Liturgical Movement had been unconsciously preparing the way for the expression of the charismatic movement within the traditional churches' (1995, 110-12)

It may seem paradoxical that the Liturgical Movement has provided such a major impetus to the rise of non-liturgical Anglican worship. But along with a new appreciation of the liturgical worship of the Church came also the desire to evangelise and make mature disciples, the notion of the church of the Body of Christ where all may use their particular gifts, and the offering of accessible worship which celebrates and proclaims the truth of the gospel. These are all values which characterise the two networks examined in this study, as was an emphasis on the charismatic work of the Holy Spirit. However, liturgical worship became a casualty as these other emphases came to the fore. But new influences were to come, in the 1960s, from another direction, this time from within Anglicanism, with a background which was far more acceptable to the evangelical Anglicans who were deeply touched by it.

The Family Service Movement

The second stream of renewal, the 'Family Service Movement' brought, as had the Liturgical Movement before it, an emphasis within the Church on more flexible and mission-focussed worship. Ward traces the growing questioning, in both Evangelical and Catholic churches, of the policy of educating children and young people in the faith in settings separate from adult Sunday worship. He quotes the vision set out in *Children in the Way* (2012, 1):

> Imagine a church congregation in which men and women, girls and boys, young and old, share together to worship God, to learn from one another about their faith, to pray together about their mutual concerns and joys, to serve those in the community who are outside the church. Whenever possible, the members are not separated into groups according to age or sex but are together ... The first instinct of this church is to say 'What can we all do?' (Ward, 1996, 146-9)

By the 1960s some evangelical Anglican clergy, notably Michael Botting of St Matthew's Fulham, began experimenting with 'family services' which involved 'simple liturgical forms involving the use of quizzes, choruses, audio-visual aids and of course the all-important overhead projector' (*Ibid.*, 149). The popularity of this style of worship, and the need to resource it, led to the publication by the Church Pastoral Aid Society (CPAS), an Anglican home mission organisation, of *Family Services* in 1968. This small book provided for Anglican churches an order of service for worship which was

neither Eucharistic nor followed the *BCP* Matins or Evensong rites. It became instantly popular, particularly in the evangelical wing of the church which CPAS represented, although it was not official nor authorised Anglican liturgy. Whilst remaining fairly liturgical, this book provided perhaps the first important step on the journey towards non-liturgical Anglican worship.

As far back as 1872 permission had been given by the Church for a 'Third Service' on Sundays, as long as it contained only texts from the *BCP* and passages from the Bible (Papadopulos, 2011, 70). This permission was broadened slightly in 1892, when texts 'substantially in agreement with' the Bible and *BCP* were allowed. But *Family Services* became a significant tool for those who were coming to realise the irrelevance of Elizabethan language in a post-Christendom secular society. As with many innovations the book was both a response to what was already going on as churches began to design alternative forms of worship, and a spur to greater experimentation. *Family Services* was followed in 1986 by *Church Family Worship*, again from CPAS, which contained both worked-out services and other resources, becoming in its 'directory' approach a forerunner to *Patterns for Worship* and the Service of the Word. The book also contains a selection of hymns, psalms and worship songs, and a Eucharistic rite taken from the *ASB*. In his preface editor Michael Perry states that

> Family Services have become a most viable and effective provision for worship in the community ... Such services meet a special need where traditional fixed forms are inappropriate and standard books of hymns or songs inadequate. This need is for reverent simplicity, intelligent informality, and *substance – for all ages.* (1986, i)

Jeremy Fletcher suggests that the Liturgical Commission, realising the mission opportunities of more contemporary and flexible worship, was keen to help churches in this new direction: 'An engagement with the Family Service movement was not about a reigning-in of miscreants, but an enlivening of the existing worship of the Church' (in Papadopulos, 2011, 71). People began to question the use of the term 'family' for a variety of reasons, and Ward (1996, 152-8) discusses several ways in which the term might be inadequate or unhelpful. Because of this such services are now more commonly known by the term 'All-age Worship', although many churches have invented their own catchy names for them, such as 'All Stars', 'Sunday at Ten' or 'SMASH!'. The influence of this movement, however, has been very important in liturgical formation since the 1960s, particularly on the evangelical wing of the church, where worship is seen as an evangelistic tool. Whilst nodding in the direction of the more catholic idea that worship is for God, and that we offer it simply because he is worthy of it, expecting to get nothing out of it for ourselves, some evangelicals have become convinced that worship is not *just* for God, but also for those currently outside the worshipping community. Such people need a bridge across which they might easily travel in the direction of faith (and sometimes 'proper church'). Thus liturgists have had to work in the tension between worship

for God and no other purpose, and much greater indexicality for those edging towards faith. This tension is explored in depth by Dawn (1995).

It is worth noting that the Family Service movement, while emphasising the potential evangelistic nature of public worship, nevertheless took liturgical form seriously, producing books which resourced worship intended to be flexible and fun, but which still used liturgical shape, text and time deliberately. This movement, therefore, might be considered something of a staging-post along the way to the kind of non-liturgical worship which characterises our two networks. For churches which embraced this new style of worship their Anglican identity and worship-history remained important. However the loosening of the grip of a set and fixed liturgical form in favour of mission and accessibility took many churches another step along the road to the abandonment of liturgy.

Charismatic Renewal

Tracing the progress of liturgical renewal, Fenwick and Spinks note a major new experience in the mid-twentieth century:

> For hundreds of thousands – perhaps millions – of Christians throughout the world the last few decades of the twentieth century have brought a totally new experience of worship of unimagined intensity. This has not at a first glance, however, had anything to do with the Liturgical Movement, but with a wave of revival and renewal in the Holy Spirit which has spread through many of the mainline churches – the charismatic movement.

They continue:

> The re-examination of Church history which the movement has prompted has confirmed the existence down the centuries in different parts of the Church of phenomena – tongues, healing, prophecies, visions – which are features both of the New Testament and of the recent revival. (1995, 105)

In terms of source and influence it is difficult to trace the start of this renewal movement, which has had such a profound effect on the church worldwide, and on British Anglicanism in particular. David Winter, in his introduction to Martin (1976, 1) tells us clearly that it began in an Anglican parish in Sunderland (All Saints' Monkwearmouth, in 1907, under the ministry of Alexander Boddy[11]). But does one begin earlier with the Azusa Street Revival of 1906 when Pentecostalism started as a world-wide phenomenon (Creech, 1996)? On April 9th 1906 William Seymour was leading a prayer meeting in Bonnie Brae Street, Los Angeles when the Holy Spirit swept in and manifestations such as tongues burst forth. The congregation soon moved to Azusa St, where Pentecostalism usually traces its roots

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[11] See also Wakefield (2001) and his bibliography for further details of Boddy's ministry.

(Fenwick and Spinks, 1995, 105). Within 20 years the two main Pentecostal denominations had been born, with their own particular practices and doctrines. An account of the history of the Elim movement is given on their website[12], as is the equivalent Assemblies of God account on theirs[13]. Scholarly texts on the history of Pentecostalism would include Poloma and Green (2010) and Blumhofer (1993). Many believed that with Pentecostalism the original but lost apostolic ministry of the early church was being restored.

But there may be even earlier antecedents. One could look further back still to 1900 when in a farmhouse in Topeka, Kansas a group of students studying the book of Acts were visited by an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Or just before that to the vision of Pope Leo XIII which led him to call the Church to desperate prayer on the eve of a new century (Martin, 1994, 31-2)[14]. Perhaps we should look further back still to the ministries of such leaders as Charles Finney (1792-1875), or John Wesley (1703-1791), or George Fox (1624-1691). In fact Wimber and Springer (1985, 151-74) and Anderson (2014, 19-25) collect a selection of evidence both from church history to suggest that since the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ the pentecostal manifestations have been present to varying degrees in every century.

What exactly are these 'pentecostal manifestations' which became so significant? At its simplest it is claimed that what people were beginning to experience was the same outpouring of the Holy Spirit as occurred on the Day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2. Particularly the experience was an emotional one, with a sense of the power and presence of God, usually leading to some vocal outflow such as glossolalia, praise or prophecy. Pawson argues that the NT evidence demonstrates that the reception of the Holy Spirit by believers is always a definitive experience, which could not be missed either by the recipients or anyone present at the time, and is always accompanied by vocal outflow (1989, 71-7). This experience is variously known as baptism, or filling, in, or with, the Holy Spirit. Classical Pentecostals (although not usually charismatics) would look for the 'initial physical evidence' of glossolalia as proof of being baptised in the Spirit (Anderson, 2014, 2). Other spiritual gifts, from the list in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 might well follow. Hocken (1997, 147-51) asserts that those who have experienced the Holy Spirit in this way would testify to a whole new experience of the Christian life, which might include a new level of awareness of the Trinity, a new capacity for and enjoyment of praise, a greater sense of hearing God speak, and new power and authority in one's own Christian life and in praying for and ministering to others. Scotland gives a similar list of benefits, which adds to those of Hocken 'a sense of wellbeing' and 'new life and vigour' (2000, 53-7). In addition Hocken notes that churches significantly touched by the work of the Holy Spirit are likely to becomes centres

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[12] http://www.elim.org.uk/Articles/417849/Our_History.aspx [Accessed 12/6/16]
[13] http://ag.org/top/about/history/ [Accessed 12/6/16]
[14] http://www.stjosephschurch.net/leoxiii.htm [Accessed 17 August 2016] provides a fuller text.

of healing, evangelism and growth (*Ibid.,* 151). Scotland goes on to list a significant number of social action projects stemming from renewed churches (*Op. cit.,* 315-20). And Buchanan (2006, 194) adds to the list of benefits a surge of creativity, an emphasis on 'every-member ministry' and a great flow of ordinands.

The magisterial history of charismatic renewal by Hocken gives a very detailed account of its beginnings, particularly in the UK, through to 1965 when, he believes, 'the main outlines of the new movement are clear ... After this date the sources are more numerous and better-known'. (1997, vii) Walter Hollenweger, in his introduction to Hocken's history, explains that 'In his painstaking and patient uncovering of the early history of the Charismatic Movement, Peter Hocken shows its simultaneous beginnings in different places in Britain, and the subsequent attempts at discovering each other.' (*Ibid.,* xiii). Anderson, however, warns against reading the history of Pentecostalism from a white Western point of view, and traces many different histories of the movement from around the world (2014, 7-8). The picture which Hocken paints is indeed about seemingly spontaneous outbreaks of the manifestations of renewal, and the joining up of individuals and groupings. Such key leaders included David du Plessis in South Africa, Bradford evangelist Smith Wigglesworth, a British Pentecostal called Donald Gee, and businessman Cecil Cousen, from Wigglesworth's home town of Bradford, who ministered in Canada. Cousin was influenced by the Latter Rain movement, which stood for a revival of primitive Pentecostal theology and practices. Largely catalysed by healing evangelist William Branham in 1947, this movement was based on an interpretation of Joel 2:23 which saw it as 'a dual prophecy of the day of Pentecost as described in the second chapter of Acts and of the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit which was to immediately precede the coming of the Lord.' (Riss, 1982, 35) With its emphasis on healing, apostolic and prophetic ministries, and the expectation of a fresh outpouring of the Spirit following a long period of dryness, the movement was not universally accepted either in Pentecostalism nor in the wider Church. For a brief account of this movement, see Riss (1982) and Resane (2022). When Cousen returned to Britain he brought with him some Pentecostal influence, but not full Latter Rain theology. He began to work in Bradford with another church leader, Walter North. Meanwhile a different group near Exeter included David Lillie, from the Plymouth Brethren, and Pentecostal Ren Jackman, a group which was to be formative on Arthur Wallis, another Brethren member, who was later to become a key leader in the House Church movement, and a fierce critic of the established churches (Wallis, 1981). A link was made in 1954 as the Devon and Bradford groups first met. Meanwhile another spring of renewal issued from Cliff College in Derbyshire as David Smith unexpectedly began to experience a healing ministry and went on to found the Evangelical Divine Healing Conventions, the first of which met at High Leigh in Hertfordshire in 1960. In South Africa Campbell McAlpine and Denis Clark met in another Brethren assembly, and experienced 'baptism in the Spirit' before returning to the UK. And in Plymouth a Methodist, Edgar Trout, was similarly baptised in the Spirit and started a church in his

home to explore and pray about the work of the Holy Spirit. By 1960 these very different streams, coming from apparently unrelated sources, had begun to flow together. Hocken is clear that although there were parallel events in America, their influence on the British charismatic scene came later, rather than being responsible for it (*Op. cit.*, 128). By the end of the 1950s there was a clear group of British Christians who had had 'an experience of God in Pentecostal blessing and spiritual gifts outside the Pentecostal churches' (*Ibid.,* 39). These men 'clearly differentiated themselves from the classical or denominational Pentecostals' (*Ibid.,* 39). Cousen and Smith refused the Pentecostal label because they felt the earlier renewal had lost its fire, while Lillie and Wallis were convinced that God was restoring his church on a much wider canvas, and wanted to bring the best of the Brethren movement together with Pentecostalism to create a much richer spirituality.

Whilst they may not realise or acknowledge their debt to the liturgical movement, *NW* and *HTB* churches would both proudly claim their ancestry to be within charismatic renewal, and would (at least in theory) seek to promote Christian discipleship which takes seriously the charismatic work of the Holy Spirit, the practice of gifts, the growth of fruit, and the energising of the Church for mission and service.

Anglican Renewal

Few denominations were left untouched by this new move of the Holy Spirit, but one of the most significant effects of this renewal was on the Church of England. A notable figure with whom to begin was William Wood. He was ordained as an Anglican in his native Australia, but came to work in the Church of England in 1937. In 1949 he was appointed Warden of the London Healing Mission, the more catholic counterpart to the Evangelical Conventions mentioned above. Wood experienced the power of the Holy Spirit and the gift of glossolalia, but was able to trace some Anglican precedents to this current move of the Spirit. Previously, in the London Healing Mission's newsletter in 1957 he had written an editorial containing these words:

> The small clouds on the horizon showed in Wesley's and Keble's days. In 1906-07 in the parish church of All Saints, Sunderland, in Los Angeles, India and Chile, the fire of the Holy Spirit manifested. In 1908, the prophet, James Moore Hickson, was listened to by the Anglican bishops at the Lambeth Conference. (Quoted in Hocken, *Op. cit.,* 51)

By 1963 du Plessis could write about eight Anglican clergy who had been baptised in the Spirit. Some had been attending a multi-denominational weekly prayer meeting in St Bride's, Fleet Street in London since 1957. But a far more significant influence was to begin in London through Richard Bolt. He was an Anglican ordinand when he received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the gift of tongues, but he subsequently returned to the Pentecostal Church, and founded the Students'

Pentecostal Fellowship in 1961, as an organisation to provide fellowship for Spirit-filled students, 'including those from or within the historic churches' (quoted by Hocken, *Op. cit.,* 61). This openness to non-Pentecostals meant that his influence in his home parish, that of All Souls Langham Place in London's West End, began to be felt as several members of the Youth Group experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as well as in another Anglican church, St Paul's Beckenham. The vicar of St Paul's, George Forester, became convinced of the truth of Holy Spirit baptism theology, and subsequently experienced the Spirit through Bolt's prayer, although controversy was stirred up in his church, and in 1964 he resigned his Anglican orders. Hocken comments: 'There is no doubt that many committed Anglicans, who had been baptised in the Spirit, saw what happened at Beckenham as a serious setback, capable of ruining the reputation of the nascent movement in the eyes of other Anglicans' (*Op. cit.,* 65). But another major Anglican influence was to spring up in Burslem in the Potteries through a young man named Ron Bailey whose Rector, Philip Smith, who he was able to influence into renewal, although 'his evangelical orthodoxy and his Anglican sense of decorum made him dubious about extending a full welcome to the Holy Spirit in this pentecostal form' (*Ibid.,* 66). News of a Spirit-filled Anglican Rector spread rapidly, and one of those to hear it was Michael Harper, who was to become a key player in the growth of renewal. Smith himself, however,

> exercised a certain caution as to how he presented his pentecostal baptism. He made no attempt to introduce any pentecostal elements into church services, the exercise of charismata and free praise being reserved for prayer meetings at the Rectory and other homes. (*Ibid.,* 68).

There was by now a growth in the number of groups gathering to pray for the renewal of the church and the revival of the nation. The only interdenominational group was the Nights of Prayer for Worldwide Revival, led by returned CMS missionary George Ingram, to pray for the Evangelist Billy Graham's Harringay crusade of 1954[15]. A sub-group of NPWR was set up to pray specifically for the Church of England and Anglican clergy, and it met at All Souls, Langham Place. One of the curates, Michael Harper, experienced the baptism of the Spirit through this group in 1962, and subsequently met with Dr Martin Lloyd-Jones from the nearby Westminster Chapel, John Collins from St Mark's Gillingham, and David Watson from Cambridge. Another All Souls curate, Martin Peppiatt, also received the filling of the Holy Spirit during a visit from American Pentecostal Larry Christenson, but the Rector, conservative evangelical statesman John Stott, publicly repudiated any doctrine of a post-conversion Spirit-baptism at a packed Islington Conference in 1964[16]. However, in spite of this setback by the mid-60s charismatic renewal was firmly established within the Anglican church in England.

> Not only was this occurring within the Church of England, but it was happening in evangelical high places, with close connections to the national establishment. Oxbridge men who had served at All

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[15] Leading biographers of Billy Graham are Laurie (2021) and Whalin (2015)

[16] Reported in the *Church of England Newspaper* ,10 January 1964 (1).

> Souls were Anglican to their bones. Not only did the events of 1962-63 at Langham Place provide a focal point for the movement, but they ensured that it was firmly within the national church (Hocken, *Op. cit.,* 78).

Whilst Philip Smith had kept any charismatic activity out of his public worship, another church was more publicly influenced by renewal. St Mark's Gillingham counted on its staff such charismatic luminaries as John Collins, later to lead Holy Trinity Brompton, David Watson and David McInnes. Other Anglican clergy such as Thomas Collett-White and Tom Walker were influenced through the ministry of St Mark's. David Watson found himself in a dilemma, agreeing as he did with Stott's denial of a post-conversion 'baptism' in the Spirit, but at the same time unable to deny the experience in his own life. It is to him that we owe the common Anglican preference for terms such as 'filling' and 'fullness' as opposed to 'baptism'. Another centre of renewal was the Lee Abbey conference centre in Lynton, North Devon, where the ministries of Deaconess Kristine McNair and retired founder Leslie Sutton became significant to many pilgrims. Soon more than a dozen members of the resident community were praying in tongues, and one notable guest was John Perry of St Andrew's Chorleywood. Thanks to the ministries of Perry and Michael Harper St Andrew's became a centre of renewal, and one of the two foci of the subsequent visits of John Wimber.

Whilst the influence of charismatic renewal in the Church of England had mainly been among evangelicals, it was not exclusively so. Notable Anglo-Catholics to be filled with the Spirit were Michael Meakin of Woburn Sands, John Gunstone of St Augustine's, Rush Green, in Romford, Colin Urquhart of St Hugh's Luton and Richard Hare, Bishop of Pontefract. Hocken notes that 'Gunstone was later to become the most articulate spokesman for the Charismatic movement in the more catholic wing of the Church of England' (*Op. cit.,* 103).

Things were different, however, in the parallel movement in the North American church, which was far more prevalent among catholic churches. Perhaps the most famous of these was Dennis Bennett from Van Nuys, California, who received the Spirit through Frank McGuire's parish in Monterey Park. McGuire became the first American charismatic to visit the UK, whilst on holiday, and he spoke to many British leaders about his experiences of renewal. Other transatlantic visitors were Larry Christenson and Agnes Sanford. Michael Harper invited people to hear these Americans speak, which established him as a major spokesman for charismatic renewal in Britain. In July 1964 he left his post at All Souls to become the first Director of the Fountain Trust. Through writing, travelling and hosting conferences Harper was free to promote the good news of renewal across Britain. In 1982 Colin Buchanan edited a report to General Synod[17] on this new spiritual movement, of which

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[17] General Synod is the national governmental body of the Church of England. It succeeded the Church Assembly in 1970, and is responsible for legal, liturgical, financial and other matters of church government. See https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/about-general-synod. [Accessed 17 May 2023].

note was taken for further study and exploration (Buchanan, 2006, 196). In the light of this Josephine Bax was commissioned to do a year's study on 'Spiritual Renewal in the Church of England', which led to the publication in 1986 of her report *The Good Wine*. This was followed by a more theologically astute study from the Doctrine Commission (1991), of which note was duly taken in Synod that year.

One theological question which presented itself, and which was highlighted in the Doctrine Commission's report, is 'Is this that?' In Acts 2:16 Peter, seeking to explain the pentecostal phenomena to the stunned crowd, asserts that 'this [τουτο - that you are witnessing today] is that [το] which was spoken through the prophet Joel'. In the same way, when charismatics claim that what they are experiencing is in continuity with the first pentecostal experiences, the question 'How do you know that?' needs asking. In particular, is the present day 'gift of tongues' really that which the first disciples received? And how do we know? This epistemological question is tackled in Turner (1997) and in Leach (2001, 106-113), with the conclusion that the evidence suggests a clear continuity between NT and current experience.

One further report for Synod was by Mitton (1998), entitled *The Way of Renewal*. Michael Mitton, a former Director of ARM, set out to demonstrate that charismatic renewal was but one among many renewal movements in the Church, but the report falls into the trap of suggesting that just about anything positive which happens can be labelled 'renewal', and downplays the radical nature of the charismatic movement, and its far-reaching effects on the wider church. Of course charismatic renewal did not just affect the Anglican church: it was, and remains, a worldwide and cross-denominational phenomenon. In a masterly three volume work Killian McDonnell (1980) collects the official statements on charismatic renewal from many different denominations and provinces of the worldwide church, under the significant title of *Presence, power, praise*. Anderson (2014), whilst acknowledging the difficulty of counting Pentecostals and charismatics worldwide, estimates that between 400 and 600 million Christians across the globe belong to three broad groupings. He quotes Walter Hollenweger, 'the founding father of academic research into Pentecostalism,' who mentions 'the stupendous growth of Pentecostalism/Charismaticism/Independentism from zero to almost 500 million in a century'. (2014, 3-5) This taxonomy, of classical Pentecostals, charismatics, and neo-Pentecostals or 'Pentecostal-like independent churches in the majority world' he sees as providing a helpful base from which to begin thinking about this phenomenon. Anthropologists found this new and fast-growing form of spirituality fascinating: 'One of the most fruitful areas for the anthropological study of worship in recent years has been in the field of charismatic worship.' (Cameron *et al.,* 2005, 91). There have been many such congregational studies, and also, inevitably, some official reports commissioned. *HTB* and *NW* Churches would proudly claim this heritage as theirs.

The Ecumenical Movement

The fourth major stream is the Ecumenical Movement. Whilst again this important force for renewal is rarely spoken about as a specific movement, it did bring about a major change in thinking in most churches. It did so by allowing and encouraging cross-fertilisation. In his introduction to the twentieth century ecumenical movement FitzGerald defines this movement as

> the quest of Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Old Catholics, and most Protestant churches for reconciliation, and the restoration of their visible unity in faith, sacramental life and witness to the world. Over the past century especially, this quest has dramatically altered the relationship of these divided churches to each other. (2004, 1)

Note that in this definition 'witness to the world' is significant: the Movement recognises that division and denominationalism can appear scandalous to those outside the Church who do not understand nor care about the minutiae of doctrine which frequently become important and divisive, and so can form an almost impenetrable barrier to faith. This movement facilitated the growth of the emphases of both the Liturgical Movement and charismatic renewal. Before the growth of ecumenism, developments in different churches would have remained mostly unknown outside their context, and in any case would not have been of particular interest. So Fenwick and Spinks recognise that liturgical renewal was greatly aided 'thanks to the Ecumenical Movement which has accompanied the Liturgical Movement throughout this century'. They add 'It could well be that the success of the Liturgical Movement is due in large measure precisely to the fact that it has found a resonance within the main families of Christendom.' (*Op. cit.,* 3) The ecumenical movement allowed different denominations to stop shouting at one another and to begin speaking to one another, and finally listening to one another. Another effect of growing ecumenism is the tendency to sit more lightly to one's denominational heritage, and to downplay the significance of denominations, each with its own distinctive ethos, and to look instead to other networks or movements. Ecumenism meant that scholars from different traditions found themselves studying the same ancient texts, each bringing the insights of their tradition, and 'generally there is a growing awareness of each other and a willingness to learn from each other' (*Ibid.*, 9), a coming together which allowed the creation of ecumenical liturgical bodies such as the International Consultation on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) and the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET). Along with this came a willingness to be open to influences from abroad, such as that which came in 1947 with the founding of the Church of South India. This new ecumenical spirit similarly allowed charismatic renewal to spread: 'Increasing ecumenical openness brought a rapid cross-fertilisation through books and personal contacts' (*Ibid.*, 107). Charismatics as well as liturgists began to find that they had as much, if not more, common ground with others in their field of experience than they did with their own denominations and traditions. Writing from a Roman Catholic point-of-view, Cardinal Suenens saw

the two movements of ecumenism and charismatic renewal as equally significant calls of God to his Church:

> At present we are perceiving a double summons, as it were, a double current of graces. There are so many challenges to Christians of all persuasions that the Church must be one in order to be faithful to its very being: "*that you may be one, as the Father and I are one*" – and in order to be credible: "*so that the world may believe it was you who sent me.*" (John 17:21) Parallel to this, another more recent current is flowing through the Churches: the charismatic current. It reminds Christians that the Spirit is the vital breath of his Church, that his active and mighty presence is always operative to the extent that we have faith, hope, and the courage to let him take over. (1978, 4)

In its 1981 report the General Synod noted that charismatic renewal 'has broken its formal and liturgical bounds, and come into the life of the congregation and individual with a vividness and power, which has astonished the recipients.' (1981, 39)

It is worth noting, too, that whilst official ecumenical dialogues were mainly conducted amongst the main historic denominations and the Free Churches, on the ground charismatic renewal was building some strong relationships with the New and Independent Churches, which are discussed briefly below. Those who had previously been called to 'come out from among' the corrupt established churches were finding new levels of fellowship and like-mindedness with their charismatic Anglican and Roman brothers and sisters. Indeed some charismatics eschewed any formal involvement with ecumenism and its committees and structures on the grounds that they were enjoying increasingly close relationships with others who shared their charismatic experience, and their desire for mission and growth. Often those relationships were stronger and deeper than those shared with other non-charismatic Anglicans. But with the rise of such ecumenical networks and gatherings it seemed inappropriate to use Anglican forms of worship, and so liturgy was once again abandoned in favour of a lowest-common-denominator song-based worship set. The message was reinforced that spiritual vitality and liturgy did not belong together, and local churches began to try to emulate in their week-by-week worship what they had experienced at celebration-level gatherings.

The Rise of the Worship song

Whilst the various movements and individuals mentioned so far have changed the face of Christian worship, the most noticeable symptom of this change within our two networks is the replacement of liturgical texts and shape with a diet of worship songs. This shift will be evaluated later. Several scholars have sought to trace this development, notably Ward (2005a), Lim Swee Hong and Ruth (2017) and Ruth (ed., 2020). These books suggest that there were two ingredients in this sea-change, which we might broadly categorise as 'music for evangelism' and 'music for worship'. Ruth, writing

from an American perspective, sees two parallel rivers which converged in the 1990s, while Ward describes the British scene more as a two-stage process, with 'music for evangelism' gradually being replaced by 'music for worship'. The 'music for evangelism' stream grew out of the attempt to modernise church for a younger audience in the light of the burgeoning post-war youth culture. Only subsequently, Ward argues, was it overtaken and almost completely replaced by 'music for worship'. He traces his history from the days of *CSSM Choruses* (1921), an important publication 'because it encouraged the development of a distinctive style of worship for children. The same principle was soon to be applied to young people.' (2005a, 23-4) However, music was seen as in need of a thorough overhaul, particularly as the emphasis in the 1960s was on evangelism, so that evangelicals could seize the opportunities afforded by the rise of the Coffee Bar (*Ibid.,* 28). From this scene the *Youth Praise* songbooks emerged, full of songs of testimony designed for a good sing-along, as well as a proliferation of gospel beat groups and singer-songwriters, and churches which were more youth savvy began to think about how more contemporary music styles might be introduced into their life, even if merely through youth groups and occasional 'youth services'. The shift from music which tried to sell a more modern version of Christianity to music used for worship happened, according to Ward, through a series of significant movements and events, as different forces came into play one after another. He suggests that it was the 1970s Jesus Movement from Western USA which really forged the links between rock music and charismatic spirituality, and that the 1971 'Festival of Light' and the visits of American evangelist Arthur Blessitt effectively brought this movement to the UK[18]. Then the musical *Come Together*, which came to Britain in 1973, was important because with the live performances and the top-selling recording it made 'overtly charismatic' worship, along with personal prayer ministry, much more accessible to large numbers of people, in a gentle non-Pentecostal way. This practice of prayer ministry, the invitation to people to come to receive prayer and laying on of hands for healing or other blessing, during or after worship, has become very popular in charismatic churches, and particularly within our two networks. Then came the festivals, with Greenbelt leading the way for its larger competitor *Spring Harvest*. Along with the publication of the first volume of *Songs of Fellowship* in 1979, songs for worship, and usually charismatic worship, became universally available. Ward suggests that Graham Kendrick became a key figure, a singer-songwriter who had started on the evangelistic folk music scene, but who, after experiencing a charismatic 'baptism in the Spirit' began his transformation into what many would describe as the doyen of worship-leading. Kendrick tells us that before that

> we knew almost nothing about praise and worship, and the 'freest' we ever got was when in the Young People's Fellowship we would have sing-song. This consisted of calling out the numbers of our favourite songs in the songbook and singing them one after the other, with little regard for anything except each person getting his or her favourite in before someone else suggested a song that you hated! (Kendrick, 1984, 86)

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[18] Blessitt's website is: https://blessitt.com/ [Accessed: 17 May 2023].

His *Make Way* materials were significant in that they combined worship and evangelism: the albums in the series combined 'Songs of Preparation' – worship materials for Christians, with 'Songs for the Street' – accessible songs of proclamation, evangelism and spiritual warfare, which were used in the context of 'prayer walking', the practice of walking or marching around the streets, often around areas which were perceived to be in particular spiritual darkness (see Dawson, 1989, Kendrick and Houghton, 1990). Finally the arrival in the UK of the Vineyard, which will be considered shortly, took music for worship to a new level.

But underneath these trends, which of course provided wonderful marketing opportunities for the recording and publishing companies, was a deeper shift. The way in which Christians encountered God was changing. Ward suggests that

> One way to express the importance of singing is to compare charismatic Christianity with other traditions in the Christian church. For the Roman Catholic, the sacraments and, particularly, the Mass, is the central act of worship. The sacraments are a means of grace. In Catholic theology God meets the worshipper in the bread and wine of the communion service. In charismatic worship the songs function in a very similar way as the means of encounter with God. For the churches of the Reformation the ministry of the word has replaced the centrality of the Catholic Mass. Here God comes to the worshipper through the reading of Scripture and through the preaching of the gospel. These churches of 'the word' locate the presence of God in these acts of witness and proclamation … This means that as the Mass is for Catholics and the sermon is for Protestants, so the singing of songs is for charismatics. (*Op. cit.,* 199)

For completeness it could be suggested that those from the other main wing of the Church of England, the Liberals, might well find that the place of encounter was less in services in church and more in service in the community, at the foodbank, in the faces of the poor, or in fractious local council meetings. The problem which this thesis will identify, though, with charismatic worship, is the wholesale dropping of the other modes of worship in favour of an exclusive diet of worship songs, when it ought surely to be the case that God is encountered through all, not just one. It is also true that the shift from 'music for evangelism' to 'music for worship' can run into difficulties when worship music is still thought to be useful and appropriate for evangelism. Both the *HTB* and the *NW* networks are heirs of this tradition.

New Wine from the Vineyard

Whilst the streams mentioned so far have profoundly affected many Anglican churches, there is one final influence significant for this present study. The *HTB* and *NW* networks were gestated by liturgical, charismatic and ecumenical renewal, but birthed by the Vineyard as anti-liturgical streams. Unless the overwhelming significance of this movement on Anglican congregations is grasped, it will be impossible adequately to understand current praxis.

John Wimber's first British national conference was held at Westminster Central Hall in 1984. He came primarily to teach on 'Signs and Wonders and Church Growth', the conviction that in the NT it was the miraculous, often healings, which drew significant numbers to people to faith in Christ. But a consequence of this and further conferences was that British Christians encountered a new style and philosophy of charismatic worship. These emphases from Wimber gave shape and direction to two local churches which became the twin foci for the two networks of this study.

The Vineyard Story

To understand Vineyard ecclesiology and worship, and their influence on British Anglicanism, will of course necessitate the exploration of some background, and the influences which formed John Wimber's Christian life[19]. Particularly the Vineyard theology of worship requires some examination. As a multi-instrumentalist Wimber was a member in the 1960s of a band called 'The Righteous Brothers', and was converted to Christianity in 1963 in an Evangelical Quaker Church in Southern California, at the time when the Jesus Movement was seeing thousands of ex-hippies and rock musicians coming to Christ. After a Biblical Studies course he was ordained within Quakerism. As a very new Christian John would meet in a homegroup of a Vineyard church led by Kenn Gulliksen. He found that as they sung simple intimate songs he was able to feel the presence of the Spirit among them. Wimber began to work as a church growth consultant, and was given an adjunct chair at Fuller Seminary, Pasadena. He led a Bible Study group himself, in order to test some of the material he was teaching at Fuller, but differences of style soon emerged, and his group was asked to leave the church. He found a home next in the Calvary Chapel movement, which was a major player in the Jesus Movement, and he was soon leading a local church. Under his leadership the congregation were again perceived as being too charismatic for this more conservative 'denomination'. Paradoxically, Wimber had begun his Christian life as a Conservative Evangelical dispensationalist, but gradually came to see the powerlessness of much church activity, and longed to see more of the New Testament power of God in action (Wimber and Springer, 1985, xix). On Mothers' Day 1978 he invited ex-Calvary Chapel evangelist Lonnie Frisbee to speak. Higgins comments:

> At the conclusion of his message, Lonnie uttered a now famous invocation: 'The church has for years grieved the Holy Spirit. But He's getting over it! Come, Holy Spirit!' According to eyewitnesses, most present were overcome and exhibited various manifestations under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Though initially uncertain, Wimber embraced the event and a great emphasis on the charismatic. (2012, 220).

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[19] See Jackson and Di Sabatino (1999).

The fallout from this service did not become fully apparent for another two years, at which point a group of Calvary Chapel pastors, concerned about the over-charismatic manifestations in Wimber's church, suggested Wimber would be more at home in the charismatic Vineyard movement. Kenn Gulliksen, who was present, agreed that this could solve the issues, and so welcomed him. However, he had another motive: he recognised gifts in Wimber which would allow him to hand over leadership of the whole Vineyard Church to him. He saw in Wimber the perfect denominational administrator and leader who would enable him to be freed to pursue his own calling to be a church planter. Within weeks Wimber had accepted the invitation to head up the denomination. A small collection of local churches was about to became an influential movement.

In terms of worship there was, therefore, nothing liturgical anywhere in Wimber's background: music was his life, and it became the life of his churches. In fact his one experience of liturgical worship was highly negative: after a rough patch in their marriage his wife Carol, a non-practising Catholic, decided it would be good to have a renewal and blessing of their wedding vows in a local Catholic church. Gunstone (1996, 12) comments: 'It was not a happy experience ... the service was incomprehensible to [John], though it provided him with vivid illustrations on how *not* to conduct worship!' Wimber himself describes his first visit to St Andrew's Chorleywood, and the sense that the ministry of the Holy Spirit had somehow to break through the Anglican liturgy and church expectations, even in a church with a reputation for being thoroughly charismatic. In the end he seemed a bit surprised that 'it was the most powerful meeting outside of the Vineyard Christian Fellowship gatherings that I had conducted' (1985, 148). Wimber did later, however, admit elsewhere to a perhaps somewhat grudging appreciation of more liturgical styles of worship:

> One of the things I've really enjoyed is when I was travelling a lot I worshipped in lots of different kinds of worship [spaces]. The high churches … offered a lot to me. I enjoyed the worship of the Lutherans and the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians and the Catholics … it wouldn't have been enough for my personal taste to have ended there, but I liked the taste I got in it. It was a nice place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there. (Quoted from a sermon at Anaheim Vineyard in Park *et al.*, 2017, 93)

A more positive influence, though, was his Quakerism, and in contrast to the more usual loud and extravagant American Pentecostal style of worship which abounded in the USA at the time, John placed a high value on gentleness and a profound aversion to any kind of manipulation. It is almost certainly this more laid-back feel which endeared him to understated British Anglicans. When he became the leader of the whole Vineyard movement this quest to feel and to see the Spirit's presence became a foundational purpose and value in worship. But underneath this praxis was a carefully thought-out theology, which was made explicit in Britain at the Brighton Worship Conference in 1989. Whilst still utilising contemporary worship songs rather than traditional hymns, a diet to which British charismatics had by now become well used, the musical style was what might be described as

'West Coast soft rock', the instrumentation was acoustic guitar-led, perhaps with some drums, keys and possibly bass in the background. The exclusively male worship leaders were often backed by a couple of female backing vocalists. Hammonds, horn sections and lead guitars were notable by their absence, and the music was all about the vocals: there were no solo sections nor displays of instrumental improvisatory virtuosity. The songs ran seamlessly for up to 45 minutes, gradually becoming slower and quieter. Finally there would be a pregnant pause, possibly punctuated by some prophetic words, and then the worship was over, and the service would move on to the teaching section. After that, and often, although not always, in response to the preaching, there would be a time of prayer ministry, when the Holy Spirit would be invited and various manifestations of his presence would ensue as people received prayer.

There was something about this style of worship which touched many British Christians deeply. Mike Pilavachi, youth leader at Chorleywood and subsequently leader of the Soul Survivor youth church in Watford, comments:

> What stood out most was the worship; it totally unhinged me. I spent a whole part of the week just crying and sniffing my way through songs like 'Isn't he beautiful?' and 'Hold me, Lord in your arms'. Many of the songs were incredibly simple, and yet totally intimate. As I worshipped, I found healing for my soul. Intimacy set me free. (Pilavachi and Borlase, 1999, xvii)

This basic model remains the worship-style of choice in many non-Vineyard churches to this day, as well as throughout the Vineyard denomination worldwide. To the uninitiated it might appear to be the same as any 'happy clappy' charismatic worship, but a deeper exploration will reveal that there is a distinctive and deliberate philosophy behind this model, which differs significantly from that of other charismatic groupings. A key source for understanding this model can be found in Park *et al.* (2017). Wimber died in November 1997 after a battle with cancer and heart disease. His legacy lives on, however, and at the time of writing the Vineyard has 620 congregations in the USA, and 2500 worldwide including 145 in Great Britain. It is estimated that the denomination has over 300,000 members worldwide[20]. In addition his inspiration lies behind the *NW* and *HTB* networks. All the *HTB* churches, and most of the *NW* churches are part of the Church of England, whilst espousing Vineyard values and praxis, so it is easy to see just how influential the Vineyard has been on the British charismatic/evangelical scene, as well as being very challenging to Anglican ethos.

These streams of renewal, therefore, flowed together to change the face of British charismatic Anglicanism. We have seen in each successive movement a lessening of the grip of a set liturgical form for worship, and the growth of the idea that mission and healthy discipleship can best be facilitated by simplification, and by the removal of as much formal liturgy as possible. But the story is

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[20] https://www.vineyard.org/ [Accessed 3 January 2022].

not yet complete. The landscape through which a river flows will do a great deal to affect how and where it flows, and will of course itself be changed by the rivers. It is necessary briefly to examine the world into which these different movements were born, and to see how they interacted with that landscape, and the effects on the growing anti-liturgical mindset in many churches.

Culture Change - Postmodernity

Deal and Kennedy (1982) proposed that culture is 'the way we do things around here'. Culture change therefore occurs when we begin to do things differently. During the period we have considered there was a tectonic shift taking place: the change from modernity to postmodernity or late modernity. The modernist metanarrative which had held sway since the Enlightenment was breaking down, which demanded new ways of doing things, based on new understandings about how the world works. Three main groups of scholars have written about this cultural shift. Some, such as Callinicos (1991) and Calhoun (1995) downplayed the idea of culture change, and emphasised evolution and continuity with the past and with modernity. Others, represented by Giddens (1990), Bauman (2000) and Castells (1996) recognised that there has been a culture shift, but regard it as merely a development of modernism into a later phase, while the third group, notably Lyotard (1984) and Baudrillard (1984, 1994) make a stronger case for the death of modernism and its replacement by something very different. But it is commonly agreed that in postmodernity we have the destabilising of 'truths' which have formed the basis of society during the centuries of modernity, the disappearance of a metanarrative which gives the overarching meaning to life, and instead the '*bricolage'* or 'Pick'n'mix' approach which builds truth together from fragments quarried from the past and disconnected from their original *Sitz-im-Leben* (Woodward and Pattison, 2000, 106). Lyotard (1984) explains the culture clearly: 'Simplifying to the extreme, I define the postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives.' Truth is relative, and different things might be true for different people. It is beyond the scope of this study to give a detailed analysis of postmodernity, but it is important to note the *mood* of this new culture, and in particular five characteristics which have enabled the streams to flow faster, and which have facilitated the praxis of the churches under examination. Lyotard's comment above neatly sums up perhaps the most important characteristic of the postmodern condition: the death of metanarratives. Different cultures at different times have told themselves great overarching stories which explained everything, but every few hundred years those metanarratives die because people cease to believe them. The Enlightenment narrative of the progress and evolution of the human race through science and technology was arguably dealt a death blow by the sinking of the 'unsinkable' *Titanic* in 1912, followed by the slaughter of World War I. Like all cultures before it, postmodernity began to create its own new metanarrative, but with a difference: the metanarrative of postmodernity is that there is no metanarrative. There is no taken-

for-granted story which explains everything: rather, all are free to create their own meaning. With this refusal to accept a metanarrative comes a second characteristic of postmodernity: a great suspicion of anyone who claims to tell us that there is after all a metanarrative, and, by extension, anyone who tells us what we ought to think or how we ought to behave. Truth for any individuals is what they believe to be true, and anyone else is free to believe what is true for them. But for anyone to try to foist their truth on someone else is 'intolerant', the greatest insult in a postmodern world. While the churches of this study mostly hold on to the metanarrative of orthodox evangelical Christianity, their worship praxis demonstrates a profound rebellion against established authority and received praxis. Certainties become relative, rules are deliberately flouted, and unconnected things are placed side by side simply in order to see how it feels, since there is no authoritative 'right' way of doing things. The term *bricolage* has been used for this desire to collect diverse items, lift them from their original backgrounds and combine them together into something which deliberately does not need to have a larger meaning. In the world of alt:worship, (short for 'alternative worship', a movement from the 90s which emphasised decentralised and multisensory worship[21]) the term 'curating' is commonly used for the putting together of an act of worship, a significant term because it suggests items collected from a range of places to form a museum experience:

> Many of the juxtapositions occurring in services have been carefully planned, others have simply been stumbled on – some have happened for some worshippers and not for others. All have had to interact with the kaleidoscope of experience and attitude inside people's souls. (Baker, Gay and Brown, 2003, xvi. See also Baker, 2012)

Whilst this *bricolage* can create some fascinating art and worship, it is easy to see how it reflects the values above of dispensing with the big story, and the rejection of any authority which seeks to tell us how things *ought* to be. Thus the need to follow a particular liturgical form or structure gives way to the desire to create something novel each time we gather. Anything liturgical is seen as authoritative, fixed and samey, and therefore outdated and harmful to mission and true worship. Similarly a denominational ethos or set of rules are there to be flouted if they do not fit with our personal version of the 'truth'.

Allied to this is the rise of consumerism, again a vast and far-reaching subject. The term is used in several different ways. It began to be used of the right of protection for those who consume goods and services provided by others[22], but has since been used to describe a set of rights, and, at a deeper level, to define the culture of buying and using, of acquisitiveness and greed. Human worth is measured in what we own rather than in character. Aaker and Day (1982, 8) trace the roots of consumerism to a growing disillusionment with the companies from which goods and services are

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[21] See Baker (2012), Baker, Gay and Brown (2003) and Ward (ed. 2008).
[22] In a speech by John F Kennedy in 1962. The text is at http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9108 [Accessed 28th Sept 2019].

brought. This results both in the need for rights, but also more subtly in the sense that people ought to be able to get everything in life exactly as they would like it to be. Alan Storkey suggests that

> It is possible to think of consumption as an expression of individualism and self-worship. We could believe that the primary religious focus of modern life is the ego and see consumption as one of the ways in which the self gathers worshippers - my car, my house, my computer. Consumption can be seen as the means whereby the individual realises the wishes and ambitions of the self as end.

However,

> although it contains important insights, I think [this view] has been overtaken. In the dynamics of our culture, consumption has now become the dominant faith and individualism, together with other subordinate commitments, serves it. Consumption is collectivist-individualist, nationalist, internationalist, the healer, the entertainer, the lover, the spiritual, the feeder and the consolation. It is the chief rival to God in our culture. (in Moritz and Bartholomew, 2000, 100)

What has been said about postmodernity and the death of metanarratives notwithstanding, Susan White affirms:

> If there is any overarching metanarrative that purports to explain reality in the late 20th century, it is surely the narrative of the free-market economy. In the beginning of this narrative is the self-made, self-sufficient human being. At the end of this narrative is the big house, the big car, and the expensive clothes. In the middle is the struggle for success, the greed, the getting-and-spending in a world in which there is no such thing as a free lunch. Most of us have made this so thoroughly 'our story' that we are hardly aware of its influence. (in Moritz and Bartholomew, 2000, 2)

Many commentators describe consumerism in terms of broken promises. Thus Craig Bartholomew:

> a consumerist culture is one in which ironically *needs are unlimited and insatiable.* Ironically, because consumerism promises to satisfy our needs in an unprecedented way, … its continuance depends on that satisfaction never actually being achieved. (in Moritz and Bartholomew, 2000, 9)

The effects of this characteristic of postmodernity on worship are clear. One Anglican Eucharistic Prayer[23] reminds us that 'it is our duty and our joy' to give thanks and praise to God. In the past 'duty' was the key word here, with 'joy' as an added advantage should it be felt, but consumerism has taught us that joy must come first, and to do anything merely out of a sense of duty is wrong. So worship-leaders (or 'curators') have as their prime task pleasing people. We sit lightly to the past and its inherited traditions, although we are willing to quarry around for bits and pieces which might feel quaint or slightly chic if we were to use them today. We expect everything to be exactly as we feel it ought to be, but we maintain a sense of irritation if the our leaders (or indeed the suppliers at the Liturgical Commission) don't give us exactly what we want to consume, or if they do not seem to be listening to our needs. And we now have the technology to pick'n'mix these fragments and to produce customised and instantly disposable texts. If it is both 'our duty and our joy' to worship, the

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[23] Prayer A from the *Common Worship Main Volume* (2000, 184)

pendulum has swung almost to the 'joy' end of the arc, with duty being seen as an outdated concept. We have a divine right to what will make us feel good. For many, what makes them feel good is singing worship songs.

The final characteristic of postmodernity which is relevant for our subject is the belief that feeling good about something is the greatest criterion for its value. There is no great overarching story other than what I choose to believe. Any authorities who try to tell me otherwise are suspect. Truth is relative rather than fixed. I have both the freedom and the technology to customise worship to that which works for me. And above all I feel I have a divine right to it that way, and no dutiful obligation to endure it if it isn't that way. Therefore my own feelings and experiences become the most important arbiters. It is this mood and this desire for emotional experience which makes people feel good, at the expense of a more mature understanding that there is often greater value in things which we do not find instantly appealing. But given the culture in which it was formed, it would be surprising if this were not so to some degree. There is much more which could be said about the postmodern condition, but it is worth noting that the whole way in which culture works is that we are immersed in it. We can no more complain about it than a fish can complain about the water in which it swims. It is this landscape which has helped to shape the direction of flow of our rivers, and the praxis of the *NW* and *HTB* churches.

The Renewal of Anglican Liturgy

Fenwick and Spinks suggested that alongside the human activities of renewal there was also the work of the Spirit as things seemed spontaneously to bubble up (1995, 110-12). Six streams of renewal have been examined, along with the landscape through which they flowed, and at least some of those streams seemed to spring up spontaneously with little in terms of human planning. But alongside these rivers was a parallel canal, dug by humans, as the Church of England sought deliberately to update its liturgical provision in order to reflect the changing times in which people lived and worshipped. Clearly this revision flows out of, and reflects, the cultural changes which have already been described, and was affected deeply by the six movements which our streams represent, but it is perhaps more helpful to think of this as a parallel piece of work by the Church of England.

Liturgical Revision

The standard text for the Church of England remains the 1662 *BCP*, and for nearly 300 years this changed minimally. Since the time of its first predecessor in 1549 any liturgical change had required

the assent of Parliament, one of the implications of being the established Church in England. Although there have been various attempts to make changes to the *BCP*, notably the abortive attempt in 1928 when revised texts failed to convince the government, liturgy seemed to have become static. However a revolution began in the 1960s, facilitated by the Prayer Book (Alternative and Other Services Measure) 1965 and the later Church of England (Worship and Doctrine) Measure 1974, which together devolved full power over church worship initially to the Church Assembly, and then, from 1970, to the newly constituted General Synod. These two pieces of legislation made the process of liturgical renewal much less cumbersome but much more open to debate, particularly in the House of Laity, and increased the sense of ownership by the Church as a whole. It is an important principle of this legislation that 'alternative' texts are alternative to provisions within the *BCP*, whereas the use of material which has no earlier equivalent is at the discretion of the officiant. This period provides a convenient starting point for our exploration because the first stirrings of the British charismatic movement came during this time. However, a clearer starting point might be the point in December 1955 when the pre-General Synod Convocation appointed the first Liturgical Commission 'to consider questions of a liturgical character submitted to them by the archbishops of Canterbury and York; and to report thereon to the archbishops' (Cuming, 1969, 254). The Commission's first major report, published in 1958 as a resource document for the Lambeth Conference of that year, was *Prayer Book Revision in the Church of England.* By 1966 the new legislation for authorisation enabled most of the proposed but failed revisions of 1928 to become legal as the *Alternative Services: First Series* (Cuming, 1969, 263; Buchanan, 2006, 32). Fairly quickly, in 1967/8, further revision led to *Alternative Services Series II.*

Whilst these revisions of the *BCP* trimmed it of many rarely used sections, and changed the order, notably of the service of Holy Communion, into one which seemed more logical of flow, they maintained the traditional language of earlier texts. But to begin to address God as 'You' rather than 'Thou' became the subject of a 1968 report by the Liturgical Commission, *Modern Liturgical Texts.* Some key texts, such as the Lord's Prayer, the Creeds and the *Gloria in Excelsis,* were translated into contemporary English. The road towards *Series 3* services had opened, and they were finally authorised during the years from 1973 to 1979, the first rites to use exclusively contemporary language, although the continued use of some traditional language texts was permitted. Along with these texts came a new contemporary translation of the Psalter, which eventually became *The Liturgical Psalter* found in the *Alternative Service Book 1980 (ASB)* (Buchanan, 2006, 32-3).

In 1973, a working party considered the need for a comprehensive new Book, which would provide a complete alternative to the *BCP*, rather than simply a series of printed booklets for specific services. This group reported to General Synod in 1976, and final approval for the new Book was granted in November 1979, allowing just one year for production of the physical copies (Buchanan, 2006, 33-4).

As the name suggested, the *Alternative Service Book 1980* was meant to provide an alternative to the comprehensive *BCP* for official and legal Anglican worship, although the fact that it was authorised only for 10 years suggests that it was only ever intended to be an interim provision. In fact the newly-elected Synod voted in 1985 to extend its authorisation for a further 10 years, until the end of December 1999. (Hebblethwaite, 2005, 4) It became apparent very quickly that the *ASB* had not gone far enough in liturgical revision. In particular three further agenda began to make themselves felt, those of seasonal variation, inclusive language, and even more accessible language. Earey comments

> The model of 'one size fits all' was already beginning to feel outdated. In particular, two sorts of variety were sought – seasonal variety and variety of provision for different contexts. Almost as soon as the ASB was published there followed a series of further materials, some official, some unofficial, but all responding to the felt need for more (2013, 5).

This desire for more personal choice is an integral feature of postmodernity. Since 1976 the Liturgical Commission had been working on three further draft rites which were not part of the *ASB. Ministry to the Sick* was authorised in 1982 as a separate booklet, but rites for *The Reconciliation of a Penitent* and *The Blessing of Oils* were never authorised (Hebblethwaite, 2004, 4-5.) This raised the question of authorisation: a legal opinion was that the *Reconciliation of a Penitent* rite was essentially an 'alternative' to parts of the *Visitation of the Sick* texts in the *BCP* and therefore required the full authorisation of Synod, which it failed to achieve. This question sharpened as the Commission began fairly quickly after the *ASB*'s publication to produce new texts aimed at the enrichment of seasonal worship. *Lent, Holy Week and Easter (LHWE,* 1986) and *The Promise of His Glory (PoG,* 1991), contained respectively provision for the periods around Easter and from All Saints to Candlemas, and *Enriching the Christian Year* (*ECY,* 1993) sought to provide material for both Saints' days and also for themes such as 'Creation' and 'Justice'. Whilst this latter volume was never commended by the House of Bishops, the fact that it was written as a piece of private enterprise by Liturgical Commission members gave it an air of officialdom which led to its wide usage. Because these seasonal provisions were not directly 'alternatives' to anything found in the *BCP*, they needed no authorisation by the Bishops and could be used at the discretion of local clergy. In fact out in the parishes the rise of ecumenism meant that there was widespread borrowing from other church traditions, particularly from the Roman Catholic Church, and the Commission sought, as has always been its policy, to provide rites which could be used across the Anglican spectrum without strong 'party' emphases or doctrinal issues which might be perceived by some as heterodox. So the new services and resources which were produced, whilst not needing authorisation, did, however, need some kind of 'quality control' and official status. There was reluctance to get them 'authorised', as they did not strictly need it, and also because if the Bishops authorised a particular way of celebrating, for example, Good Friday, this would imply that any other ways of handling it would be illegal, and discretion and variety would be removed, the very opposite of what the books were trying to achieve. This conundrum was resolved by the Bishops'

invention of a new category, that of 'commended' texts. *LHWE* was commended for use from January 1986, with *PoG* following five years later.

Celebrating Common Prayer (*CCP*, 1992), a production of the Franciscan Order, appeared to fill the gap left by the *ASB*'s limited provision for daily offices, and became very popular among clergy and others whose rule of life included daily liturgical prayer, despite a somewhat idiosyncratic and complicated approach to the liturgical seasons. Like *ECY* it never achieved official Anglican authorisation or commendation, but its foreword written by George Carey, then Archbishop of Canterbury, gave it a similar aura of respectability. It was to become an important source for the later *Common Worship: Daily Prayer* book.

Earey makes the important point that

> variety, and the complexity which it brings, did not begin with *Common Worship* – it was already there
> ... *Common Worship* did not invent complexity and variety, but it gave it a common cover, and common
> name and a common logo, and it is this which makes *Common Worship feel* so much more complicated
> than what went before it.
>
> The truth is that a Church which was getting used to this level of variety was not easily going to be
> able to put the genie back into the one-volume bottle. (2013, 7)

The other key report for our purposes was *Faith in the City* (1985a), the report to General Synod of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas. This was one response of the Church of England to the accusations that it was middle-class, the 'Tory Party at prayer', and out of touch with working class people in England. Whilst much of the material forms a sociological analysis of the life and issues of those living in Urban Priority Areas (UPAs), the key section for our purposes (*Ibid.,* 134-7) deals with worship, and calls, among other things, for greater inculturation of the church's worship, greater affirmation of the church as 'family', more concrete and less abstract language, a greater sense of involvement, a willingness to see people dip in and out of worship at their whim, more accessible service cards rather than heavyweight books, the creation of outdoor liturgies (for example 'Way of the Cross' taken onto the streets of the East End of London), and the ability to set dreams and aspirations alongside the harsh reality of people's lives. This report led to calls for simpler and less abstract language for worship, calls which were backed up from a different direction with the publication in 1993 of *Children in the Way*, a report from the General Synod Board of Education. A key recommendation of this report was that 'the Board of Education and the Liturgical Commission should examine the need for new liturgies to serve all-age worship, and in particular a form of Eucharist suitable for when children are present.' (*Ibid.,* 53) New 'Eucharistic Prayers suitable for use on occasions when a significant number of children are present or when it is otherwise pastorally appropriate to meet the needs of children present' were finally published in 2012,

although we still await a distinctive 'form of Eucharist'[24]. It is significant that what was called for at this stage was some 'new liturgies', not fewer liturgies, or a relaxation of the Canons which made liturgy non-negotiable.

In these and many other areas, therefore, the *ASB* itself was soon found wanting. A more complete revision was inevitable, but this meant a new approach to liturgical construction itself. GS 698 *The Worship of the Church* (1985b) was the first report to use the term 'Directory' for this new direction. The word was used in two different but related ways. The understanding was that providing texts was only one small part of the liturgical enterprise, but that the real key was in how that worship was led. So began a new emphasis on 'best practice' in worship leading, and the need for some coaching notes in what had become a much more complicated task than merely reading the words from the *BCP*. But along with this came the realisation that there was a need for new materials on which this best practice might be exercised. Thus 'it was ... perceived by 1986 that the successor to *ASB* might have more of the character of a directory, leaving much wider scope for local initiatives within laid-down guidelines and key texts.' (Hebblethwaite, 2004, 11) This paved the way for what became the Service of the Word (*SoW*) and its resources in *Patterns for Worship*. The concerns of the UPAs in *Faith in the City* and the more suburban 'Family Service' movement combined to fuel the desire for simpler, more customisable forms of worship. The first edition of *Patterns for Worship* published in 1989 was a paper-bound General Synod report (GS 898) which contained nothing that was authorised or commended, but which quickly became widely used around the parishes. Clearly this approach was meeting a need, and a second edition, published in 1995, included some authorised texts for which the Commission had argued in GS 1037 and 1038, namely forms of penitence and affirmations of faith. These texts did not just bring more prayers to the Church, but also some new approaches, notably Kyrie Confessions and shorter 'Affirmations of Faith' alongside the Churches' historic Creeds (Hebblethwaite, 2004, 12.) A third edition, *New Patterns for Worship* (*NPfW*), was published in 2002, during the *CW* era, which brought it into line with the *CW* house style. In the same way material from the three seasonal books was brought together, added to, and brought into line with *CW* style in *Times and Seasons*, which was duly commended and published in 2006, followed in 2008 by the *Festivals* volume, with provision for Saints' Days and similar occasions. Both these books, in line with the comments on *LHWE* and *PoG* above, contain a mixture of fully worked services and other resource materials.

By 1996 the Synod had come to realise that unlike the *ASB*, *CW* was not going to be contained within one volume. The first volume in the *CW* family appeared in 1997 as *The Christian Year: Calendar, Lectionary and Collects,* three years before the launch of the main volume which was

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[24] The text is at https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/texts/additional-eucharistic-prayers.aspx [Accessed 25 August 2016].

authorised from 2000, when the *ASB*'s authorisation expired. At the time of writing the *CW* corpus contains nine key volumes (plus numerous other Presidents' editions and congregational offprints) and a comprehensive website from which texts and coaching notes could be freely downloaded. It had now become clear that the task of planning and leading worship is far more complex than during the era of the *BCP*. Once again, though, it is easy to perceive the link between liturgical renewal and the postmodern condition.

For the purposes of this project it has been important in this brief survey only to concentrate on rites and texts mainly concerned with Sunday acts of worship. However there was clearly a considerable amount of other work done during this period on different aspects of the Church's worship: the Daily Office, Initiation and Ordination rites, Calendar, Lectionary, Collects, and even the Lord's Prayer itself were the subjects of repeated debates, revisions and Synodical votes. This period in English Anglican liturgical development is well documented, although some books only take us part-way through the story. Key texts would include Cuming (1969), Jasper (1989), and Perham (1989, 1991, 1993). More subjective views of the machinations of the Liturgical Commission and General Synod are to found in Buchanan (2006) and Hebblethwaite (2004), which may be compared to the official Synod report GS Misc 364 *The Worship of the Church* (1991). Contemporary accounts of the regular developments in liturgical revision can be found in the archives of *News of Liturgy* (1975 – 2003) edited by Buchanan[25], and numerous Grove Books from the period give eye-witness accounts of the deliberations of the Commission along with commentaries on the emerging texts. Particularly useful among these are Buchanan (1973, 1974, 1976, 1978, 1984). A retrospective view ten years on from the advent of *Common Worship* may be found in Papadopulos (2011).

Five key values

Underlying all this detail, is it possible to identify the principles which drove liturgical revision?. This is important because all this work appears to have been done in order to enhance the worshipping life of the Church of England, but it is this very work which is being ignored by the *NW* and *HTB* churches. Whilst at least some of the values which have driven this revision would be welcomed in such churches, they have chosen not to take advantage of these changes. As a reflection on the material above, it is worth mentioning five values appear to have driven Anglican liturgical revision, and which one would think ought to chime in with the values of our networks. Whilst neither General Synod nor the Liturgical Commission have specifically debated or articulated a set of values

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[25] These archives can be accessed at https://grovebooks.co.uk/pages/news-of-liturgy [Accessed 15 August 2022].

for their work of revision towards *CW*[26], these values could be seen as a useful reflection on their work.

Faithfulness

Throughout the process of revision there has clearly been a reverence for the past, and a desire to improvise upon it faithfully. There is no sense of a desire to scrap everything and start from scratch, doing it properly this time. One significant manifestation of this came with the revision of the Sunday collects for *CW*, largely undertaken by the late Bishop Michael Perham. They were initially very unpopular in the parishes, since they were felt to be too close to the outdated *BCP* collects, so a set of alternatives was commissioned by General Synod in July 2001, merely months after the publication of *CW*. However these collects remain 'alternative' to the original set, which are recognised to have strong resonances with worshippers who have grown used to them perhaps over decades of use. This ability to move fairly quickly, and yet to retain what is felt to be valuable from the past, has often characterised Anglican liturgical renewal. Anglicans are aware of and value their heritage.

Accessibility

No doubt in line with the emphases of the Liturgical Movement and the Family Service Movement, the direction of revision has been not so much simplicity (although that desire has been present) but rather accessibility. The overlong passages from *BCP* have disappeared in favour of more compact and economical texts, and of course contemporary language has replaced the Elizabethan English of earlier prayer books. The leadership of worship is no longer expected to come from one solitary ordained minister, and there is scope for a variety of voices, with key texts reserved for the president alone. Under the heading of accessibility must also come the desire that our worship should be missionary and in particular evangelistic. Earey and Headley (2002) suggest a helpful grid which explains the relationship between liturgical worship and mission, two partners which are not always seen as belonging helpfully together.

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[26] From a private e-mail from a then Commission member.

Variety

There has been the desire, driven to some degree by the postmodern agenda, for a much greater variety of texts, rather than the lack of variation in *BCP* and the very limited approach of *ASB*. In fact there is such a welter of possibilities in the *CW* corpus that there has been the need for simple guides, such as Earey (2014) and Tovey (2008), as well as many coaching guides and commentaries. Earey notes that

> The first volumes of *Common Worship*, which came out in 2000, took up half a shelf, but some have been superseded and all have been followed by more parts of the library, so the 'full set' has been completed only in recent years. How is anyone expected to keep up with what there is, let alone know where to look in the library to find the answers? The result is that, unfortunately, '*Common Worship'* has become, for some in the Church of England, a byword for wordiness and complexity. The sheer amount of material is seen not as an abundant resource, but as a complicating constraint. (2014, xii)

It is one purpose of this thesis to explore to what degree the possibilities for variety in *CW* are taken up by *HTB* and *NW* churches, and whether the sheer complexity of the task of planning an act of worship has become counterproductive, leading to somewhat monochrome and uncreative worship.

Richness

One of the reasons for this increase in variety is the desire for language which, while remaining accessible, is rich in meaning and nuance. To a high degree the compilers of *CW* used something of a postmodern *bricolage*, and borrowed texts from other ecumenical partners where texts were felt to be suitably poetic of rich in allusions. There was also a much greater use of biblical texts, for example the use of these two passages from Hosea 6 and Luke 15 which form the basis for prayers of confession:

> **Lord our God,**
> **in our sin we have avoided your call.**
> **Our love for you is like a morning cloud,**
> **like the dew that goes away early.**
> **Have mercy on us;**
> **deliver us from judgement;**
> **bind up our wounds**
> **and revive us;**
> **in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

> **Father,**
> **we have sinned against heaven and against you.**
> **We are not worthy to be called your children.**
> **We turn to you again.**

Have mercy on us,
bring us back to yourself
as those who once were dead
but now have life through Christ our Lord. Amen. (*NPfW* 2002, 85, 88)

This richness of expression is a glorious opportunity to allow liturgy to be lifted above its hostile caricature of 'vain repetition', and to speak afresh, and to allow worshippers to speak afresh, through different words, although there are still some anchor points which mean that each act of worship is not a completely novel experience: there still is faithfulness to the tradition. Getting the right balance between what is familiar and what is novel is an important art in worship-planning, a principle which later will illustrated from the world of music. But it is worth noting that there is the possibility in liturgical worship for great variety, a truth which subverts the notion of liturgy as merely repeating the same words over and over again.

Customisability

The final important principle behind the revision which led to *CW* is the desire to allow congregations to create worship which fits with their culture and style, clearly a factor which is part of the Pick'n'Mix approach of postmodernity. This principle is worked out in two distinct ways. Firstly the creation of the *Service of the Word* as a legal form of worship means that as long as the shape or framework is loosely adhered to, actual texts can be put together at will from the directory of forms of words provided for example by *NPfW*. And secondly, the fact that *CW* texts are accessible online makes it easy for acts of worship to be constructed, copied and pasted for local use. Again, this approach subverts the view of liturgy which regards it as exactly the same thing every week, and allows more meaningful themes and journeys to be explored.

In summary, then, these five principles which could be said to summarise the Church's canal digging and the production of *CW*, should mean that this renewed liturgy of the Church of England works well in a postmodern world where the Church has a heart for mission and discipleship. Part of the purpose of this study is to explore the degree to which *HTB* and *NW* churches are using the opportunities it provides, and what riches they might be ignoring. So by what journey specifically did our two networks arrive at their current non-liturgical position?

The Backcloth – Renewed Anglican Worship

Those Anglican churches affected by charismatic renewal naturally changed in the way they worshipped. This meant that there began to be a divergence between the liturgical and the charismatic which has culminated in the emergence of the non-liturgical Anglicanism with which this study is concerned. Liturgical worship began to be supplemented with, and then increasingly replaced by, the use of short repetitive choruses or 'worship songs'. Previously 'choruses' had been used, particularly in children's ministry, to provide a simpler musical diet, where the refrains but not the verses of well-known hymns were used, as in the *CSSM Chorus Book*[27]. But with the growth of charismatic renewal the new musical genre discussed above, the 'worship song', began to come to the fore, as individuals and groups sought to express the new life they had discovered in new music. Notable and significant in this move was a musical group called 'The Fisherfolk', who hailed from the Church of the Redeemer, Houston, Texas, where the Rector, Graham Pulkingham, had seen renewal impact what British Anglicans would call a somewhat catholic parish. The new, simple and folksy worship songs were intended to compliment the liturgical worship of the church, and not to replace it. One enduring treasure from this particular stable is the *King of Glory* setting of the Mass by Pulkingham's wife Betty (1975), which demonstrates the strong link of the time between liturgical worship and the 'worship song' culture. Other pieces from this era, as popularised in three songbooks which had significant impact on the British church[28], also have a liturgical feel to them: indeed the second volume has a section of 'liturgical songs' (54-79) including introits, penitential songs, psalms and canticles, other Eucharistic texts, and settings of the Lord's Prayer. The influence at the time on British charismatic worship was highly significant. Ward (2005a, 107-42) traces the musical developments within the worship scene of the late twentieth century, and provides a thorough critique of the theology and worldview of these different songbooks.

Many would say that the zenith of the charismatic song culture came with the ministry of Graham Kendrick, whose corpus is wide, varied musically, lyrically and theologically, and hugely popular. He is often considered to be the grandfather of modern worship leading, and among his corpus are songs which could be used to function at just about every stage in the shape of an Anglican liturgical service. Indeed many parishes have used his music to do just that.

This process of movement away from the official texts of the Church towards the exclusive use of worship songs happened gradually, and the degree to which different churches made this journey, and the pace at which they made it, varied considerably. A body of popular literature from the 1970s

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[27] The first volume was published in 1921, with volumes 1, 2 and 3 being bound together as a single book in 1964.
[28] (*Sounds of Living Water* and *Fresh Sounds,* Pulkingham and Harper, 1974, 1976, and *Cry Hosanna,* Pulkingham and Farra, 1981)

and 80s, typically tells the story of a local church and its renewal. Frequently there is a chapter or two about the renewal of worship, and it is interesting that there is a high degree of agreement about how the churches in question moved into renewal. Such books would include Bennett (1970), Carey (1984), Higton (1985), Pulkingham (1973a, b), Urquhart (1974), Walker (1982), and Warren (1989). In addition some autobiographical material gives information about worship renewal, particularly Saunders and Sansom (1992) in their biography of David Watson, and David Pytches' autobiography (2002). Other material, from the point of view of the emerging House Church movement, is highly critical of Anglican liturgical worship, notably Bowater (1986), Fellingham (1987) and Wallis (1981). Another important source may be found in three official reports on charismatic renewal from the General Synod, those edited by Buchanan (1981), Bax (1986), and the Doctrine Commission (1991).

There is in fact a great deal of common experience in the lives of those who went on to lead their churches in charismatic renewal and increasingly non-liturgical worship. The general trajectory in the stories of local church renewal is of a church leader, often after a period of spiritual dryness, having an experience of the Holy Spirit variously called 'Baptism in the Spirit', being 'filled with the Spirit' or 'renewed by the Spirit'. This renewal may have come through a conference, through personal ministry from a charismatic leader or friend, or directly from God. Colin Urquhart, of St Hugh's Luton, begins with the realisation that he really is a 'Son of God' (Urquhart, 1974, 9), and Warren (1989, 21) tells of his frustration of feeling as a preacher that he had 'nothing to set before them'. Bennett shared this sense of personal dryness, and its effect on those to whom he was supposed to minister:

> In my congregation I saw that while people were being helped, lives were rarely being changed. Because I had for the most part lost my personal awareness of God in my life, I wasn't able to lead the people of the congregation into that kind of awareness. (1970, 27)

The personal renewal which follows is gradually and often painfully transferred to the church as a whole, often in spite of severe resistance (Carey, 1984, 24-33; Bennett, 1970, 68-88). Inevitably it begins to affect the worshipping life of the church.

The Process of Renewal of Worship

Several authors note the awareness that their worship-styles, usually *BCP*, were old wineskins[29] which could not easily contain the new wine of the Spirit's renewal, and were unhelpful vehicles for evangelism or church growth. However the renewal of public worship often lagged behind personal renewal, for example in Burslem under Philip Smith. Others began to seek church renewal not

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[29] The text and exegesis of this pericope will be discussed later.

through Sunday services but through extra gatherings for prayer and worship. Typical is Urquhart (1974, 57-8), who, in order to preserve unity, was reluctant to change his somewhat Anglo-Catholic Parish Communion, but was happy to replace a dying (presumably *BCP*) Evensong with a service of Evening Praise which was 'unstructured, so that we could allow the Holy Spirit to lead us'. Renewal in Luton, and in several other churches, came through weeknight Bible Study groups, where the singing of choruses and worship songs led people deeper into the presence of God. Music was similarly important for Bennett. Whilst his first reaction to being baptised in the Spirit was a new awareness of God through the Daily Office (1970, 44), he soon set up prayer meetings, initially in order to pray for more people to receive the Spirit. Singing was important at these gatherings, although it was '"Gospel music" as opposed to 'good music', that is 'a Bach chorale or the good poetry in a beautiful hymn … These High-Church Episcopalians discovered gospel music, and they loved it!' (1970, 55). Further comments demonstrate that by 'Gospel Music' Bennett was not referring to what we would call 'Black Gospel Music' but rather short choruses more a hallmark of evangelicalism than of his high Episcopalianism.

For Carey at St Nicholas' Durham there was a growing awareness of their *BCP* worship as being boring, youth-hostile and unhelpful for mission and evangelism (Carey, 1984, 16). For him as for so many others renewal came through song as the choir of six people was replaced by a small singing and instrumental group. What had begun in Homegroups began to make its presence felt in Sunday services. Similarly Walker in Harborne, Birmingham began with several years of committed prayer 'for the Spirit's life to be poured out in Birmingham' (Walker, 1982, 87). On his appointment to St John's he began a prayer group called 'Open to God (*Ibid.*, 89). But like Carey and others he was very aware that when it came to public worship 'ingrained, familiar forms of worship had become foreign and strange to the non-churchgoer' many of whom had stopped attending church after the end of the Great War. (Walker, 1982, 95) Renewal took flight through the use of new worship songs (*Ibid.*, 99), although in some places these songs took a while to become the diet on Sunday mornings. Higton (1985) tells the story of renewal in Hawkwell, Essex, and constantly contrasts worship which is 'liturgical' with that which is 'spontaneous'. Like others he began to find that his services were unhelpful for new Christians, and did not sit well with the evangelistic thrust of his ministry, even though they were popular with the existing congregation. He notes the 1976 advent of Series 3 with the practice of 'Sharing the Peace' as being a major landmark which was not easily negotiated, and the starting of a 'Family Service' in 1977 met with similar resistance. A parish weekend away had been the occasion of 'a brief experience of spontaneous charismatic worship. Until now, though, this more charismatic worship had not affected the Sunday services' (1985, 62).

> During 1978 a series of special services with guest speakers the congregation began to experience joyful praise and uplifting worship actually in the church building. Slowly it began to dawn on us 'Why shouldn't we experience this sort of worship as part of our regular Sunday services?' So on various

occasions in early summer 1978 we introduced some more spontaneous worship within the services'. (*Ibid.,* 62).

However Higton continued to wrestle with the relationship between the 'liturgical' and the spontaneous. He arrived at the point of realisation that the Holy Spirit had to be Lord, and could lead the worship either in the direction of liturgy or spontaneity as he willed. The dualistic language here and throughout this chapter of his book is striking: it did not seem to occur to him that liturgical worship might also be spontaneous or Spirit-led. After a while the PCC approved a two-tier pattern of evening services, with a liturgical Evensong followed by 'more informal worship with choruses, testimonies and the sharing in church of prayer topics' (1985, 62). The morning services, by now from the *ASB*, were launched with a slot of 'spontaneous' worship before the liturgy took over. Higton expresses his appreciation of the beauty of liturgical services, but asks 'How much are they an experience of beauty, and how much are they an experience of God? Can the love of beauty almost become idolatrous?' (*Ibid.,* 67). This was an early precursor of the theology of Vineyard worship which is suspicious of anything other than extreme simplicity, as it might distract and shift the focus from Jesus and onto the worship itself. Higton also tells of his realisation that while leading liturgical worship or a hymn sandwich is relatively easy, to lead spontaneous worship requires much more of the leader in terms of spiritual preparation, and his feeling of unworthiness in this task, and the draining effect it had on him.

These examples from similar churches serve to paint the backcloth against which our two networks arose: personal spiritual dryness led to a life-changing experience of the Holy Spirit, which in turn led to a sense that traditional Anglican worship forms could no longer provide suitable vehicles for the new life which the Spirit was bringing, nor the human response of praise to God for this new life. But as renewal moved into its second generation, and younger leaders arose, there were some changes of emphasis, and a vital new ingredient in the shape of John Wimber and the Vineyard.

David Watson and York

David Watson was the first English Anglican priest to meet Wimber in Anaheim, and was instrumental in inviting him to the UK. The most detailed information we have of renewal in this era and its effects on public worship comes from the biography of David Watson by Saunders and Sansom (1992). When Watson arrived at St Cuthbert's York in July 1965 he inherited an early Holy Communion service, and Morning Prayer and an Evening Service from the *BCP*. In spite of days of prayer each Wednesday and the Thursday evening prayer and teaching sessions, he struggled with the Sunday Worship, and particularly with the preaching:

> The little band from St Cuthbert's were not unappreciative, but they were clearly not used to listening to sermons in order to receive the Word of God ... [Eventually David] preached a series on the Prayer Book canticles, believing that the very familiarity of words sung every Sunday could all too easily blind the congregation to the meaning and significance of what they were singing (1992, 102, 104).

But the story of St Cuthbert's reveals another important strand in worship renewal, which is present in several other church's stories as well. Realising that neither the *BCP* Holy Communion nor Matins services were good vehicles for mission, Watson began in December 1965 a monthly 'Family Service' instead of Matins. He used the *CPAS* booklet already mentioned, and welcomed the *ASB* when it came onstream in 1980. It is interesting that his strategy from the start was not to run a 'children's service' but to aim at parents. This insight paved the way for what is now commonly known as 'All-age Worship' (*Ibid.,* 105), and it soon became the practice at St Cuthbert's and later St Michael-le-Belfry to hold such services weekly.

Bax, in her review of the effects of the charismatic renewal on Anglicanism, discusses the growing influence of 'Family Services' and 'Guest Services', and notes that 'Charismatics are writing their own Guest Services, more open and informal services aimed at the newcomer. These have a very slight liturgical content, with an emphasis on singing and preaching, very much "early Methodist" in style' (1986, 182). Watson provided a classic example of this practice. In parallel to his morning services he started evening Guest Services to which people could confidently invite seekers. They soon outgrew their small building and its extension, and negotiated a move to nearby York Minster, where the first Cathedral Guest Service in December 1972 attracted a crowd of 2,600 people (1986, 117). These services followed this pattern:

An opening song
Welcome and notices
Traditional hymn
Prayers
Bible readings (perhaps dramatised)
Hymn with an offering for missions
Sketch or drama
40 minute sermon
Song
Evangelistic appeal
Hymn
Blessing (*Ibid.,* 118)

The absence of liturgical text from these services is interesting, in spite of a clear liturgical shape. However on Sunday mornings David was much more Anglican:

> At St Michael's he adhered more closely and more gladly to the new *Series 3* forms of service which had recently been approved by the General Synod. He found these services provided him with a

considerable degree of liturgical freedom, but the Anglican discipline and structure for worship were still there. Even his Family Service was based on this, and upon the 1980 *Alternative Service Book* which replaced *Series 3* (*Ibid.*, 134).

Musically, Watson acknowledged that he had been brought up to sing hymns which were 'didactic and objective' (Sansom and Saunders, 1992, 161). However renewal songs were quickly accepted and widely used. He remained unhappy, though, about putting subjective words of worship onto the lips of people who were not yet Christians. First and foremost an evangelist, he believed it was better to proclaim objective Christian truth, although he believed that seeing Christians praising could 'soften up' non-Christians for an evangelistic appeal: 'a praising community preaches to answer questions raised by its praise' (Watson, 1999, 163). Clearly Watson was what one might call a 'churchman', that breed of evangelical Anglican clergy who were devotees of the *BCP*, wore their clerical collars with pride, and were thoroughly committed to the Anglican way, warts and all. Under his leadership St Michael's knew clearly that it was an Anglican church, called to be a source of renewal for other Anglicans. Watson's curate at this time, Graham Cray, commented on a painful split at St Michael's where many members of the church left to form a House Church: 'The group who left had little sense of calling to the Church of England, whereas St Michael's is called to be part of the renewal in the Church of England, from within the Church of England.' (Burnett, 1988, 142). Watson was typical of the breed of clergy who valued their Anglican heritage.

Anglican Vineyardism

Watson first heard about Wimber from church growth consultant Eddie Gibbs who was working with Wimber at Fuller Seminary. In 1981 Watson visited Fuller, and wrote to his friend David Pytches that having met Wimber his ministry 'would never be the same again' (Pytches, 1998, 33). Watson and Pytches united to invite Wimber to the UK, and he arrived at Chorleywood for a weekend conference at Pentecost 1981. Then in 1984 Wimber came to lead a day conference at HTB Kensington as a precursor to his first major conference at Westminster Central Hall in November that year. From Wimber's deep personal friendship with Watson and Pytches to this first major public conference, the Vineyard movement seemed to have instant appeal in the Church of England and among many of its evangelical clergy. Walker (1998, 311) notes that the influence of the Vineyard movement was accepted 'especially among Anglicans'. According to Pytches 'the largest number of church leaders at Wimber conferences come from Anglican churches' (in Springer and Wimber, 1987, 175) while Hunt argues that whilst having considerable influence on the Restorationist churches

it is in the Church of England where the ministry has made its most profound impression. Indeed, there is a much-quoted statement from a leading Anglican [apparently Sandy Millar of Holy Trinity

Brompton] who suggested that 'Wimber has had a greater impact on the Church of England than anyone since John Wesley'. (1995, 105-6)

At the 1984 Westminster conference 42.5% of those attending were from Anglican churches, while Pentecostals and New Church members together only accounted for 20% (*Ibid.,* 112). Hunt goes on to examine the reasons for this apparent instant empathy between the Church of England and the Vineyard, which he suggests are, perhaps surprisingly, largely cultural:

> One could be forgiven for thinking that the Church of England would be one of the last Christian institutions which was likely to accept and apply Wimber's ministry. Certainly, at first glance the cultures of the Vineyard and the Anglican Church appear to have very little in common. By reputation, much of the Vineyard's image is largely associated with the counter-culture. Indeed it has some roots, albeit indirect, in the Californian Jesus People of the 1970s. With these roots, the Vineyard movement is identified by an abundance of Christian rock music, spontaneity in worship, and casual dress with a particular appeal to the young. The Vineyard is renowned for shunning the institutional setting, and Wimber himself has been critical of the ritualized nature and "deadness" of the established denominations. (1995, 107)

Nevertheless, he goes on to suggest that several factors contributed to this positive relationship. He mentions 'Third Wave Theology', a term coined by Wagner (1983, 1-5) which suggests three major moves of the Holy Spirit in the last century. The first wave was the birth of classic denominational Pentecostalism, and the second the transdenominational charismatic movement. Hunt suggests that 'The "Third Wave" was perceived as bringing the classical and neo-Pentecostals together, along with conservative Evangelicals, growing in the unity of the Holy Spirit before the Second Coming of Christ' (1995, 110). He also identifies what he terms a 'seeking factor' by which charismatic Anglicans who had chosen to stay within their denomination were hungry for more, and expectant of a new work of the Spirit. The Vineyard's strategy, he suggests, had always been two-pronged: church planting of new Vineyard congregations as well as 'Equipping the Saints', a generous and openhearted desire to bless the whole church with what they felt God had given to them. This contrasted strongly with the 'Come out from among them' rhetoric of Wallis and other Restorationists, which naturally did not endear them to Anglicans. Additionally, Anglican churches which adopted Vineyard values and ethos tended to be effective in seeing conversion growth, and it is easy to see how this new 'denomination' appeared an attractive bedfellow in many places. There was also, he notes, considerable overlap theologically between Wimber and some key Anglican charismatic leaders such as David Watson and David Pytches, including a rejection of doctrines associated with classical Pentecostalism, such as 'Second Blessing' theology and the 'evidence of tongues'.

In my own personal reflection on the Vineyard conferences during the 80s and 90s I reached a slightly different conclusion from that of Hunt. There was something about Wimber himself which made his teaching accessible to Anglicans, a combination of a gentle style and a theologically

thoughtful approach both to Scripture and to secular insights. Anglicans can be offended by some of the manifestations of Pentecostalism, and particularly its leaders, whom they may perceive as noisy, arrogant and attention-seeking. They may also reject approaches to Scripture which they regard as naïve or over-fundamentalist. Wimber, by contrast, projected a persona which was gentle, pastoral and academically intelligent, and therefore attractive to Anglicans. Theologically, too, Vineyard teaching often resonated with the best of the academic world. His chair at Fuller Seminary gave him some academic respectability, and his theology of the Kingdom of God was based firmly on the academic work of many major twentieth century theologians such as Kraft, Ladd, Bultmann, Dodd and Cullmann[30]. But he added to this theology practical experiential demonstrations of the work of the Spirit. Wimber returned to the UK for a conference in Sheffield in 1985, sponsored by St Thomas' Crookes, and then regularly for the next few years around such subjects as Healing and Spiritual Warfare, but it was in Brighton in 1989 that Wimber first specifically taught on worship.

The House Churches

As charismatic renewal hit England in the 60s and grew steadily in influence during the 70s, not all Anglicans embraced it willingly. Alongside the above narrative another strand developed with the rise of the 'House Church' movement. Walker, in his study of Restorationism (1985) suggests that the movement had twin roots in the Irvingite Catholic Apostolic Church and the Brethren Movement. (Walker, 1985, 35; see also Wright, 1991). Typically Christians from mainstream denominations such as the Church of England would come into a new experience of the Holy Spirit, only to find that their church culture and/or church leadership were not at all comfortable with their new and enthusiastic spirituality. Alongside the common trajectory outlined above of renewal taking hold when a church leader discovers a new experience of the Spirit there was a parallel track when lay people were led into renewal, but then found that their church leaders were sometimes significantly opposed. Many such people eventually felt that they had option but to leave. Born out of this frustration, and in some cases rebellion against what they regarded as 'unspiritual' leadership, charismatics began meeting in homes. At first this was as well as regular Sunday services in church, but increasingly it replaced Sunday attendance at their churches. The 'House Church' movement began to grow, and took on a complex life of its own. Walker, writing in the mid-80s, and noting the many different brands and streams of House Churches, seeks to identify some common threads:

> All these churches do have some things in common: they exist outside the mainline denominations of Great Britain; many are Evangelicals, and most of them are Pentecostals. However, they are different in style and organisation. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, these different movements have virtually nothing to do with each other (1985, 18).

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[30] See Williams (1986).

Steven (1989) notes that the charismatic movement tended to diverge into two different types, what he calls 'Renewal' and 'Restorationism'. Those in Renewal, focussed in the 1970s on the Fountain Trust, sought to live out the implications of charismatic life within the already established church institutions. The majority of these people belonged to Catholic, Anglican or Methodist churches. Restorationism, however, sought to go further in radically altering church structures according to their perception of Biblical principles. They sensed that the new wine could not be contained within the old wineskins (1989, 3). Thus the House Churches diverged from Anglican renewal because of their Restorationist theology. Walker is at pains to point out that Restorationist groupings, while looking as though 'they are an outgrowth of the Charismatic Renewal within the mainstream churches', in fact owe much more of their heritage to classical Pentecostalism (1985, 35). He notes Arthur Wallis as a key protagonist of Restorationism, and his Brethren background as being highly influential on the movement's theology. Wallis was at the forefront of the House Church invective against all things Anglican. Anything 'traditional' or to do with the 'establishment' is clearly anathema to him (Wallis, 1981, 101). He asks us to choose between 'Tradition or Scripture' and seeks to reconstruct 'the Church as it was meant to be' as opposed to what ecclesiastical traditions have made it, and paints a fanciful description of a first century worship service, which interestingly looks very much like a meeting of a 1980s House Church (113-9). He ignores the more scholarly descriptions by scholars such as Cullmann (1953) which are based firmly on NT and patristic sources. This ecclesiological fundamentalism guided the House Church movement, and it is easy to see how later developments in worship, or even the liturgical worship contained within the New Testament, were ignored or denigrated as the creeping in of 'traditions'. In one purple passage Wallis fulminates:

> [Traditions] put a yoke on the neck of disciples, and especially on their corporate worship which produces bondage. Liturgies and fixed forms of service … militate against our being able to 'worship by the Spirit of God'. Liturgies, whether ancient or modern, written or unwritten, are a human device, to keep the wheels turning by doing what is customary, rather than exercising faith in the immediate presence and operation of the Spirit. Consequently they cover up the need for the return of the Spirit when he has departed, and they hinder faith for spontaneity and variety. (1981, 119-20)

Restorationists believed that in the latest wave of renewal God was restoring authentic New Testament church life to an institution which had been steadily losing its way for nearly 2000 years. Wright explains that Restorationism's 'fundamental insight was that the new wine of charismatic experience required new wineskins if it were not to be dissipated. These new wineskins amounted to new church structures replacing the stifling and obdurate practices of traditional denominational Christianity'. (1991, 4) Walker (1985, 133) reproduces this diagram from *Restoration* magazine which is a plot of church effectiveness against time, and shows graphically the decline and renewal of the Christian Church according to Restorationist thinking:

Figure 1. Restorationist Church History

Table 1 Graph of Church History

From *Restoration* magazine, Nov./Dec. 1983, p. 40.
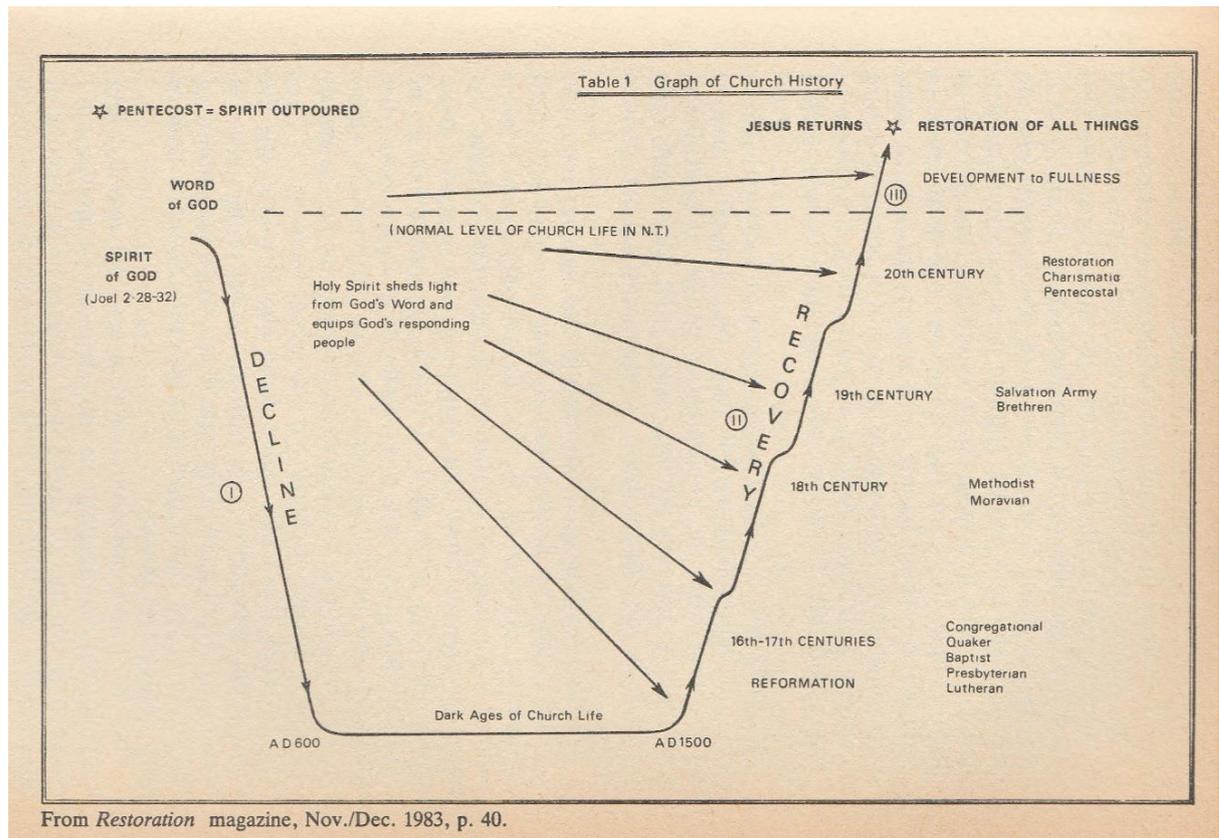
One can see in this theology the outworkings of the 'Latter Rain' movement, 'implying a comparative inactivity of the Holy Spirit between the pristine rain of Pentecost and the latter rain of a twentieth century Pentecost' (Hocken, 1997, 171). In particular one of the movement's worship leaders, Dave Fellingham, wrote an influential book about the restoration of true worship in the style of the Davidic Tabernacle. He asserts that 'Renewed worship is an integral part of what God is doing today in bringing the church back to how God intended it to be: worship is an integral part of God's restoration programme. (1987, 84) As one might expect this true worship consisted mainly of singing songs.

But is even the Spirit of God capable of bringing liturgy to life? Of course the experience of many was that Anglican liturgical worship was not only unrenewed but also unrenewable, and they accepted only too gladly the rhetoric of Restorationism. Anglican charismatics, however, were not always convinced. Within the established and liturgical denominations the Holy Spirit was alive and well, and worshippers were finding that the new life of the Spirit could enhance the liturgy without needing to remove it. Whilst many churches did need extra prayer gatherings outside of Sunday Worship to express the new life of the Holy Spirit, they were also finding that the liturgy could be renewed by that same Spirit. The wineskins were actually a lot more flexible than the Restorationists believed.

It is worth mentioning this stream simply because while many Anglicans deliberately rejected Restorationist theology, they nevertheless could not help but be influenced by the anti-liturgical rhetoric which was so prevalent during these years. However, because the Restorationist movement contained many who had deserted the Anglican Church, because of the divergence of renewal and restoration, and because of its implied or direct criticism of established denominations it was not heavily influential, although many of its new worship songs were taken up, unthinkingly according to some critics, in the Church of England[31]. Whilst in time many local Anglican churches learnt to value and work well with nearby House Churches, without necessarily adopting their restoration theology, many kept a discrete distance and continued with their liturgical worship, even if it was in some cases enlivened by this new experience of the Holy Spirit. The continuing history of the House Church movement, now more commonly known as the 'New Churches' is complex and beyond the scope of this study (See Wright, 1991, 4). However restorationist theology is not a major hallmark of the worship corpus of the *HTB* and *NW* churches.

Anglican Renewal Ministries

My own work, however, during this time, *contra* Restorationism and at a church led by an Anglican 'churchman' and experiencing charismatic renewal, was to seek to discover how we might encourage the renewal of liturgical worship, and my *Liturgy and Liberty* (Leach, 1989) became and remains an important source for liturgical churches wanting to see their liturgy renewed rather than replaced. I describe how we would still use extended periods of sung worship, but that we would do so in order to 'do' the liturgy, rather than to replace it. So a song set might move through gathering, a call to worship, penitence and praise, as does the first part of the Eucharistic rite, but through well-chosen songs, perhaps with liturgical texts spoken as voice-overs. Whilst the Vineyard journey of worship towards intimacy is one possible way of using sung worship, it is by no means the only way. *Liturgy and Liberty* is an important source for this period, since it was written in the context of a local church and, while in places aspirational, was largely descriptive of how we were planning and organising our worship. My inspiration came not only from the Wimber-influenced networks of Chorelywood and *HTB*, but from another direction. I became Director of ARM in 1997.

The start of Anglican renewal as a distinct movement with some significance in the Church of England can be dated to 1978, when Michael Harper organised an Anglican Charismatic Conference in Canterbury in parallel with the Lambeth conference. The iconic picture of robed Bishops dancing in front of the High Altar in Canterbury Cathedral marked an acceptance by at least some of the Anglican hierarchy (Harper, 1978 and Scotland, 2000, 17-18). Two years later Lawrence Hoyle, vicar

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[31] See, for example Begbie (1991) and Munden (1984).

of Thwing in Yorkshire founded ARM to promote charismatic renewal within the Church of England. It was my privilege to serve as the third National Director from 1997 to 2002, and I believe it to have been a happy coincidence that this period covered the run-up to the publication of *CW* in 2000. Having a liturgist as its Director meant that ARM could deliberately promote, and model at its conferences, authentically Anglican liturgical worship with a high degree of openness to the Holy Spirit. Much of my work was to try to resell liturgy to renewed Anglican clergy, although sadly this felt for much of the time like fighting a losing battle. When, at the end of my period as Director in 2002, ARM closed down, it was to a high degree due to the growing success of *NW* and the failure of ARM to attract younger affiliates. (Leach, 2010) No doubt my desire to embark on this current piece of research has been fuelled to some degree by my frustration with this period.

One final question concerns the trajectory of the *HTB* movement. Is *HTB* likely to become a denomination? Reed (2017) in his study of Victorian Anglo-Catholicism charts the growth of this movement in the Church of England. In many ways this is uncannily parallel to the rise of *HTB*, and will be explored in chapter 5 below. Reed's work suggests that in time *HTB* may become a respected movement or strand within Anglicanism, rather than a distinct denomination. Certainly nothing said during the interviews suggested otherwise.

Summary – a personal reflection

The general picture during this period seems to have been of renewal coming to individuals from beyond the boundaries of the established churches, with those touched by it attempting with varying degrees of enthusiasm to introduce its manifestations into regular public worship. Depending on just how brittle they believed the wineskins to be, leaders would range on a spectrum between starting from scratch with the New Churches, and bringing the insights and practices of charismatic renewal fully into their liturgy. It seems to me from having lived through this period that those most likely to invest in the renewal of liturgical worship were those with the greatest stake in it. Evangelicals (and particularly younger evangelicals living in a postmodern world) who already had perhaps less respect for Anglicanism, were likely more easily to move away from it, while more Anglo-Catholic churches were far better at using the liturgy in a renewed way. Largely, though, there were few models of good renewed liturgical worship, and the sources of inspiration for those who had experienced the Spirit were largely not local church-based. Festivals like Spring Harvest attracted a large number of Anglicans each Easter (anecdotally around 50% of those who attended), and modelled song-driven worship, although of a good variety, including the use of traditional hymnody, and far more musical creativity and virtuosity than would be encountered in Vineyard worship. The better the time one had at these annual festivals, the greater the desire to bring it home to the local church. Just as many

parish churches attempt to emulate cathedral worship (although often without the resources or expertise), so others based their worship on what they had experienced in the Spring Harvest Big Top. Because, due to the ecumenical nature of these events, Anglican liturgical worship did not seem appropriate, it began to be used less in parishes influenced by the festivals. Other organisations such as the Kingsway publishing group put on worship conferences twice each year in the 90s, in Eastbourne and Southport, and the skills in which attenders were trained were almost exclusively to do with musical worship, although at one notable exception Mark Earey and I celebrated a full *CW* Eucharist, complete with vestments, to great acclaim. This service provided the only time in my ministry when the words of the Eucharistic Prayer were greeting with spontaneous applause, and yells and whoops of delight from the congregation. Nowadays Worship Central continues to provide training for worship leaders, through resources, courses, internships and an academy. As an offshoot of *HTB*, this organisation trains people into values and styles in worship which are highly influenced by the Vineyard[32]. Underlying this reluctance to worship liturgically, though, was a sense that such worship was not missional, and that if a local church was to fulfil its calling to be evangelistic, worship had to be cleansed of the alien nature of traditional worship, however short that tradition might be. This belief is one which I wanted to test more thoroughly in my fieldwork.

In the light of this background my research questions formulated themselves for me as already mentioned:

What is the relationship between *HTB* and *NW* churches and formal Anglican liturgy?,

a question which suggests three sub-questions:

Is the abandonment of formal liturgy a helpful and faithful development in Anglicanism?

Do worship songs make an adequate replacement for liturgy?

Can there be worship praxis which is both charismatic and liturgical and which is more faithful to the gospel and more effective in forming long-term disciples?

The next chapter explains the methodology used to seek answers to these questions.

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[32] See https://www.worshipcentral.org [Accessed 16 October 2019]

3. Methodology

Having surveyed the backdrop for this study and articulated the research questions, we now turn to an account of the methodology used to gain information towards answering those questions. This chapter contains two parts. The first will consider some theoretical questions around the methodological approaches to this research. The second will give an account of the fieldwork and some of the challenges involved.

Methodological approaches

This study is a piece of Practical Theology involving Qualitative Research. It will use a Case Study Research approach, but will also draw on some insights from Theological Action Research, using the four theological voices. The first part of the chapter considers three areas: the nature of Practical Theology as it relates to the research questions, the relationship between Qualitative Research and Practical Theology, and the possible methods appropriate for obtaining data, with my decisions regarding which are most appropriate.

Practical Theology

Because the subject of this study is a 'situation' which exists in the life of the churches concerned, it locates itself in the realm of Practical Theology. This discipline has often utilised some versions of the Pastoral Cycle, based originally on the Experiential Learning Cycle of Kolb (1984) and developed by Dennison and Kirk (1990) among others. Accounts of the development of the Pastoral Cycle may be found in Thompson and Burns (2008) and Graham (2017). At its most basic level the Cycle is a four-stage process for learning and change. It begins with observation of a concrete experience or situation, moving to a more reflective analysis of the situation. Abstract conceptualisation seeks to discover deeper meanings, and active experimentation imagines and tests some alternative ways in which things might be done. Although conceived of as a two-dimensional cycle, it quickly becomes clear that experimentation will lead to a new situation, which in turn may be reflected upon and changed. Thus a spiral might be a more helpful way of thinking about the cycle. Practical Theology is, according to Ballard and Pritchard, 'A particular field of theology. It specifically deals with Christian life and practice within the Church and in relation to wider society.' (1996, 1) It is as interested in practice as it is in texts, doctrines or beliefs, making it essentially practical rather than scholastic or theoretical. The methodology of Practical Theology is inductive rather than deductive, in that it

begins with events and seeks to discover a theological 'policy' from them, rather than starting from a given and authoritative body of 'truth'.

From the several available approaches to Practical Theology, two are particularly appropriate in answering the research questions. I will be using the work of Osmer (2008) and Swinton and Mowatt (2006), both of whom emphasise the purpose of qualitative research as calling the Church (back) to practices which are faithful to the gospel:

> Practical theology ... finds itself located in the uneasy but critical tension between the script of revelation given us in Christ and formulated historically within Scripture, doctrine and tradition, and the continuing innovative performance of the gospel as it is embodied and enacted in the life and practices of the Church as they interact with the life and practices of the world (Swinton and Mowatt, 2006, 5)

> One of the main critical tasks of Practical Theology is to recognise distorted practice and to call the Church back to the theological significance of its practices and to enable it to engage faithfully with the mission of God. (*Ibid.*, 24-5)

Osmer is equally keen on what he calls the 'normative' intentions of Practical Theology. He sees Practical Theology in terms of four interrelated tasks, or helpful questions to ask of a particular situation (2008, 4). This version of the Pastoral Cycle begins with the 'descriptive/empirical' question which asks 'What is going on?' Next comes the 'interpretative' stage: 'Why is it going on?' Thirdly the 'normative' stage asks 'What ought to be going on?', and the final stage, the 'pragmatic' or 'strategic', asks 'How might we respond practically?' This thesis will use Osmer's four-stage process, bearing in mind Swinton and Mowatt's concern for faithfulness to the gospel and to the mission of God in the world. Osmer is also keen to emphasise that Practical Theology can be an academic discipline and a helpful research tool, quite apart from any formational or problem-solving purposes:

> It is no longer accurate to view this field as solely concerned with application, with helpful techniques and skills applied to the life of the Church. Practical theologians carry out diverse research programs and make their own constructive, scholarly contributions to the theological enterprise as a whole. Nor is it accurate to see this field as concerned solely with the tasks of clergy or the life of congregations. (2008, ix)

Because of this purpose for my research and the nature of my research questions there are other approaches to Practical Theology which are less appropriate. Those would include that of Green (2009), who is concerned to give the theological task back to the whole people of God. Ballard and Pritchard (1996) have a fourfold focus: describing how Christians have believed and behaved, discovering the 'inner meanings' of Christian behaviour, raising critical questions of truth, and looking for practical outworkings of what Christians believe. This is essentially a problem-solving approach. The concern of Collins (2020) is the formation of Christians for ministry, but she also wants to be more thoroughly biblical than she perceives other approaches to be, proposing a 'Scriptural Cycle', which begins not with an event or situation but with a biblical text, instead of the

more common approach to the Cycle. Killen and de Beer (1994) base their work more heavily on people's personal experiences, the emotions attached to them, and on images and metaphors. Miller-McLemore (1993) reminds us that we live in a 'Human web' which means that meaning is far more complex than simple approaches would suggest. She questions the Western individualistic nature of much pastoral theology (1993, and a 25 year retrospective in 2018), and reminds us that 'A "living human web" cannot simply be read and interpreted like a document. Those within the web who haven't yet spoken must speak for themselves.' She notes 'the limits of knowledge apart from context' (1993, 369), and provides a helpful reminder than individuals do not act, nor situations arise, in isolation from their wider contexts. Capra (1996) takes this even further and suggests not just a human web but a 'Web of Life' which aims to synthesise the mystical and the scientific. Another model which attempts to listen to different voices is Theological Action Research of Cameron *et al.* (2010), and while this framework will not, for a variety of reasons, provide a useful overarching methodology, I will be using insights from it in the course of this study. It cannot legitimately be claimed that this study is a piece of Theological Action Research, since Cameron *et al.* define the discipline as

> a partnership between an insider and an outsider team to undertake research and conversations answering theological questions about faithful practice in order to renew both theology and practice in the service of God's mission. (2010: 63)

The present study does not, therefore, by this definition, follow this approach: it will not be not a team effort, but an individual piece of research, and there has certainly been no invitation to work deliberately with the networks in question towards any change of policy: indeed there would there appear to be no desire or perceived need to change. However, the notion of different theological voices seemed a highly significant one. Valuable though these alternative ways of thinking about and using Practical Theology may be in different situations, apart from the latter they will not contribute so helpfully to my research purpose, and so have not been adopted in my overall shaping of this study.

Osmer's Four Phases

As mentioned, the approach which will be adopted here is that of Osmer's Four Phases of Practical Theology. Brief accounts of these phases and how I will use them follow.

1.   The 'descriptive/empirical' phase: 'What is going on?'

In the descriptive phase I will use both my past experience of worship in charismatic evangelical churches and the data gained through more focussed Participant Observation. The aim of this phase

is to generate 'thick' and accurate details of the worship which is being conducted in the subject churches. This of course raises question of reflexivity, which will be discussed below. This phase provides basic-level data which will be the subject matter for analysis and reflection later in the process, and will utilise familiar methods from the world of social scientific research.

2.   The 'interpretative' phase: Why is it going on?

Osmer's second phase, the interpretative, brings questions about the best tools to enable researchers to interpret those practices which have been observed. Clearly this piece of research is qualitative in nature, although with two brief pieces of quantitative analysis. In one sense, therefore, this might be seen as a mixed method case study, but the main purpose is to ask 'Why?' rather than 'How much?' It would no doubt be interesting to conduct quantitative research among the networks in question and to see, for example, just how many English Anglican churches have been influenced by the movement away from liturgical worship, and the degree of penetration into the Church of England of these two networks. However that was not the objective of this research, and discovering quantitative data would not help to answer the research questions. I will use interviews with church leaders to ask questions about their beliefs and reasons for adopting non-liturgical policies, thus building up a picture of why this praxis is being utilised. This information will be further illuminated by a Focus Group which will allow different voices to be heard.

3.   The 'normative' phase: What ought to be going on?

Having observed and reflected upon the praxis of the subject churches, the next phase attempts to evaluate these practices theologically. It asks questions about the faithfulness to the gospel of the practices, and their effectiveness in forming Christian disciples who see themselves involved in God's mission to the world. The discipline of Liturgical Theology will be helpful here, as operant practices are scrutinised as to their implied theology, and as practices such as the use of 'worship-songs' as replacements for liturgical worship are critiqued. The reasons given by interviewees for their non-liturgical preferences will also be examined and evaluated.

4.   The 'pragmatic' phase: How might we respond?

Although not the main purpose of this study, a brief section at the end will suggest different ways in which worship might be constructed, in the light of the data gained and reflection on it.

These four phases, therefore, will provide the framework for this thesis. The descriptive/empirical question will be discussed in chapter 4, where the results of fieldwork, specifically Participant Observation, will be reported, and accounts given of churches at worship. Chapter 5 will take up the second, interpretative, question where significant themes emerging from the data and particularly from interviews and a Focus Group will be discussed. In chapters 6 and 7 I move to the normative phase, where the policies of the research churches will be evaluated critically, using tools from liturgical theology. Finally a brief section within chapter 7 will suggest an alternative approach for charismatic Anglican churches, in the light of the critiques of current praxis offered.

Osmer's phases as spiritual disciplines

One question, to which we shall return shortly, is that of the relationship between theology and social scientific research. One of the appeals of Osmer's approach to Practical Theology, particularly given that worship provides the subject matter, is that he maps his four phases onto four biblical areas of wisdom and spirituality. (*Op. cit., passim.*) The descriptive/empirical task requires 'priestly listening', the skill shown by leaders when they preach to or pray on behalf of their congregations. Wise and accurate attention is required if leaders are to sum up and articulate clearly what is happening for their people, and researchers need similar skills. The deeper interpretative task requires 'sagely wisdom'. Osmer draws on the OT wisdom tradition, which he sees as a continuum between thoughtfulness and theory which leads to 'wise judgement'. This leads to the normative task for which prophetic discernment is necessary. This he likens to the OT prophets, whose main role was to call the people back to faithfulness to the covenant when they had drifted off course. A knowledge of divine disclosure is balanced against an awareness of the possibilities of unfaithfulness to that revelation, and how they might be being lived out in the community. Finally the pragmatic phase requires the kind of servant leadership which is able to influence a community into change and greater faithfulness whilst avoiding the temptation to lord it over the people in unhelpful ways. He notes OT passages, notable Psalm 72, in which the hope is expressed that the king will rule with justice in order to create righteousness within the community. In each case he sees the Jesus of the NT as the fulfilment of these priestly/wise/prophetic and practical gifts. This approach, which sees social scientific research in terms of spiritual disciples, provides an inspiring model for this study.

Qualitative Research and Practical Theology

One important theoretical issue concerns the question 'In what sense is Practical Theology theological?' How might God be investigated empirically, or can we only gain helpful information

about human reactions to God, or indeed their reactions to their experiences of what they refer to as 'God'? Ward (2022) argues that First Order theology is often anecdotal and unexamined, but could, through qualitative research, become a genuine and valued expression of theological truth, no less important or significant than academic or second order theology. What has been thought of as mere socio-scientific research becomes theology in its own right, rather than a prelude which provides some data for the theologians to discuss. He notices, though, that in the somewhat uneasy relationship between theology and social scientific research there has been the desire to keep the two disciplines in separate rooms. The way they have been expected to work together is through 'correlation', in other words allowing the theologians to come in and conduct their 'reflection' only once the hard work of observation and analysis has been done by the sociologists (Tracy, 1975). The theologians can then get to work on the 'accurate data' provided by social scientific research. Ward explains:

> Correlation was institutionalised in Practical Theology through various versions of the pastoral cycle where students were taught to negotiate a path from practice to theory to practice via stages that start with analysis drawn from the social sciences followed by biblical and doctrinal reflection. (Ward, 2022, 8)

So Swinton and Mowat ask the question 'How can we faithfully use qualitative research to provide accurate data for theological reflection?' (1995, vii), a question which suggests that the two are indeed different activities. The issue, therefore, is how one goes about qualitative research as a theological discipline, rather than feeling that one is trespassing onto the unfamiliar turf of social scientists, or waiting patiently until it is time to get to work on the already unearthed data. Whilst there has been some reluctance, for different reasons, from both sides to break down the walls or to trespass, Ward asserts that social scientific methods are not the sole preserve of social scientists, and that they can therefore be appropriate tools in the hands of theologians. This raises the question, therefore, of how this research might be conducted in a way which sees the whole cycle as a piece of theological work. We have already noted Osmer's insistence that the tasks of Practical Theology are in essence spiritual tasks, and it has certainly not been the case that theological thinking was absent from the observation and analysis phases. Since much of the data was gained through participation in worship, it is clearly an observation of Kavanagh's (1992) and Schmemman's (1963) 'primary theology' or 'first order theology'. According to Schmemman the academic study of theology 'is consequent upon the worship of the Church, and properly inseparable from it.' In other words, 'actual participation *in* the liturgy is the only means of truly coming to understand what is written *about* liturgy.' (1966, 17) Charismatics share a clear expectation that they worship a God who is present and active among them[33], and there was much material in the interviews concerning the nature and action of the God who was encountered and experienced during the worship services attended. Indeed much of the

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[33] See, for example McDonnell, 1980, *passim.*

questioning and discussion centred around the effect of churches' policies on evangelism, growth and discipleship, in other words people's relationship with and experience of God and their desire to communicate about him.

Swinton and Mowatt argue 'that qualitative research is one way in which we can begin to look behind the veil of "normality" and see what is actually going on in "situations".' (2006, vi) But depending on exactly what is being studied, and the kinds of information which are being sought, different approaches to qualitative research would suggest themselves, approaches which have varying degrees of relevance for this current study. Osmer suggests six possible inquiry strategies for qualitative research using Practical Theology (2008, 49-53). Life history/narrative research is interested in telling people's stories, often based around significant moments or 'epiphanies'. Secondly, ethnographic research, described by Hammersley and Atkinson in these terms:

> It involves the ethnographer participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions – in fact collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, 1)

is concerned with the discovery of whatever information one might find, allowing us to understand the culture of those being investigated, to:

> interpret the world as they do, and therefore learn to understand their behaviour in a different way to (*sic*) that in which natural scientists set about understanding the behaviour of physical phenomena.' (Ibid., 8)

Ethnography, they suggest, cannot be used to discover generalisable information which forms universal laws, and Guest *et al.* explain that ethnography is

> not a matter of compiling statistics, testing hypotheses or establishing laws. Rather, ethnography is a facilitation of a more or less believable account of local or contextualised meanings. The central question ethnographers ask themselves is "What does this group do, and how do they make sense of what they do?" (2004, 99)

Steven (2002:47-8) notes that 'In the past anthropologists have, on the whole, only been interested in the rituals of more "exotic" societies in other parts of the world, and have not engaged in working with the more familiar Christian traditions'. The aim is what Weber (1962) called *Verstehen*, which we might translate 'understanding', although Abel (1948, 211, n.1) insists that the term refers to a particular type of understanding, which enables us to grasp and explain the behaviour of individuals or groups. Osmer describes this as 'the creation of a cultural portrait.' (2008, 51)

Thirdly, Osmer suggests a 'Grounded theory' approach, which involves an iterative process of gathering data towards the formation of a theory, which is then tested and amended through further research. Then he suggests a 'Phenomenological approach, which seeks to describe the 'essence' of people's experience, and fifthly an 'Advocacy' approach, based on a political agenda and a struggle for change. This approach researches *with* others rather than *on* them.

Case Study Research

Given the nature of my research question, none of these approaches is exactly appropriate, but Osmer also suggests 'Case Study Research', where an individual or small group sample is studied more intensively, 'using a range of methods like interviews, participant observation, focus groups or brief surveys'. (2008, 51) In spite of the insights and undoubted benefits of the approaches outlined above, Case Study Research methodology provides the most appropriate tool for this particular study, in that it seeks to answer, from the study of a representative sample, questions as to why a larger group might have made a particular set of decisions, in this case about the conduct of the worship. For the conduct of Case Study Research I will use the work of Yin (1994). In his book he quotes Schramm (1971), who suggests that

> The essence of a case study, the central tendency among all types of case study, is that it tries to illuminate a decision or a set of decisions: why were they taken, how were they implemented, and with what result? (1994, 12)

Yin tabulates possible methods of research according to questions such as 'Who?', 'What?', 'Where?', 'How?', 'How many?' and 'Why?' (1994, 6). This is predominantly a 'Why?' study, which moves in the final chapters to a critical and normative approach to non-liturgical policies. A research question which asks 'Why?', therefore, is helpfully answered by this methodological framework. It will be an 'explanatory', as opposed to 'exploratory' or 'descriptive', piece of research. Yin suggests that this approach is appropriate when 'a "how" or "why" question is being asked about a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator has little or no control.' (1994, 9) By these criteria this approach is clearly the most appropriate one for this research.

Case Study Research, however, is not without its critics, and Burawoy (1998) summarises both advantages and shortcomings of this methodology. However Flyvbjerg (2006) sees some of these as 'misunderstandings' and paints a more positive picture. Many of the issues revolve around the relationship between positivist and qualitative data, and in particular generalisability, the extent to which it is accurate to draw conclusions about a larger group from a smaller sample. Clearly in

quantitative research it is not possible to guarantee this kind of accuracy, neither it is its purpose to guarantee it. But Burawoy suggests the importance of 'reactivity', the need for the researcher to beware of distorting the area under scrutiny, 'reliability', which is about ensuring correct criteria for the selection and handling of data, 'replicability', the belief that a different researcher, using the same methods, would gain similar results, and 'representativeness', which is about ensuring that the case studies chosen do fully represent the larger sample. (1998, 31-2) The essence of Case Study Research is that it uses data from a smaller representative sample to provide information about a larger group. But because qualitative research is necessarily concerned with ideographic rather than nomothetic knowledge it is necessarily impressionistic and personal, rather than scientific and statistically provable. So questions about the degree to which one can one study a small sample and expect the findings to be true of a whole population are pertinent. Even with attempts to find a balanced and representative sample of churches, this study could not claim to provide generalisable results which would be true of every single Anglican charismatic church. 'Relatability', though, is about the extent to which one's sample is typical of other similar samples. It concerns whether a piece of research has painted a fair picture of certain churches which would be easily recognised as true by similar churches, without wanting in any way to suggest that a much larger sample of churches could be scientifically shown to correspond to the studied sample. My aim was to explore a few places from networks I knew well, without trying to prove a point about every single non-liturgical Anglican church. It was worth noting also that since the practice of Practical Theology is to study a particular 'situation', it does not follow that churches in which a similar situation is present will be like that for the same reasons. It is good to remember the assertions of Frank that

> Each congregation is like every other congregation.
> Some congregations are like some other congregations.
> No congregation is like any other congregation. (2000, 82)

My hope was that with the analysis of the data a good clear picture would emerge, which would answer the replicability question satisfactorily.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity, the degree to which researchers are aware of their own potential biases and blindspots, is clearly an important issue in any research. Swinton and Mowatt (2006, 59) identify two types of reflexivity, the personal and the epistemological. Personal reflexivity concerns the awareness that the researcher cannot help but come with pre-existing ideas and experiences, and so must remain aware of the need for critical self-examination in order to detect possible areas of bias. The disciplines of anthropology and ethnography encourage a great variety in the degrees of immersion of the

researcher into the culture being studied, particularly where that culture is foreign and alien. The question of my pre-existing relationship with the culture being studied is therefore an important one in a consideration of reflexivity. This culture is one to which I have belonged, and in which I have ministered as a leader, for over 40 years, and which has formed and nurtured me as a Christian. I will not be going in as an 'outsider' to see what I can discover, and I have not had to feel my way cautiously into this world, nor do I need to become accepted within it, or to go in undercover. Rather it will be the critical withdrawal and reflection which will provide the greater challenge. My intention is not merely to criticise what I might regard as an unhelpful trend in the Anglican Church, but, through listening to practitioners and worshippers, to understand it more deeply, so as to attempt a balanced theological critique, in line with Osmer's normative task and Swinton and Mowatt's concern for praxis which is faithful and missional. Having stated from the outset (p.20 above) my personal conviction that the abandonment of liturgical worship can be an unhelpful policy for the growth of Christian disciples in local churches, I was aware that I would need to be particularly careful that my research did not merely confirm my own beliefs and prejudices. I was clearly not going in with an open mind in order to discover something fresh. It was also important on an epistemological level that my fieldwork would have to be designed so that the objective facts of what I witnessed during Participant Observation, and the answers to interview questions, could be recorded accurately, and that my questioning did not in any way distort interviewees' opinions towards my views rather than theirs. Of course I did want to offer as part of this thesis some normative theological critique of the policies I saw and heard, but I was aware of the need not to try to offer during the interviews any critique of the information I was given, but merely to record opinions accurately, even when I found myself in profound disagreement with them. My sole task during the fieldwork phase would be to listen carefully to the stated views of the interviewees, and to hold off on any critique until a later stage in the research process. There might be times when I would need to probe a little more deeply into some of the answers I was given, but I was very aware of the need not to make my questioning critical or hostile. I also expected that it would be helpful for me to flesh out my thinking with nuance and qualification which modified and enriched my personal views. I had also to be prepared to be surprised along the way if I heard opinions which were very different from those I had been expecting.

But beyond the attempt to make my fieldwork accurate and as objective as possible, there was a deeper question of *attitude* to be considered. As an insider to this movement, but also as someone who has become increasingly critical of it, I was aware that great care would be necessary. I remain a convinced advocate of charismatic *theology* and *spirituality*, in that I see the awareness and welcoming of the work of the Holy Spirit as of paramount importance, and I believe that the Church has been impoverished where it has functionally neglected the Third Person of the Trinity. But at the same time I have become aware of what I regard as some flaws within the *culture* of charismatic renewal

Leach (2001) and (2009). Whilst my views on worship have naturally evolved over the years, I was keen to avoid too much negativity and instead provide a reasoned and academically rigorous critique. So this study presented me with three challenges, and three attitudes to avoid. I did not want to continue in an uncritical adulation of the movement which has fostered my spirituality; indeed it would be impossible for me to do so. But I wanted to avoid becoming a petulant and rebellious adolescent who has nothing good to say about his parents. Neither did I want my critique to be so bland as to have no cutting edge. Lyon (in Woodward and Pattison, 2000, 258-70) describes congregations as 'fundamentally good and precious', and above all I wanted to show respect and generosity to those among whom I conducted this research. Questions of bias are always important in research. Hammersley and Atkinson suggest that

> While it is rare for ethnographic analysis to begin from a well-defined theory, and indeed there are dangers associated with such a starting point, the process of analysis cannot but rely on the existing ideas of the ethnographer ... what is important is that these do not take the form of prejudgements, forcing the interpretation of the data into their mould (1995, 210).

There is a significant danger of bias if investigators think they know the scene well, and so might assume that they know it better than they actually do, and look for evidence to confirm their presuppositions, ignoring that which challenges it. The use, therefore, of critical colleagues can help one spot one's biases. Kelleher gives wise advice:

> Rather than trying to detach themselves from their own worlds, investigators need to attend to themselves, become aware of their own biases, and strive to keep these biases from blocking their ability to learn about others. (1988, 22-3)

Hockey (2006, 202-11) discusses the issue of researching in familiar contexts, highlighting the twin errors of too little and too much familiarity. Taken-for-granted assumptions might blind the researcher to factors which might require investigation, and over identification with the group could temper the critical faculties. On the other hand 'entry-shock' is minimised, and subjects who regard the researcher as an 'insider' might be more trusting and more open in their discussions. I was aware of the need for self-reflection in my observing and questioning.

One resource which is helpful for reflexivity is the use of a research colleague. Steven (2002) in his qualitative research made use of a second participant observer, one not so clearly at home within the culture being studied, in order that an alternative, more objective voice, could be heard, a voice which might articulate insights and questions which might be missed through familiarity. I decided to invite a friend who is a retired academic social scientist to accompany me on my visits. He would describe himself as being from an Anglo-Catholic rather than charismatic/evangelical background. Because he did not share my experience of charismatic churches, he would be able to illuminate for me some things to which I had become habituated, and he would also bring his experience as a social scientist.

Another important aspect of reflexivity has to do with my personal relationships with the interviewees and churches. I had previously visited only two of the fieldwork churches, both of them around 20 years earlier, when they were under the leadership of different clergy. Of those I planned to interview (details of whom are given in the next section) I would count two as good friends, and a further three as acquaintances, but the rest I had not met before this project. The Bishop I had not met previously, and the Archdeacon was a work colleague. There was, therefore, a variety of existing relationships, which created differing dynamics. I acknowledged that I might feel hesitant about appearing critical of the ministries of those whom I would see as friends, and wondered whether perhaps I would feel the need to soften my questioning slightly. I hoped, however, that our friendship and a sense of mutual trust would mean that I was able to probe more deeply when talking with those whom I knew better. Because I had chosen to use semi-structured interviews, all the conversations would begin similarly, but would then be free to head in some different directions. The Focus Group was different in that it would consist of people I knew fairly well, all members of one *HTB* church. Again, because of our existing relationships of trust, and because I was not a leader at that church and therefore did not represent any espoused theology, I expected that our conversation would be real and honest, but I was determined to remain aware of the dynamics of the group as it progressed.

One final point needs to be made. The fact that I have lived in the world of this project over several decades meant that I would inevitably bring some insights which had not been gleaned from interview data but rather from personal experiences. I will try hard to minimise this kind of information, and not to allow these insights to control what I observed and heard interviewees saying. I was also very aware that information not directly gained through Participant Observation or interviews would be of a different nature from that which was specifically the result of fieldwork. I hoped to use this small amount of anecdotal evidence to illustrate and enrich the hard data gained through fieldwork, rather than to treat it of equal value with research data. And if at times that informal information was clearly contradicted by fieldwork data, I would allow my impressions to be challenged and perhaps corrected.

Research Methods

Having decided on a Case Study Research approach to qualitative research the next question was to decide exactly how the information might be discovered. Both Osmer (2008, 54) and Yin (1994, 79-81) provide (slightly differing) lists of possible sources for such evidence for Case Study Research, which include documentary and archival material, interviews, direct observations and Participant Observation, physical artefacts, analysis of the physical spaces involved, demographic analysis of the

people, and Focus Groups. For the collection of data the fieldwork for this study will include some but not all of these. I planned to use Participant Observation and interviews as the main sources for evidence, believing that face-to-face information gathering, whether through observation or conversation, would provide primary sources for seeing both how the different churches worshipped, and why they believed they did so. A Focus Group would allow me to compare what I was told by leaders with the views of congregational members. But in addition the data would be enriched by a more limited use of some of the other sources. Yin's 'direct observation' and Osmer's 'spatial analysis' would happen before services began, as I would have the opportunity to observe the congregation members as they gathered, and the layout of the worship-space and what it might say about the church's understanding of worship. I decided to take photographs of the churches I visited, although for the purposes of anonymity these will not be included in the final presentation of the material. I did not expect that documents or archives from the churches would provide particularly useful information, although I will collect any bulletins which might be given to me. I expected that decisions about worship would not have occupied too much PCC time, from which there might have been minutes or records, but rather would have been made by clergy alone. I also expected more of an oral and digital rather than a written culture, so that worship style would not have been the subject of written policy documents, but was more likely to appear online. However, with one exception which will be noted below, websites, which were consulted before the visits, tended not to give detailed information about worship policy. I planned, therefore, to employ three main methods: Participant Observation, Interviews, and a Focus Group. These would be triangulated together in order to provide a comprehensive picture of the churches' worship and the thinking behind it.

Participant Observation

Since, as mentioned, the unique contribution of this research will be actually to experience non-liturgical worship and to talk to practitioners about the reasons for their choices, I would begin with attending services at each church. This participation in worship would be important for me to gain a clear idea of how each church actually behaved, and what appeared important to them. I would also need to be able to talk specifically about an act of worship when it came to the other main source of information, the interviews. I expected that by beginning with a particular shared experience of worship, we could then extrapolate to the thinking about worship generally within that church. In terms of Osmer's four tasks, the Participant Observation would help me answer descriptive empirical questions, while the interviews would yield information which would help in the interpretive thinking.

I was aware that from one point of view I was going to carry out non-participant observation, in that I would make a single visit to a single act of worship in each church, rather than a longer period in which I immersed myself, as would an ethnographer, more fully in the life of a congregation and its culture. I could not claim to be an outsider to either the networks nor the informal cultures of the two types of churches involved. I believed that having lived within the culture for many years, and being at the time a member of an *HTB* congregation, would mean that I understood enough of the culture not to need to immerse myself any more fully in individual churches. I simply wanted to experience a variety of acts of worship so that I could then discuss with interviewees what I had experienced and, in particular, why the worship had been shaped as it had been. Little would be gained from further visits to the same churches. But on another level Participant Observation is something which in one sense I have been involved in for many years. Burgess, suggests four different levels of participation:

> The complete participant
> The participant as observer
> The observer as participant
> The complete observer (1984, 79)

where the proportions of participation to observation are subtly shifted. My previous experience of charismatic worship would have suggested for me as a researcher a shift from 'complete participant' to 'participant as observer', but for the purposes of this research I needed to become an 'observer as participant'. As Frank puts it, 'Most of us who are actively involved in congregations are participant observers at one level or another; it's mainly a matter of bringing the role to greater self-consciousness and intentionality'. (2000, 82) Further exploration of the role of participant observers is to be found in the work of Burgess (1984), Cicourel (1964), Hammersley and Atkinson (1983), and Ely (1991). The visits will involve attending public worship in the different churches on a single Sunday morning. If in some of the churches there was more than one service, I will attend the 'main' act of worship, for example if there was an earlier, perhaps more traditional service.

Interviews

In order to move on to consider Osmer's second question, and to begin to answer questions as to *why* non-liturgical policies were in place, the most appropriate method would be to conduct a series of interviews designed to uncover my respondents' understandings of the realities in which they were engaged. This will be the heart of my research, as I seek to understand, and ultimately to critique theologically, the worship-practices of the churches I had visited. Whilst I could clearly observe what happened during worship, the essence of this piece of research, in line with the approach of qualitative Case Study Research and of Osmer's interpretative question, will be to explore *why* those

things happened, and this kind of information would best be gained by specific questioning of leaders. Accurate qualitative research requires skills in listening, non-directive steering, reflecting back and checking out. Yin (*Op. Cit.*, 84) provides details of various models of interviewing, and for this project I will use a semi-structured approach which allows exploration of any interesting side issues which might emerge during the interview. Yin commends this adaptive and flexible approach, and suggests that while a researcher needs to remember the original questions, he or she needs to be free to change them during the process as new and more interesting avenues open. One example of an interview transcript is included as Appendix 5. Bernard (2017, 239) suggests various ways in which interview responses might be affected by interviewers, and notes also that these kinds of 'response effects' might be caused by both the interviewee and the environment in which the interview takes place. Because of the travel distances involved I would be conducting audio interviews mostly by phone, but I was aware that the lack of visual signals and body language might affect the results, although I knew that at the time of the interviews being conducted video conferencing software was often notoriously unreliable.

Cameron *et. al.* (2005) suggest that a small number of trial interviews take place before the actual research begins, to test methodology and to build researcher confidence. I decided to conduct a trial interview with a friend who has a thorough *HTB* pedigree, having worked in the past at the *HTB* 'headquarters' church in Kensington. My aim is that these interviews will be more to do with honing my skills than with obtaining information about his church (which was not one of those selected for fieldwork), although I hoped as well that I might gain some useful background information into the culture of the *HTB* network. I decided, therefore, that data from these interviews would be processed alongside the main interview data. Along with the other respondents this interviewee will be given a code, and any useful information used in the course of my research.

Focus Group

As well as information gleaned from church leaders and worship-leaders, it will be important to hear what some congregational worshippers had to offer. This desire to listen to the voice from the pew, and to compare data from this source with that obtained from leaders, immediately brought to mind the methodology of Theological Action Research, developed by Cameron *et al.* (2010). I would seek particularly to distinguish between the normative theology of the networks, the espoused theology of the churches and their leaders, and the operant theology of FG members as a sample of congregational attenders. This last part would help to illuminate the worship in which I participated, as I sought to discern as well as to question the theology which actual praxis implied.

In preparation for the Group it would be important to discover how and from where one might hear the different voices. In seeking sources for Normative Theology, I recognised that all the churches except one which formed a part of this research would place themselves in the evangelical wing of the Church of England, and would therefore be fairly orthodox and biblically conservative in their theology, and committed in their adherence to the Scriptures and historic Creeds as their sources for normative theology. However there are clearly other authoritative sources, particularly when it comes to worship-style. These might be found in the official statements of theology, or, more commonly values, in worship. Apart from information gained through Participant Observation and interviews, therefore, I will seek to discover the beliefs and values of the two networks. Vineyard websites set out their theology/philosophy of worship, and Park *et al.* (2017) provide a rich source of original Vineyard materials on their thinking about worship. Since the Vineyard articulates so clearly its values in worship on its websites and in other publications, I would need to seek equivalent primary sources of normative theology for our two individual networks. As has been demonstrated, their history shows a very clear and direct link between both of them and the Vineyard movement, but in fact there are other sources which might be regarded as at least semi-canonical for the two networks. Whilst there is very little to be found on the *HTB* website, the Vineyard influence is to be seen clearly in their vision for the worship team: 'The worship team's purpose is to usher people into the presence of God through music and creative worship'[34]. Their affiliated *Worship Central* website yields a much fuller account of their worship values[35].

The *NW* website[36] says little about their values in worship, and is much more focused on evangelism and mission, but Harcourt and Turner in their account of the history and life of the *NW* network, give us more normative theology in their chapter on worship. Significantly the links with the Vineyard are made very explicit in this from *HTB* worship leader Tim Hughes: 'The values that John Wimber held are those that the churches carry now … the values of intimacy in worship, the values of connection and being Spirit-led.' (2019, 82)

The circle is completed when the authors comment that 'The values within New Wine have strongly affected Tim in his worship leading [within the *HTB* network]' (*Ibid.*, 83). There are clearly direct connections between the two networks and the values of the Vineyard. So if these websites, courses and publications set out the core values and emphases of the worship in the respective networks, they might appropriately be regarded as the equivalent of Cameron's normative theology, and I would need to be familiar with them. But what of the other three voices?

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[34] www.htb.org/worship [Accessed 24 Sept 2019]
[35] www.worshipcentral.org/about-us/ [Accessed 24 Sept 2019]
[36] www.new-wine.org/ [Accessed 24 Sept 2019]

Formal theology might be said to correspond to two different kinds of material. It can provide the academic undergirding for the normative theology, as well as providing a critique of it. Most of the Vineyard praxis in worship appears to have arisen, as we have seen, out of John Wimber's personal experience and his biblical reflection on it. But one interesting source for this undergirding theology is the course handbook for the first UK Vineyard worship conference, held in Brighton in 1989. Whilst varying in their academic rigour, these papers provide an interesting account of the writers who had influenced the Vineyard. The authors range from conservative evangelical statesman John Stott to spirituality guru Richard Foster to Restorationists such as Terry Virgo and Dave Fellingham. Clearly at that stage there was little evidence of interaction with any academic work, nor any sense that anyone was interested in being critiqued. The normative theology seemed to rely much more on Wimber's own experience, and on current popular writing. Interestingly, this lack of engagement with any academic work on worship stands in stark contrast to Wimber's theology of the Kingdom of God and of his 'Signs and Wonders' approach to mission and evangelism.

Espoused theology, thirdly, is that which particular groupings make their own, and which they then work out in their praxis, as indicated in this study's data report. Again, these descriptions will converse with the other voices as we examine to what degree local churches are living out the values from the normative theology of their organisations' central publicity. Park *et al.*(2017) give much valuable information about Vineyard worship in their descriptions of the life of Wimber's Anaheim Vineyard.

Operant theology, finally, is the actually believed and lived theology of individual members of the congregation, which is demonstrated in concrete praxis. Would church leaders be correct in their assessment of what 'people' would or would not like, and what would or would not 'connect' with them? The purpose of the Focus Group was to explore the relationship between the views of leaders and congregants, and to see how accurately leaders were reading their people. This would consist of some 'ordinary' congregation members, a group intended to reveal the operant theology of those present.

The data from these three main sources will finally be processed to build up an accurate picture of the worship praxis of the churches involved, as well an some explanation of the reasons for the churches' non-liturgical practices. This information will answer Osmer's first two questions, allowing a more reflective and evaluative turn using those data.

Fieldwork Methods

The table below provides a quantitative summary the fieldwork undertaken, and the times involved in the different parts of the fieldwork. This section provides details of the Participant Observation, interviews and Focus Group, along with reflections on some challenges which were met along the way.

Table 1. Fieldwork

Participant Observation	Time	Interview	Time
HTB 9 services at 9 churches	Each service between 1 and 2 hours, plus time before and after services, and discussion with colleague on journeys	*HTB* 8 interviews	Each interview between 45 mins and 1½ hours
NW 10 services at 10 churches		*NW* 9 interviews	
		Focus group	2 hours
		Archdeacon	2 x 45 minutes
		Bishop	20 mins
Totals:	**Approx. 24 hours**		**Approx. 21 hours**

Sample selection and contact

The first task was to identify which churches would be involved in the research. The two networks, *HTB* and *NW*, were chosen, rather than a random collection of charismatic Anglican churches, in order to seek coherence. Clearly these networks are highly significant among charismatic Anglicans, and in the case of *HTB* were expanding rapidly, both numerically and in influence within the Church of England. Both of the networks, as we have seen, sprang directly from the influence of the Vineyard, and both were networks I knew well, having been involved with both in different ways, for example through having attended the *NW* Summer festival, and through my regular membership for most of the research period of a planted *HTB* congregation. These two networks, therefore, would provide some useful parameters for the research, as well as opportunities to compare and contrast. It was clearly impossible, and unnecessary in a piece of qualitative research, to study all of the churches

in these two networks, so a selection of a representative samples of each would be important. Identifying churches was straightforward. The *HTB* website clearly lists their network of church plants[37]. Similarly the *NW* churches were simple to find: I had contact with a regional leader for *NW* who was able to recommend some churches which might be open to participation in my research (he himself was not one of the clergy subsequently interviewed). It was important, though, that the samples should be representative of the larger group, and not single-case anomalies (Yin, 1994, 44-5). My past experience of the two networks led me to expect that when it came to their use of formal Anglican liturgy there would be a much greater variety within *NW* than in *HTB*. I also expected it to be true that whilst the vast majority of the *HTB* churches would be urban, based in university cities, the *NW* churches would be from a wider and much more varied demographic. I was aware of one or two *HTB* plants of a more Anglo-Catholic nature, so I was careful to include one of these churches, even though I expected it to be dissimilar from the vast majority of the *HTB* churches. But apart from that I anticipated little variation, meaning that sample selection would not be too critical an issue for this network. Choices were made, therefore, largely more on a geographical basis, so that it would be possible easily to travel to attend Sunday morning services. The fact that *NW* churches are more suburban, and even rural, than *HTB* meant that I had to make a more careful selection in order to reflect this. Above all it was important to ensure that the churches chosen would provide a fair sample of those represented in the networks as a whole. I began by contacting churches nearest to my home, and gradually cast the net wider until I had achieved a reasonable and, in the case of *NW*, a varied enough sample. In spite of this largely geographical selection vacation opportunities permitted attendance at a few churches, from both networks, which were further afield. I also tried to balance the number of visits from each of the two networks. I anticipated that the larger the number of *NW* churches I visited, the more complex the result would be, with a much greater nuancing of attitudes towards liturgical worship, but also that to increase the number of *HTB* visits would not significantly alter the overall picture. The degree to which these assumptions were correct will be explored below.

I first contacted those whom I hoped to interview either by e-mail or by phone, and when they expressed willingness to participate in my research (which all those contacted did) I sent them the explanatory materials and ethical consent forms which may be found in Appendix 1. Leaders of the different *NW* churches were very co-operative, but *HTB* contacts sometimes turned out to be problematic. After initial enthusiasm, there appeared to have been a culture of not responding to further calls or e-mails. In some *HTB* churches I was welcomed to their services and a time and date for the interview was fixed, but when the time came there was no response and the interviewee was not contactable. This limited my data collection. I explored this with one *HTB* clergyman during an interview:.

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[37] https://www.htb.org/about/related-churches [Accessed 2 April 2018).

JL: *HTB* has a culture of not responding to e-mails or texts (laughter) so access has been quite difficult and in fact there's a few visits I've done and I just haven't managed to do the interview, so I don't know what that's about.

HT8:   Yeah, fascinating ... What speaks through all of it about the e-mails, *HTB* from my experience is an organisation built very highly on trust, and very centrally from Nicky [Gumbel], and Sandy [Millar] before. It's very tight, very loyal, and very sort of close-knit relationships that are at the heart of that church, and that tends to make them quite suspicious or closed off to outside, as a general rule, particularly with things like how Alpha spread, they wanted to keep a very tight rein on it, which I think was wise actually. But I think that has produced a culture of 'we're kind of just going to crack on and do our thing with the people that we trust, and everything else can go on and we'll support as and where we can but we're kind of doing our thing'. Which means that when someone e-mails and says 'I'm doing this outside thing', even if you think that sounds fascinating, it's kind of like 'Yeah, but we're doing our thing', which I think then feeds into the model of planting, which is the people that get sent are the people who are very highly trusted, by Nicky, and have probably …[been at] HTB as a curate.

It is worth recording that at visits without exception I was welcomed warmly, by church members and leaders alike, but in the follow-through I was sometimes abandoned. Whether this was about 'We're doing our thing', or whether I was in any sense perceived as a threat is hard to discern: I was certainly never treated as threatening. But the net result was that I was simply unable to collect the amount of data I would have liked. I finally reached the point of making the decision to work with what I had, rather than to extend my research unduly by keeping on pursuing more visits from obviously reluctant churches, not least because by this stage we had been affected by the March 2020 Coronavirus lockdown. While visiting online services would no doubt have been an interesting experience, I felt that this would introduce another complicating dynamic. It would have been easily possible to increase the number of *NW* visits, but I did not want my data to be unduly biased towards one of the networks, and so tried to keep the numbers similar for each. In any case I did not feel that much more data collection would have significantly altered the results. It was encouraging to learn that Cartledge (2019, 31) found it equally difficult to gain access in his study of megachurches. My interviewees were all white British males, apart from one female worship pastor, with an age range, particularly in *HTB* churches, towards the younger end of the scale for Anglican clergy (the average age of non-retired Anglican clergy was approximately 55 in 2016[38]). Details of *HTB* clergy at the different plants are available at https://www.htb.org/network [Accessed 5th July 2022]. It is clear from this website that there is little ethnic or gender diversity among *HTB* leaders, and therefore those selected were a fairly typical selection, as were the *NW* leaders involved.

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[38] https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Ministry%20Statistics%202016.pdf
[Accessed 5th July 2022]

Ethical approval

It is vital that in any research project strict ethical practices are designed and followed. It was necessary before beginning the fieldwork to ensure that the correct ethical permissions were in place. Once fieldwork materials had been approved by the University they were sent out to possible candidates. All those who had indicated willingness to participate were sent an introductory pack which introduced me, explained the purpose of the project, and how I was seeking information from them and their churches. Copies of the materials used are included in Appendix 1. The same materials were also sent to those who would be part of the Focus Group. I made sure that I had received back from all the research subjects signed ethical permission forms, which ensured that they had given informed consent to being interviewed, recorded, transcribed, and to having their comments used in this thesis. I also ensured that ethical integrity would be preserved in the ways in which I stored interview data, both recordings and transcripts, on my personal computer rather than on a cloud, and that both audio files and transcripts were encrypted and password-protected, and would be deleted once the project was over. I have also ensured anonymity by disguising names of individuals and churches with a coding system. I explained to participants that the only specific information which would be given was to which of the two networks each church belonged, which was important as I attempted to analyse both similarities and differences between the two. The geographical information about the location of the different churches was kept sufficiently vague to make identification unlikely. None of the photographs I took appear in this thesis, in case the buildings are recognisable. I was also aware of the need not to do reputational damage to churches, particularly in the light of the somewhat critical conclusions with which this study will conclude. Yin (*Op. cit.*, 68) notes that Case Study Research is often about activities and decisions of living people. We are not merely studying specimens in a laboratory. Ward (2012, 7) reminds us too of the importance of our representation of the communities we study, and how our writing up of the research is likely to make the community appear to others. I proceeded with the visits and research only once I had received signed forms from the church leaders and focus group members.

As well as the process required by the University of Durham I was also aware that ethical considerations would need to spread wider than just the formal subjects of my research, those from whom ethical consent procedures would have to be followed. My behaviour during visits could well affect others, and I knew that it was important not to cause any 'collateral damage' to their worship. When I visited churches, therefore, I decided always to sit near the back, where fewer people would see me, and I would make a point of introducing myself to those sitting nearby, explaining the purpose of my visit, and expressing the hope that my note-taking during the service would not unduly prove a distraction to them or hinder their own worship. These introductions seemed to have been appreciated and were universally well received.

Participant Observation

I arranged to visit one service at each of the churches, usually the only, but occasionally the main Sunday morning gathering. As mentioned I was careful to arrive in good time so that I could relax into the new space, position myself appropriately, and begin to record impressions both of the worship-space and the arriving worshippers. My hand-written note-taking also described the order of events and the songs which were used, very brief notes on the sermon, information about which liturgical texts (if any) were used, and any personal reflections at the time. Full descriptions of three of the services will be given in the next chapter. After the service I would join in conversations over coffee, and then on the return journey my research colleague (when he was able to be present) would reflect on what we had experienced, and our interpretations of what had been going on. In particular we were able to reflect on how the same act of worship can inspire very different reactions in different people. My aim was that through careful listening to and recording of what I observed I would be able to see some clear patterns emerging.

As part of the Participant Observation some documentary evidence was gathered from those of the churches which issued weekly news sheets or bulletins, but on examination while they did give something of the 'flavour' of the different congregations they shed little light on the research questions and their interest in liturgical worship. In the same way physical artefacts did not seem helpful, although spatial analysis and photographs of the worship-spaces did give some clear signals about what was central (literally) to the worship of the churches. In writing up the services I attended I sought to interpret what the layout of the space said about the theology of worship espoused by particular communities. Details of church buildings and layout are given as part of the data report in the next chapter. Some documentary evidence was used to provide sources of normative and formal theology, as mentioned above, but this information came not from the individual churches but from publications by the networks to which they belonged. Similarly attention was paid to the congregational context and the apparent demographics of different congregations, as well as to the interviewees as a group.

Interviews

The interviews, where possible, were conducted mostly by phone, and were audio recorded and transcribed. Because I had chosen the semi-structured approach I began with a set of questions which would form a rough guide for me, but which would also allow me to follow interesting turns in the conversation. All the interviews with parish clergy were concluded with a question about the Declaration of Assent, which will be discussed in the next chapter. All the interviewees were ascribed

a code which indicated only to which of the two networks they belonged, but were otherwise numerical in chronological order. They began, as mentioned, with a trial interview from an *HTB* priest, to whom I returned later in the process for help in reflecting on the information so far received. As well as the parish clergy, there were two interviews with paid worship-leaders, one of whom worked in an *HTB* church but had previously been at a *NW* church. He had some helpful contributions to make in comparing the two networks. Over the question of the legality or otherwise of the abandonment of liturgy I wanted to get the mind of someone from the other side of the question, so I conducted two interviews with an Archdeacon at different stages in the process. Finally, at one *HTB* service I arrived to discover that the Diocesan Bishop was present and would be presiding at the Eucharist and preaching. I had not come prepared to conduct a formal interview, but I was able to talk to him after the service and gain some insights from his point of view. Because I had not been through the research ethics process with him, none of his comments are recorded here, although they did provide some helpful information in the background.

I enjoyed the interview process, and felt that I had good rapport with all those to whom I spoke. There appeared to be a high degree of honesty and openness. Occasionally I ended the interviews by asking whether people had found it easy and comfortable, and the answers were positive in every case. My previous training in counselling had, I felt, provided some useful skills in active listening, reflection, and non-directiveness. I was pleased to discover that while many of my presuppositions had been confirmed in the interviews, others had proved to be incorrect, and I was pleased to be able to rethink these issues.

Focus Group

The group consisted of a group of seven people, with me as host and my research colleague as an observer and reflector. The members were selected to represent a typical cross section of the age range of the *HTB* church which they all attended, and a reasonable mix of gender and ethnicity. I invited a slightly wider group, and the actual members were those from that group able to attend at the most acceptable date and time. The group had five members in their 20s and two in their forties. There were three men and four women, and all had had previous Christian experience before they joined the church in question. There was also some racial variety with one woman from Nigeria and one from Norway. I considered the possibility of a second Focus Group from within the *NW* network, but I felt after the *HTB* group that I had answered the question I had set out to ask, whether it was possible that there might be disagreement between the normative theology of the church and its network and the operant theology of congregation members. I decided that to repeat the exercise with another group would yield no further useful information. In any case, while I could

be sure that an *HTB* Focus Group would be highly typical of the network as a whole, the greater variety of approaches within *NW* would mean that the results would depend very much on which particular *NW* church I chose for the Group. The group members completed ethical consent forms, and agreed that the session would be audio recorded and transcribed for the purposes of my research.

Data processing

The final fieldwork task involved processing the information I had received in order that it should accurately reflect what I had seen and heard, and form a solid basis for further reflection and analysis. Data comprised written notes, photographs, recordings and transcripts from interviews and the Focus Group, and reflections and discussions with my research colleague. I took the decision to transcribe audio recordings manually rather than using voice recognition software to do so. This was time-consuming (approximately four hours transcription for one hour of audio), but it did enable me to hear some of the nuances which transcription software would have missed, and to spend a large amount of time 'inhabiting' the material as I relived the interviews. Once transcribed, the interviews, along with my own notes, were coded and reflected upon. I transcribed interviews as soon as I could after the sessions, and I worked on one interview at a time, avoiding saving up several interviews before processing them. This meant that as well as the recorded and written notes I could note impressions and feelings which seemed important as I spent more time with the data. Coding, on the other hand, happened once I had several transcribed files, rather than one at a time, using Nvivo v12. As well as the coded data I kept the full transcripts as separate files, both written and recorded as audio. In line with ethical policy I kept these files in password-protected encrypted form on my own computer.

Belotto (2018, 262) bemoans the 'dearth of information regarding the details of qualitative data analysis', and shares some principles from his early experiences as a newcomer to qualitative research. He suggests the identification of 'meaning units', phrases which were used of different areas which might build up evidence and agreement, and also commends 'structural coding', where responses are classified according to their relationship with the research questions. Yin (1996, 106-19) emphasises the need to begin with a strategy rather than simply 'playing' with the data to see what might emerge, and suggests several approaches, of which two seem particularly relevant: pattern-matching (matching data with expected or predicted results) and explanation-building (an iterative process which seeks to use the data to interpret a situation, to discover causal links, and to build and test hypotheses). He also commends the analysis of 'embedded units', in this case individual churches with the two larger networks, an approach which will become relevant in the quest to compare and contrast responses,

so that the two different sub-cases, *NW* and *HTB*, may be examined in order to identify differences as well as similarities. Hahn (2008) uses a different picture, that of panning for gold, where a series of 'sweeps' of the data gradually removes the less helpful materials so that that which is really valuable can be isolated.

Whilst this kind of theoretical approach to coding is important, Osmer suggests that like the Pastoral Cycle itself the analysis of data is both a science and an art, and requires not just the ability to use coding software well, but also deep spirituality. Using Belotto's approach I identified from the transcripts some 'meaning units', for example 'attitudes to liturgy', which were further subdivided, for example into 'negative attitudes' and 'positive attitudes'. I also found his method of 'structural coding' helpful. For example, answers to the question 'What do you think is gained by a non-liturgical approach?' included such sub-codes as 'freedom', 'flexibility', and 'time'. I also made connections between what I had observed of the churches at worship and some things which were *not* said. For example only two interviewees specifically mentioned their belief that worship songs had replaced liturgy, a contention which will be examined in detail in chapter 6. But in fact the actual praxis of the vast majority of the churches demonstrated that this was exactly their approach. Thus the observation and the interviews together provided a rich source of data for further reflection. Finally I identified some key themes which emerged, either frequently or strongly, and which seemed worth pursuing as they provided direct answers to my research questions. These themes provide the framework for the more critical analysis in subsequent chapters.

4. Data Report – Liturgy: 'a massive switch-off'?

This chapter reports data gained from visits to churches from the *HTB* and *NW* networks, and from interviews with church leaders, usually the ordained clergy, but also with some employed 'worship pastors'.[39] It seeks to describe the Practical Theology situation which is the subject of this study, to answer Osmer's (2018) descriptive/empirical question. It will paint a backcloth with brief details of each of the churches visited, before providing more detailed information about three specially chosen acts of worship. It will move on to report significant information gained through Participant Observation, and will amplify those findings through information gained from the interviews. The chapter concludes with an account of how clergy explained that they navigated the legal issues around their worship choices.

The fieldwork demonstrated clearly five major policies or modes of praxis present in the churches visited. These provide a framework for reporting the data, and each will be examined and evidenced in turn. The data demonstrated that in *NW* and *HTB* churches there was a deliberate lack of formal liturgy, and instead a much greater use made of singing. The way in which worship was led demonstrated a demeanour of informality rather than reverence. When liturgy was used, it was used with a lack of creativity, and there was little evidence of what will be termed a 'liturgical approach' to worship. Attention will also be paid to the differences between the networks as well as the similarities. These differences are significant in uncovering the policies which Participant Observation demonstrated. Whilst from outside the culture it would be easy simply to see congregations from these two networks as generic evangelical/charismatic churches, the fieldwork demonstrated important differences. Though both influenced by the Vineyard movement they have moved in two significantly different directions, including in their use of Anglican liturgy. It is important, therefore, to reflect on this dichotomy, and how it affects liturgical policies.

These differences stem largely from the way in which local churches become part of the networks. All the *HTB* churches visited were direct or indirect plants from HTB Kensington. Sometimes these were plants in the sense of a brand new congregation starting from scratch, but more often they were 'grafts', where *HTB*-trained teams took over an existing, usually fairly weak, Anglican church, along with its building(s). As explained by HT7 different terminology is used for grafts and plants, and the culture which they bring, and even grafts can vary in nature:

> In the planting network they talk about majority graft and minority graft. The majority graft is where maybe the new congregation is made up of 80% of the people who have come in, a minority graft is where maybe the people who have come in represent 20% of the overall congregation, but nonetheless it's a coherent monocultural … it's a formed group. (HT7T)

[39] The churches and individuals were each given a unique code, the key to which can be found in Appendix 3.

The key point here is that the planting or grafting group arrive with a pre-formed culture, often described as 'DNA', which they then seek to replicate in their new setting. They have a very clear idea of what the 'finished product' will look like, plenty of models from previous plants, and a road map of how they hope to get there. Whilst there is limited room for variation and individuality, the life, the terminology and the general *HTB* brand is strong and clearly on display on the individual websites of different congregations. Interviewee HT4 spoke of *HTB* 'style and tradition' and HT8 specifically used the language of DNA and replication. However the language of 'cloning' was resisted in favour of 'family likeness', although *HTB* churches are very aware of being part of a success story, with a sense of having a winning formula and a proven track record of dramatic numerical growth. Since it clearly works so well, and since there are so many examples of the numerical success of this model in action, why try to do anything different? (HT7T) Another important factor is the relative youthfulness of *HTB* churches. Whilst HTB Kensington has a long and distinguished history, even the oldest of the plants date only from the mid-80s, and of those visited the oldest dates from 2010 and the majority from within the previous six years[40].

NW churches, on the other hand, come with a history. Whilst most would be evangelical, they are all churches which at some point have opted to sign up to the network. This means that there was no clean sheet with which to start, and leaders are much more aware of their history, and therefore the need to honour that from the past which is honourable. There is also likely to be a much greater thankfulness for those who have gone before, and a desire to respect their faithfulness, even if things are now heading in a very different direction. There is also likely to be a greater awareness of the traditional role of an Anglican Parish Church, set in and rooted within its community, whilst *HTB* churches frequently describe themselves as 'city centre' or 'student' churches. When asked about the principles behind the changes they had made to the church's worship, some *NW* leaders mentioned this sense of being primarily the parish church (NW5T, NW8T). However, while this was generally found to be true, *HTB* leaders do try to negotiate this tension well. HT6T stated that it was the 'charism' of the Church of England to be 'for that neighbourhood, for that parish, for that place'. But more common among *HTB* churches is the attempt to maintain at least one service which will satisfy the needs of more traditional worshippers, which allows the *HTB* culture and praxis to take root without hindrance in the main congregation(s). This might be an early Sunday Communion, or a midweek service, or even a more traditional church building within the team, where something recognisably Anglican would be maintained (HT2T, HT5T), even if this is done with little conviction (HT8T).

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[40] Apart from the HTB website, another useful list of plants from HTB, with basic details and dates of each, can be found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HTB_network#List_of_church_plants [Accessed 22 April 2020].

The key difference between the two networks, therefore, is that *HTB* is much more rooted in its own culture and ethos, while *NW* has a greater awareness of, and loyalty to, the ethos of the Anglican parish system, and the need to be a church for all people in a particular place, whilst also being fully committed to welcoming the work of the Holy Spirit. This fundamental difference between the two networks accounts for other significant variations, such as the targeting of different demographics, the musical repertoire, and even the nature of the gospel proclaimed.

This means that in practice the age profile of congregations is another significant difference between the two streams, as indeed is the age group of clergy and other leaders. *HTB* churches, because they often have the luxury of a clean sheet, are more easily able to target younger people, which they do relentlessly. An exploration of the photographic images used on the different *HTB* plant websites will give the message very clearly that they have a young, 'cool' approach to church, and while leaders did not often speak of this deliberate targeting, it came out strongly as a subtext in virtually all the interviews. During fieldwork *HTB* congregations tended, with one exception (HT12D), to be more monochrome and youthful, whereas *NW* congregations, while typically having a younger age profile than the Church of England generally, nevertheless tended to be more mixed. It is interesting to note that so far the majority of *HTB* plants and grafts are in university cities or gentrified areas of London, which may be perceived as being ripe for the evangelistic picking. On the other hand *NW* churches tend to be more suburban than urban. In the interviews everything in the life of the *HTB* churches, and especially their worship, was assessed again and again on its appeal (or not) to youth, students and young adults, and whether or not it would 'connect'. Along with this came the assumption that the target group would not relate to formal liturgy, but would relate to contemporary worship songs. (HT1T, HT2T, HT5T). But could Moy have been correct in suggesting that 'to sit through 30 minutes of guitar-based ballads playing the same lyrics on repeat and staring into space with "arms high and hearts abandoned" takes a certain sort of personality'? (2023b, 133) Indeed, it will be reported shortly that Focus Group members felt more negatively about sung worship than might have been expected, and even articulated some interest in liturgy.

It has to be said, of course, that all the churches visited had been successful in their quest for growth. The *HTB* churches particularly, often starting almost or completely from nothing, showed numerical growth which is often startlingly dramatic. My own church began with a residual congregation of nine and a team of 12 moving to the city: five years later the figures were around the 300 mark, and on Easter Sunday 2020, in spite of the Coronavirus lockdown, nearly 1000 people tuned in online for Sunday worship. This is dramatic growth by any standards, and was being replicated in scale by all the *HTB* plants visited. The *NW* churches, while not enjoying the privilege of a clean sheet, and often with battles to fight, nevertheless were growing, and creating congregations with a good age mix, and

thus bucking the Anglican trend of elderly congregations and missing generations in the middle.[41] However, although there was little explanation of the content of the gospel either at services or during interviews, some assumptions emerged which needed to be explored further. For now, though, it is clear that while expressed slightly differently in terms of target groups, the need to evangelise those currently outside the Church was a major driver in both networks.

Experiencing Worship: The Churches Visited

A brief sketch of each of the churches will help to locate the interviews, although the information will be kept brief and general in order to minimise the possibility of identification. This will help to provide a context for the data reporting which will follow.

New Wine Churches

NW1 is located in the centre of a well-to-do small market town in the East Midlands, in a building which dates from the 15th Century. It has been reordered with chairs rather than pews, a chancel which houses the worship-band, a dais extending from the chancel step, with a central lectern, and three TV screens. At the east end is a colourful window which dominates the front of the church, and which remains unobscured by any other installations. The church seats 240, with around 200 present for the service attended. The congregation was a good cross-section of ages, with a large number of men present. This was the second mid-morning service, and an earlier service had had a higher proportion of young families, but with standing room only. In addition to these two services there had also been a smaller 8:00am *BCP* Holy Communion service. The service attended was clearly song-based, with liturgy only used for penitence and the Lord's Prayer. However, there was a sense that the songs chosen were used because they fitted with the teaching theme, the power of the resurrection. The whole service approximated to a *SoW*, but with several missing ingredients.

NW2 was one of a group of three churches in a series of small rural villages in the West Country, with a Grade II* listed building, parts of which date from the 13th century. There were around 40 people present at this service in a church which seated 80, and which showed no signs of significant reordering. The congregation was made up of elderly people and young families, with a gap between these two age brackets. The children present were predominantly under the age of seven. Normally,

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[41] See Research and Statistics *Statistics for mission 2018*
https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/2018StatisticsForMission_0.pdf [Accessed 24 May 2020]

apparently, there would have been many more children, but the local school had organised an event which meant that only around six were present. The service was called 'Family Focus' and it was number two of an experimental new service. It was aimed, in spite of the name, at children. Across the chancel step there was a screen for projection and a 'stage' for puppets. There was no worship-band, and we sang karaoke-style from projected video clips. The vicar was dressed casually, but with a clerical collar. The service was notable because there was not one single word of Anglican liturgy: from the greeting to the final prayer everything was extempore.

NW3 is set close to the centre of a large town in the Midlands, meeting in a traditional-looking Grade I listed church building, parts of which date from the 12th century. Various reordering schemes have taken place over the years, and the current building has chairs instead of pews, and a platform and nave altar in front of a long and narrow chancel. Three large screens serve the three aisles. On the platform was the altar table with a cross, obscured by a central lectern (which remained there throughout the service) and a worship band with guitar, bass, drums and piano, plus viola and male and female vocals, placed to one side of the dais. We were welcomed by several lay people as we arrived. The vicar and curate were dressed in chinos and checked clerical shirts with dog-collars. There were around 200 people present, with a good mix across the age ranges. In contrast to NW2 the service was very liturgical, although worship songs were blended in at several points, as were extempore prayers. It followed closely the *CW* Order 1 Communion shape, although no optional texts were used. A complete description of this service follows below.

NW4 was in a building dating from the mid-1800s as an estate church, on the site of an earlier 7th century building. It lies on the outskirts of the Potteries, and is set in a leafy area in the grounds of the local stately home. The service attended was a 9:30 *CW* Communion Service, part of the pattern of a weekly 8:00 *BCP* Communion, with the 9:30 and 11:00 services varying during the month. The 9:30 which we attended was a more elderly congregation, with 70-80 worshippers, organ and hymns, and the liturgy displayed on-screen. The building had been reordered with chairs and a small nave altar. The vicar wore a clerical shirt and collar but no other robes. There was a small amount of liturgical material, combined with sections from *NP/W* and two older worship songs were used alongside more traditional hymns. The later 11:00 service was more informal, I was told, so that the 9:30 provided something of a bridge between that and the 8:00 *BCP* service. What liturgy there was was led in a straightforward way with little in terms of creativity.

NW5 was a prosperous parish near the sea in a South Coast retirement town. The building, which dated from the mid-19th century had been destroyed in the war, and a new 1950s building erected, but in a fairly traditional style. Further reordering was planned. The service was a 5th Sunday combined service, where a traditional 9:30 *CW* Communion congregation and a more informal 11:15

congregation met together quarterly. There was a mix of ages but predominantly over 60s. There were 175 people present, plus a dozen or so children. Everything was printed on a service sheet which had been custom-produced for that service alone. No projection was used. The vicar led the service wearing dog-collar, jacket and chinos, and music was led by a band of a very high quality consisting of keys, guitar, vocals and a small string section. Musically the repertoire was interesting as hymns, played on organ and piano together, sat alongside 80s worship songs and even a Taizé chant. Clearly thought had gone into the planning of the sung worship, which reflected appropriately on the theme, from the lectionary readings. There was a mixture of *CW* and extempore prayers.

NW6 was a suburban church, around two miles from the centre of a large northern industrial city, in what had been a village until swallowed up in the 1900s. The building dated from 1874. It had been substantially re-ordered, with a platform in front of a solid chancel screen, carpet throughout and chairs replacing the pews. What looked like the previous altar stood centrally on the platform, with the band strung out across the front of it: drums, bass, guitar and two keyboards. A large screen hung above them, with TV monitors for the side aisles. The congregation numbered around 150, with a good mix of ages, including about 20 children, and of men and women. The curate led the service, clearly, confidently and enthusiastically, wearing a skirt and clerical shirt with dog-collar. The service lay towards the non-liturgical end of the typical *NW* spectrum, with a selection of worship songs, minimal liturgy, and one traditional hymn. Great emphasis was placed on welcoming the Spirit, and prayer ministry was offered during a slot of sung worship, rather than at the end of the service. As with NW3 a fuller description of this service follows.

NW7 met in a 1980s building set in a pleasant suburban estate near a small town in the East Midlands. It had decorated brick inside walls, a square floor-plan and a low dais at the front, with a plain wooden altar-table and portable font. No liturgical colours or other soft furnishings were in evidence. The clergy wore dog-collars but no robes. The space seated around 250 people on individual chairs, and there were two large projection screens up high on the front wall. The service was one of All-Age Worship with the baptisms. There were around 120 adults present, with perhaps 20 children. This was the second service of the day, and apart from the Baptism was a straight repeat of an earlier one. Little liturgy was used apart from during the Baptism, when *CW* texts were used, including the more accessible Prayer over the Water. Apart from a threefold sprinkling with water none of the other creative *CW* options, such as anointing with oil or clothing in white, were taken up, reinforcing the idea that 'liturgy' equals 'words'. After the Baptism the service reverted to the more usual sung worship.

At **NW8** the service was held in an unusually-shaped modern church, built, like the estate in which it stands, around the 1970s, in an area of the South East which did not look or feel particularly affluent,

but which has experienced some gentrification due to the ease of commuting into London. Originally with a traditional Anglican layout, it had been reordered and turned through 90° so that the simple altar-table and lectern were placed at the front centre of what would have been the north wall, with the old chancel providing a slightly raised seating area. The service was a generic non-eucharistic morning service, with around 175 people present, with a fairly good age mix. Vicar and curate were wearing dog-collars but no robes, and the music was led by a band, off centre, with piano, cahon, bass, guitar, violin, vocals and, surprisingly, a tuba. The curate led the service, and was clearly and confidently 'presiding', while the vicar preached. Again the main time in the service was spent on sung worship, with two slots, the first lasting 20 minutes, and the opportunity of prayer ministry in response to the preaching during the second. The service was a *SoW*, but with several ingredients missing.

NW9's building, set in a leafy suburb of a northern city around three miles from the city centre, was erected in the 1830s as a chapel-of-ease, and had seen some refurbishment since. Pews were removed and chairs and carpeting added. The worship-space consists of one large area with no side chapels, but with a servery in the north west corner. It had a very light and airy feel to it. At the front was a central altar-table, with the worship-band spread along behind it. Candles were lit on the altar-table, and there was a lectern to the north side, although most of the time those officiating stood in the front centre. The band consisted of keys, drums and three female vocalists. The congregation was around 100 strong, with a good age mix and many children. The vicar was dressed in cords, a jumper and a dog-collar. The service was a game of two halves, with the first hour or so consisting of a lengthy notices slot, extempore prayers and worship songs, followed by a fairly straight *CW* Eucharistic Prayer, complete with surrounding texts. Unusually a seasonal preface was used, but not the one for the season we were actually in. Similarly the blessing was from a series of options, but did not reflect the appropriate season, and lacked a dismissal. The evening service, we were told, would be a in straight Vineyard worship-word-ministry format. This church provided further evidence of the preference for worship-songs over liturgy.

NW10's building, which dates from 1909, was built to replace a smaller mission church, and originally seated over 600. It lies in a suburban village which is close to a well-to-do Yorkshire town. It has now been reordered, with Victorian pews replaced by chairs and a platform at the chancel step. There was a large screen for projection with TVs in the side aisles. The band (keys, two vocals, drums) were off centre stage left, and to the right there was a signing station for deaf people. One lady was seen to be following a braille copy of the service. This was the only church where any provision for deaf or blind people was in evidence. Around 80 people were there, of mixed ages but predominantly 50-60s. There were tables in one side aisle with craft activities for children. Coffee was served in a lean-to narthex before the service, which was led by two (unidentified) lay people. The

service took place on Palm Sunday, so some liturgical action was used, although what texts were used were used unconvincingly: palms were distributed and waved but not blessed, the confession lacked an absolution and the blessing a dismissal. In response to the penitential section we were invited to write our own praises and stick them onto a wallpaper 'road' which ran down the central aisle. During the sermon people could, if they preferred, move to the side and engage in craft activities. Musically there was a complete absence of traditional Palm Sunday hymns, and what liturgy was used was not from *CW*, but appeared to be from another all-age resource, perhaps Scripture Union.

HTB Churches

HT1 was an *HTB* plant less than one year old at the time of the visit, in the club and restaurant quarter of a Midlands university city. The building had been an Anglican church in the past, but had been used as a retail outlet until its readoption as a place of worship. The building was little more than a shell, with extensive building works in evidence as smaller rooms were being erected on the gallery level. The stage was empty but for a large wooden cross, for reasons which became apparent as the service progressed. Fairy lights festooned the pillars and rafters of the building. We were welcomed at the door, although not overwhelmingly, and hot drinks were being served before the service began. There were around 80 people present, mostly in the 18-30 age range, although with some older people, but as this was during August, and immediately following the *HTB* Focus holiday week, attendance was apparently smaller than usual. Words and videos were shown on two TV screens either side of the stage, and there was the usual Alpha Course banner at the front. There was a recognisable *HTB* branding in evidence, and the five minute countdown clock heralded the start of the service. A band, somewhat stripped down from usual, apparently, consisted of keys, cajon, cello, vocals and guitar. The format of the service was Vineyard worship-word-ministry, with much sung worship, although with a mix of older songs and the more contemporary. There was a noticeable escalation in volume and enthusiasm when some more familiar older songs began. The only liturgical section were the Intercessions, which were introduced as 'old skool' and 'perhaps a bit dreary' (HT1D) since we were going to use the standard Anglican response:

> Lord, in your mercy,
> **Hear our prayer.**

Rarely, the service invited extempore singing, in tongues or English, to which there was a slightly less than enthusiastic response, and a couple of 'Words of Knowledge' were given before the prayer ministry, making this one of the most overtly charismatic services attended.

HT2-3 is a three-year old *HTB* plant, meeting in a traditional-looking Anglican building in the centre of the town and a few yards from the sea-front in a South Coast resort. The building has a nave with a South aisle, and a chancel screen behind which are choir stalls. In front of the screen a stage had been constructed, with the band centre-stage: keys, acoustic guitar, bass and drums in a booth, with a female backing vocalist. The nave still has the original pews (although they are awaiting a faculty[42] to remove them), and the south aisle has been cleared to create a space for coffee and mingling. Christmas lights had been strung across the nave, and TVs hung from the pillars. Before the service there was upbeat music, with a loop of the notices for the week and a countdown timer. The start time was publicised as 11:15, but in fact the service actually began shortly after 11:30. There was a good mix of all ages, but with more older people than one might expect, and a predominance of student-age people. Around 250 people in all were present. The format was again a fairly straight Vineyard worship-word-ministry, with an opening slot which lasted 40 minutes, although the flagging enthusiasm as the singing continued was clearly noticeable as people began to disengage and sit down. At the time of my visit this church stated explicitly on its website that 'in our worship we use songs from Bethel, Hillsong and Worship Central'. When I asked the worship-pastor why this was, he told me

> Yeah, partly because they are the … they're at the forefront of what's happening in the global movement on contemporary charismatic worship. They are writing amazing songs for congregations that people really connect with, they're really well known, and so if I want to introduce a new Hillsong song, I'm really confident that before I start singing it, there are a lot of people in the church that have already heard it, because they've got the latest Hillsong album, or they've seen it on YouTube. (HT3T)

The only liturgical texts used were for the reading of Banns of Marriage (used extemporarily and inaccurately) and a liturgical blessing which ended the sermon. This church yielded two interviews, one with the vicar (HT2) and one with the worship-pastor (HT3), who had previously been a worship-leader in a *NW* church, and who was able to provide some useful insights into the differences between the two networks.

HT4 was a redbrick church, surrounded by a park and high-rise flats, near the centre of a Midlands city. The building was Grade II listed and had been built in 1868, but had been put to secular use before the arrival of the *HTB* team. It had been completely gutted inside, leaving a shell which had been carpeted, with a servery at the back, a central stage and three sections of chairs around it in a squared U-shape. Four TVs were suspended from large pillars, and there was no central screen, but a large wooden cross hung over the centre of the stage. The band were spread around the platform (with the drums just off at floor level) and faced inwards toward each other. The line-up was leader with acoustic guitar, keys, drums, bass, electric guitar and female vocals. For the sermon a lectern was

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[42] A legal document which is essential for any changes to the fabric of Church of England church buildings.

placed facing the bottom of the U of seats. The service attended was number four of a new morning service: they had been meeting only in the afternoons up to that stage. There were 65 people present, mostly of student age. Again this service was typical of the Vineyard/*HTB* format, and will be described more fully below.

HT5 met in a disused factory close to the centre of a major city. Planted in 2015, this was a more mature congregation. There were approximately 400 people present in a T-shaped space, with a large stage at the crossing, empty except for an unused drum booth, with the band, consisting of keys, guitar and two vocalists at floor level in front of the stage. The vast majority of those present were under 30, with a good number of children. The vicar led the service and preached, dressed totally informally. This again was in a Vineyard format, with 30 minutes of sung worship, a 30 minute sermon, and prayer ministry accompanied by more sung worship. The only liturgical element was a *CW* blessing at the end.

HT6 is a plant into a typical classical Georgian building, set in a gentrified area of the East End of London. The vicar has a sharp and intelligent mind, and is a liturgist, and the worship represented a rare blend of well-used liturgy and a more typical *HTB* style. The congregation for the Family Communion service attended numbered around 100 people, with white faces very much in the minority. Among the expected sung worship, which consisted of several children's songs as well as the more usual *HTB* repertoire, the liturgical sections included the Collect, a truncated rite of Thanksgiving for the birth of a child, responses to the reading of Scripture, and a full *CW* Eucharistic prayer. At the end the liturgical blessing was preceded by an extempore prayer of blessing, and followed by The Grace.

HT7-8 were interviews from a friend who served at HTB Kensington and was then a curate at a 5½ year old *HTB* plant in the centre of a Midlands university city. His church was not part of the Participant Observation visits, but is a typical *HTB* plant, with several hundred students and young adults regularly in attendance. It was useful to speak to him less about the specific research project, and more about the nature and culture of *HTB* as a network.

HT9 was a church in the centre of a southern city, which, despite being part of the *HTB* network had retained its more catholic style. The building dates from 1865, and is set in a very expensive part of the city. Space had been cleared within the nave to form a servery, and pews have been replaced with chairs. The service was a straight *CW* Order One Eucharist in an Anglo-catholic style, with a small, very high quality singing group who sung parts of the liturgy, an organ for the traditional hymns, and clouds of smoke. The celebrant wore cassock, surplice and stole and others wore cassock albs. There were around 50 present, largely elderly. Sadly the curate-in-charge had been taken ill the

night before, so a stand-in priest had been found at short notice, and he looked distinctly out of his depth and had constantly to be manhandled by the MC. An ordinand preached, less than effectively. There seemed to be nothing distinctively *HTB* in style about the worship, although the setting, with coffee bar and lots of invitations to Alpha, seemed part of the set-up and brand. The sermon was a very basic evangelistic talk, which seemed out of place here, and there was no prayer ministry or opportunity for response. Attempts to gain access for an interview were not responded to, and I reluctantly gave up trying. This would no doubt have been a most instructive interview. This was by far the most thoroughly liturgical *HTB* service, but felt awkward and something of a compromise, reinforcing the sense that one could have either liturgy or the Spirit, but not both.

HT10 was another service after which I was not able to conduct an interview. It was (for *HTB*) a very atypical Good Friday service in the form of a meditation, based around the Seven Words from the Cross. The building, Grade 1 listed and dating from the 1870s, lies on the edge of a South Coast seaside town. There were some brief periods of central congregational words and music, but the bulk of the time was given to 'liquid worship' in different areas of the church and grounds, around which people could come and go as they pleased[43]. Each gathered section was in the same format:

> Worship song or hymn (led simply by one person playing keys)
> Bible passage
> Meditation on each of the Seven Words from the Cross.

These gathered sessions then gave way to more space for worshippers to use the stations as they wished, while recorded classical music was played over the PA. This service formed an interesting example of *HTB* doing something distinctively different, and making use if not of Anglican liturgy at least the liturgical calendar to catch the mood of the day very well. While liturgical texts were not used, there was plenty of opportunity for the devotional use of space and artefacts, and opportunities for silence.

HT11 was visited on Easter Sunday, in a different *HTB* church, but also in the South of England, and was far more familiar as a piece of *HTB* worship. The service lay at the other extreme of the exuberance scale from the Good Friday meditation. The church building had previously been gutted and used as a sports centre before being used for an *HTB* plant, nearing five years old, and any traditional Anglican furnishings were absent. Instead the space was set up with a central stage along the north wall of the church, under a scaffolding canopy and lights, dominated by a central drum booth. There was a large band, with drums, bass, keys, 2 electric guitars, one acoustic, and nine female vocalists. The whole room had been filled with smoke from a smoke machine, which

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[43] See Lomax and Moynagh (2004).

continued to be used liberally throughout the service. The worship consisted of a mixture of videos, an actress, testimony and preaching, and a 25 minute song slot, which rarely seemed to reflect the resurrection theme of the day. The service ended with a liturgical blessing after two more songs and a video of the famous Dr Lockridge *Do you know him?* talk[44]. There was no invitation to or expectation of prayer ministry, and the overall effect was of having been to a show rather than to a service. The event appeared to take its inspiration as much from the 'seeker sensitive' worship of Willow Creek as from the Vineyard or *HTB*.

HT12 was planted by HTB in 2016, met in a former office building near the city centre of a Midlands university town. The worship-space was basically a single room on the first floor, with a stage for the band, which consisted of keys, two acoustic guitars, electric and bass guitars, vocals and drums. A small table was placed at floor level in front of the stage, which served as the altar-table for Communion. The diocesan bishop was present as preacher and president, wearing his purple shirt and a suit, whilst the local clergy were dressed informally. Atypically the bishop used two lectionary readings, with the *CW* responses for non-Gospel readings, and preached from the Gospel, although he then went on to preside at the Eucharist using words from 1 Corinthians 11 rather than an authorised Anglican Eucharistic Prayer. He concluded the sermon with the Collect of the day. Again, attempts to obtain an interview proved fruitless.

AD1 was an interview conducted at the suggestion of one of the interviewees (HT8), with an archdeacon, who is a work colleague and also an experienced liturgist and canonist, specifically in order to explore some thoughts about legalities from a member of the Church hierarchy. And **Bp1** was not a formal interview but rather a conversation after the service at which the diocesan bishop had been present. I had not come prepared to conduct a formal interview, and was not expecting him to be present, so this interview was neither recorded nor transcribed. Nevertheless it was possible to converse informally about my research and the views of the church hierarchy on the issues of worship and legality.

These brief descriptions of the acts of worship attended confirm the policies stated above, with the minimalization of the liturgical, the emphasis instead on worship songs, usually used in extensive sets, and an overwhelming sense of informality or even jokiness. In the vast majority of churches liturgy, when used, was used unconvincingly, at times inaccurately, and congregations rarely seemed to engage well with it. Finally there were few opportunities to experience anything about liturgical worship other than occasional texts, with the rooms, especially in *HTB* churches, set up to

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[44] The text and links to audio recordings can be found at
https://www.shadowmountain.org/Content/HtmlImages/Public/Documents/General/EBI/Thats%20My%20King%20-%20Do%20You%20Know%20Him.pdf [Accessed 11 May 2020]

minimalize any Anglican ethos, but rather to emulate clubs or concert halls. Silence was rarely in evidence, and liturgical action and gesture were almost non-existent. Of course individual churches exhibited some exceptions to these general trends, but overall the picture is clear. Fuller details of three particular services follow, which paint a more detailed picture of the variety of worship attended, and illustrate further the identified policies. They comprise two *NW* churches, NW3, and NW6, which lay at the extremes of the liturgical spectrum, with the other *NW* churches falling somewhere between them. There is also a full description of one typical *HTB* service, at HT4. Since the *HTB* churches are much more closely cloned than *NW*, all of them were very similar in both shape and contents, apart from the three atypical catholic and Easter services described above. Some immediate comments are provided following each description.

HT4 Description

As the congregation gathered lively music was playing through the PA set the tone for what was to come, and the service began with an informal greeting from the casually dressed vicar inviting those still chatting at the back to sit down. A minute or two later he welcomed us again and introduced himself. He laid out the menu for the service: a few songs which we were free to engage with at any level we liked, them some notices and the talk. We had a special guest speaker, a luminary from the *HTB* network, from whose church this one had been planted. The vicar then led us in an extempore introductory prayer, and the keyboard player began to play softly underneath. We went seamlessly into a slot of four songs, which lasted for 25 minutes:

The Way[45] (Worship Central)
Love so great[46] (Hillsong)

An extempore prayer from the worship leader followed as a voice-over with synth pads underneath, with some murmured prayers from the congregation. The sung worship continued with two more songs:

Living Hope[47] (Bethel)
Great are you Lord[48]

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[45] Ben Smith/Daniel Bashta/Pat Barrett © 2018 Capitol CMG Genesis/Housefires Sounds
[46] Joshua Grimmett, Jamie Snell, Reuben Morgan © 2016 Capitol Christian Music Group
[47] Phil Wickham, Brian Johnson © 2018 Bethel Music Publishing
[48] Jason Ingram, David Leonard, Leslie Jordan © 2012 Open Hands Music

As the instrumental music continued the vicar's wife took the mic and encouraged us to extend our hands to receive new hope from Jesus, an action with which most of the congregation appeared to feel comfortable. A period of waiting led smoothly into intercessions, during which she prayed for the city, its communities, and in particular for its overstretched police force. The intercessions took about five minutes. The vicar then came to the stage, and interviewed the guest preacher. A few other notices followed, with still images on the screens, before we were invited to take a few moments to chat to one another before the talk as the offering was collected. We were not asked to stand, so there was little movement around the building, and no-one at all approached me. I was not sitting near anyone else so I sat in silence. There was no liturgical introduction; indeed it was not clear whether this was actually 'The Peace' or not. Then the preacher spoke for around 35 minutes, which led into prayer ministry. There was no Scripture reading, and therefore no liturgical responses, but odd verses appeared onscreen as they were referred to. Some 'words of knowledge' were given out, and an evangelistic response was invited, all over quiet keyboard music. Several people responded and were prayed for over the next 10 minutes or so, before the final song, *Build my life*[49] (Bethel). Then the vicar prayed an extempore prayer, followed by a liturgical blessing, but no dismissal.

In terms of the *HTB* visits this church was very typical, with this overall shape of the service repeated in virtually all the other *HTB* congregations. It illustrates the typical policies mentioned above, with a minimal use of liturgy, lacking creativity and reverence, and concerned with text only, rather than other aspects of a liturgical approach to worship. Instead liturgy was replaced with extensive use of worship songs. Notable by their absence were the lack of any public reading of Scripture, any liturgical texts other than the most basic, and the emphasis not just on sung worship but on the very latest songs (the oldest song used was from 2012, but most were less than two years old). Other factors of interest were the prominent role of the vicar's wife, and the lack of an overly friendly approach towards me as a visitor. These non-liturgical policies were further evidenced by the layout of the worship-space, which emphasised the importance of the musicians, as did the amount of time during the service in which we were in their hands.

Descriptions now follow of two services which were at extreme ends of the spectrum in terms of their use of formal liturgy. The rest of the *NW* congregations lay somewhere in between these two extremes.

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[49] Pat Barrett/Matt Redman/Brett Younker/Kirby Kaple/Karl Martin © 2017 worshiptogether.com songs.

NW3 Description

The service, which took place during Ordinary Time, and therefore used no seasonal propers, began with an informal greeting, and an informal Peace where we were encouraged to look around and identify people we didn't know, with whom we could share the Peace later. Then an excerpt from Psalm 67 and an opening liturgical dialogue led into three lively songs:

Great in Power[50]
Holy is your name in all the earth[51]
To God be the glory[52]

The children were sent out to their groups with a prayer, and the sung worship continued with a quieter song:

Great is your faithfulness[53]

Then came a period of intercession. We were encouraged, by the Vicar, simply to rest in God's presence for a period of silence, and then to turn to the prayer page in the pew-sheet and pray for whatever caught our attention. This list contained the names of mission partners and organisations, the sick and dying, and more global concerns such as conflict in the Middle East. This period of silent prayer was followed up by some more traditional intercessions, led from the front, with the response:

> Lord, in your mercy,
> **Hear our prayer.**

During these intercessions we prayed for Thailand and a family who were working there, an English evangelical mission organisation to which the church was affiliated, and the life of the town. The above response did not appear on the screens, although people appeared to know it well, but the *CW* final response, used at the end of the intercessions at the Eucharist, was projected:

> Merciful Father,
> **Accept these prayers …**

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[50] Russell Fragar © 1998, Capitol CMG from Hillsong
[51] Brenton Brown © 2001, Vineyard Music (UK/Eire)
[52] Words: Fanny Jane Crosby, Music Nathan Fellingham © 2009 Thankyou Music
[53] Martin Smith/Matt Redman © 2013 Thankyou Music

The intercessions lasted around 10 minutes in all. A single Bible reading followed, from James 5:13-20, and was concluded with the usual response

> This is the Word of the Lord.
> **Thanks be to God.**

which was not projected, although again people were familiar with it. The curate then preached from James 5, but beginning in Genesis 2:18 with the text 'It is not good for man to be alone', which he claimed did not just apply to marriage but to the Christian life as a whole. He went on to stress the importance of relationships of mutual accountability, where we can confess our sins to one another and pray for healing. He then told us about the Urban Saints 'Live Life 123' initiative, and challenged us to be a part of it.[54] At the end of the 25 minute sermon the vicar encouraged us all to give the curate a round of applause, and we moved into the penitential section, with a liturgical invitation, confession (with a further personalised confession led by the vicar, and based around the themes of the sermon) and an absolution, all from *CW* and projected onto the screens. This was followed by an authorised Affirmation of Faith from *NPfW*. Another song, *Beautiful Saviour*[55], covered the return of the children, and the Peace proper, introduced by the vicar's wife, who is also a Reader, with the usual *CW* generic words. The enthusiastic sharing of the peace went on for a good five minutes, and as visitors we were made to feel very welcome. With no preamble we went into Eucharistic Prayer D from *CW* Order 1, the text of which was projected onto the screens, which was used with no variation or propers apart from a pause and an extempore personalised epiclesis. The Lord's Prayer, Fraction and Invitation followed, with some rather complicated instructions for receiving bread and wine, and prayer ministry for those who wanted it. Two songs covered the administration:

How deep the Father's love[56]
Only by grace[57]

and a small number of people took up the opportunity to receive prayer ministry. There was a pause as we were invited to lay hands on and pray for any children near us, for God's blessing on them, and the service ended with the hymn *I will sing the wondrous story*[58], a liturgical blessing and dismissal, and an invitation to coffee at the back of church.

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[54] https://www.livelife123.org/ [accessed 6th June 2018]
[55] *Beautiful Saviour* Stuart Townend © 1998, Thankyou Music.
[56] *How deep the Father's love for us* Stuart Townend © 1995, Thankyou Music.
[57] *Only by Grace* Gerrit Gustafsen © 1989 Integrity's Hosanna! Music
[58] *I will sing the wondrous story* Francis H. Rowley (1886) Public Domain, to the tune Hyfrydol by Rowland H. Pritchard (1830).

The overall feel of the service was joyful but spacious, with some periods of silence which allowed the liturgy and songs to breathe, and punctuated the sometimes frenetic and exhausting nature of charismatic sung worship. The welcome was genuine and heartfelt, before and after the service, as we were approached by several lay members of the congregation, and the worship was one of the most liturgical of any of the services which formed part of this research. As is typical of *NW* churches the musical repertoire was varied, with well-known hymns alongside more contemporary songs, although no songs newer than 2013 were sung. This service was atypical, and therefore of interest, in that it took liturgical worship seriously whilst maintaining a clear charismatic approach, managing to combine the liturgical and the spontaneous effectively. It was led with a demeanour of reverence, and the musical worship did not replace the liturgical, but rather complimented it.

NW6 Description

Whilst NW3 used formal Anglican liturgy quite extensively, both in terms of shape and text, the second example is from NW6, one of two *NW* churches which used none at all (the other was NW2). The service began with an informal welcome from the curate, who was leading that day, and we were told that there was to be a visiting preacher from an anti-trafficking charity. An extempore prayer led into two songs:

Over all the earth[59]
Ten thousand reasons[60].

At the end of the second song we were asked to remain standing, extend our hands, and think about the highs and lows of the past week. If this was the penitential section, which was not clear, we used no formal prayer of confession, and we did not receive an absolution. The curate ended with an extempore prayer of thanksgiving that we were forgiven. This was followed by what was obviously a regular slot called 'Tomorrow at 11' with jaunty music and a video of a clock fast-forwarding. As encouraged by the *Setting God's People Free* report (Archbishops' Council, 2017), this was a chance for a member of the congregation to be interviewed about where he or she would be at this time on Monday, and how we might pray for their 'Monday to Saturday' ministry as Christian disciples. Then the children and youth team stood while we prayed for them and they took the youngsters off to their own groups, while we sang

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[59] Brenton Brown, © 1998 Vineyard Songs (UK/Eire).
[60] Jonas Myrin and Matt Redman, © 2011 worshiptogether.com songs (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing).

Great is thy faithfulness[61].

The Bible reading was announced, complete with page numbers in the NIV pew Bibles, and Isaiah 58:6-12 was read. The visiting preacher spoke for 35 minutes about God's calling to her and her family to provide a safe home for girls who had been rescued from trafficking and prostitution. The refreshing take-home was less 'You should all sign up for my charity' and more 'You should all do what it is that God is calling *you* to do'. The curate then invited us to stand for 'a time of worship', two songs during which people were invited forward to receive prayer ministry. The songs were

Draw me close[62]
Sovereign over us[63].

Several people received prayer ministry at the front of the platform. The curate then led in intercessions, all extempore, and with PowerPoint pictures to focus attention, but no liturgical responses between sections. We prayed particularly against modern slavery, and for the charity from which the speaker had come, and also for Indonesia in the wake of the 2018 tsunami. We were encouraged to give financially via the *Tear Fund* website. The notices followed, and then we were led into the final song, a mash-up of

The splendour of the King[64]
and the chorus of
How great thou art[65],

which worked well. The offering was taken up, unannounced, and received with an inaudible prayer at the front. Then the children and young people reported back on their activities, and an extempore dismissal, though without a blessing, and the offer of further prayer ministry for any who wanted it, closed the service.

Whilst this service, which did not contain a single word of liturgical text, apart perhaps from 'Amen' at the end of prayers, broadly conformed in shape to the outline of a *SoW*, there was nothing at all, apart from the clerical collars worn by the clergy, to suggest that we were in an Anglican act of worship, and there were some significant omissions, for example the Lord's Prayer. It illustrated well

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[61] Thomas Chisholm and William Runyan, © 1923 Hope Publishing.
[62] Nikki Fletcher, © 2013 worshiptogether.com songs.
[63] Aaron Keyes/Bryan Brown/Jack Mooring, © 2011 Jack Mooring Music (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing).
[64] Chris Tomlin/Ed Cash/Jesse Reeves, © 2004 worshiptogether.com songs (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing).
[65] Stuart Hine, © 1949 Integrity Music.

the tendencies away from liturgical texts and a liturgical approach, towards informality rather than reverence, and to the replacement of the liturgical with the musical.

Whilst the other services attended at *HTB* churches were very similar to the typical one described, the rest of the *NW* services sat between these two extremes of a significant use of formal liturgy and none at all. There was a much greater degree of variety in the *NW* network, but these descriptions of different churches at worship serve to give a good picture of the range of acts of worship attended.

Quantitative Analysis – Which liturgy?

The descriptions of worship experienced through Participant Observation, are now followed with a table showing how much formal Anglican liturgy was used, and which pieces of liturgy. This quantitative analysis describes for each church the number of Bible readings, and whether they came from the Lectionary, the use of Psalmody and the Collect of the Day, whether or not the service was Eucharistic, the use of a Creed or Affirmation of Faith, and any other liturgical texts used, for example responses to readings or intercessions (Ints), the Lord's Prayer (LP) or the PostCommunion Prayer (PC). The final column concerns the invitation to any kind of liturgical action (apart from an invitation to prayer ministry, which was almost universal). It evidences clearly the first of the policies mentioned above, the deliberate neglect of liturgical worship, and the lack of any 'liturgical approach' to worship. Tables 2 and 3 give a clear picture of these policies in both networks:

Tables 2 and 3 – *HTB* and *NW* churches

Church	Bible	Psalms	Collect	HC	Creed	Other Liturgy	Action
HT1	1	N	N	N	Song	Ints responses	Y
HT2	1	N	N	N	N	Blessing	N
HT4	0	N	N	N	N	Blessing	N
HT5	1	N	N	N	N	Blessing	N
HT6	1	N	Y	Y	Y	Most of *CW* HC and Thanksgiving for Child	N
HT9	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	All	N
HT10	7	N	N	N	N	N	Y
HT11	Performed	N	N	N	N	Blessing	N

Church	Bible	Psalms	Collect	HC	Creed	Other Liturgy	Action
NW1	1	N	N	N	N	Penitence, Offering, LP, Blessing	N
NW2	1 (Lectionary) (Puppets)	N	N	N	N	N	Discussion
NW3	1	Y	N	Y	AoF	Reading/Ints responses, LP	N
NW4	1 (Lectionary)	N	N	Y	N	Most	N
NW5	2 (Lectionary)	N	N	Y	N	Penitence, Reading/Ints responses, PC	N
NW6	1	N	N	N	N	N	N
NW7	Performed	N	N	N	Baptism	Blessing/Dismissal	N
NW8	1	Y	N	N	N	Ints responses, LP	Candles
NW9	2 (Lectionary)	N	N	Y	N	Reading responses, LP, PC	N
NW10	Interactive	Y	N	N	N	Penitence, Ints responses, Blessing	Palms, Post-its

The tables reveal that in the *HTB* churches there was rarely more than one Scripture reading, and that seldom from the Lectionary. One church used a dramatized reading by an actor, but the rest used only one reading, or even odd verses alluded to during the sermon. Only the Good Friday service and the more Anglo-catholic *HTB* church used Scripture extensively. In only four churches was any Psalmody used, but with only odd verses. Among the ten *NW* churches visited, things were slightly more liturgical, with six using one Bible reading, (one of them 'performed' and one presented by puppets), two using two, again from those set by the lectionary for the day, and one being an interactive Palm Sunday reading of the Passion. No churches from either network used any canticles, and only one *HTB* church used the Collect, perhaps used anomalously by the visiting bishop.

In terms of which liturgical texts were used, the *HTB* churches tended to use words for the Blessing, with one each using liturgical responses during the Intercessions and after the readings (no church used the Gospel responses). Two (HT6 and HT9) used standard responses for intercessions. *NW* churches were similar, with a concentration on penitence and intercession, and in three cases a fairly full Baptism or Eucharistic liturgy, although two *NW* churches used not one single world of liturgical text. The bishop failed to use an authorised Eucharistic Prayer. Things fared even less well with the Creeds: one *HTB* church used the Hillsong *This I believe*, one *NW* and one *HTB* church used an Affirmation of Faith from *NPfW*, and one the responsive version of the Apostles' Creed which forms part of the baptism liturgy. The rest used no credal statements at all. Even when liturgy was used it was often truncated: the shortest Eucharistic Prayers tended to be chosen, and it was common

to have a Confession not followed by an Absolution and the Blessing not followed by a Dismissal (or a Dismissal not preceded by a Blessing). In terms of liturgical action, this too was at a minimum. There was on a couple of occasions the opportunity to use stones or candles, or to write prayers on Post-its, and the *NW* church we visited on Palm Sunday did use action in the form of waving palm crosses and placing written praises on a wallpaper 'road' down the central aisle. Apart from this service and the two Easter ones, there was no recognition of the liturgical calendar in either network. The data also reveal a lack of enthusiasm for Eucharistic worship: of the 19 services attended only seven were Eucharistic. Even on Easter Sunday there was no opportunity to receive Communion. Apart from the meditative Good Friday service and NW3, there was no intentional use of silence. There can be no doubt from these data that overall the liturgical was minimised. When it was used it was used with little creativity or variety: seasonal material was almost totally absent, and the rich variety of different texts from the *CW* corpus were hardly in evidence at all, since scant attention was paid to the liturgical calendar. Interviews revealed that when leaders heard or used the term 'liturgy' all they understood by it was text, rather than the full range of factors which describe a liturgical approach to worship.

In summary, these quantitative data describe scenarios in which the liturgical is deliberately minimised or omitted altogether, but the next section will go further and describe how the fieldwork evidenced some of the more qualitative policies of the churches visited, exploring more fully the five policies stated above:

> A deliberate lack of formal liturgy
> A much greater use made of singing
> A demeanour of informality rather than reverence
> A lack of creativity when liturgy was used
> A lack of evidence of a 'liturgical approach' to worship.

A deliberate lack of formal liturgy

It is clear from the quantitative analysis tables above that in very few of the churches was much formal Anglican liturgy used, including two where there was none at all. The reasons for adopting this as a deliberate policy became clear during the interviews. It was not just the case that leaders did not *use* Anglican liturgy: they did not *like* it. The churches were not just *non*-liturgical: they were *anti*-liturgical. Interviewees expressed a range of negative comments which explained the reasons for this negativity. HT1T described liturgy at several points during the interview as 'dreary', '"other" and foreign', and, above all, 'connected to dying churches'. Other interviewees agreed that liturgy was

'boring' (HT2T, HT3T, HT8T), 'dry, dull and stuffy' (HT2T) and 'dirgy' (HT2T, NW6T). It is inaccessible, due to it being 'wordy' (HT4T, HT6T) and 'difficult to grasp' (HT4T). Because it is 'inflexible' (NW2T), 'predictable' (HT5T, NW6T), 'controlled' (HT1T), and 'formal and restrictive' (NW4T, NW7T) it is clearly unspiritual and 'doesn't reflect Jesus' ministry' (NW2T). For NW5 liturgy is outdated since it is 'rooted in 80s culture' (NW5T). All in all, liturgical worship was perceived to be 'disengaging' (HT5T) and 'a massive switch-off' (HT5T, NW1T). Some leaders could remember past experiences in liturgical churches being negative:

> I know that for me growing up in an Anglican church I've found the liturgy a massive switch-off personally. (HT5T)

> I think in church that liturgy has been done in such a way for so long that it's disengaged for young people, who don't necessarily understand it or have just found it quite disengaging, and I think there are lots of maybe kids who grew up maybe chapel at school and all this stuff, and they found it … I don't understand it. And then you see models like *NW*, Soul Survivor come through, based on the Vineyard, nice and free open worship, much more informal, relaxed, and they get to like it, and it more engages the heart … more exciting, more kinda contemporary and that's a bit why we've ended up where we're at … Actually a huge proportion of those who led *HTB* network churches grew up going to chapel. And so they went to chapel at public school, private school, whatever it might have been. (HT6T)

There was clearly a dislike of liturgy which lay behind leaders' lack of its use: it was not used simply because the leaders genuinely believed that it was unhelpful. Further investigation of this question led to the clear sense that liturgical worship would not 'connect' with people, particularly younger people, and that unlike worship songs it was dry and emotionless. It was very common, particularly in *HTB* churches, to be told what the younger people would and would not appreciate or relate to, and in particular what would 'connect' with them (HT1T, HT2T, HT4T, HT5T, HT6T, HT8T, NW2T, NW6T, NW8T, NW9T). It was a taken-for-granted assumption that singing would connect, while liturgy would not. The relative values of liturgy and worship songs will be examined in chapter 6, but if a leader does not fundamentally believe in liturgical worship and even sees it as harmful, it is a perfectly logical step to minimise its use. However, whilst two respondents claimed that *CW* was just bad (HT4T, NW6T), this view was not a common one. Some of the interviewees could find something positive to say about Anglican liturgy, either because it 'trains and habituates us into godly attitudes' (HT6T), because of its value in difficult times (NW2T), because it was perhaps more theologically thought-out (NW3T, HT1T), or because it encourages a more corporate mindset: there is so often

> a very individualised, individualistic approach to faith, which is about me and my encounter. This is where liturgy comes in, because liturgy basically enables us to do something corporately. All the great prayers are '*Our* Father in heaven'. When you open a service with liturgy that we share together, you are standing together and saying 'This is corporate, this is about our identity as the people of God, and this is not me coming as an individual' … And in liturgy I'm gathered up with the people of God, and actually I have some words that I can offer as a sacrifice of praise, and I'm standing together shoulder-to-shoulder with my brothers and sisters and I'm not on my own. So it counters that feeling of being alone ... So there's something very powerful about that, which I just wouldn't want to lose. (NW3T)

Another respondent felt that liturgical worship could be useful in redeeming human failings, having experienced a service in another church:

> When the worship pastor is having an off-day, and the preacher's having an off-day, there was nothing else. There was no spine, right? And at that moment I thought what I love about the structure of our worship is that even if the preacher's having a bad day or the worship pastor's having a bad day, we will confess our sins, we will pray for the world, we will share the Peace, we will hear Scripture read, we will receive Communion, we will be sent out and dismissed, charged with mission. And I was like, actually the liturgy is giving us a spine and a structure of doing things we just know are good and beneficial. (HT6T)

These positives, though, were not apparently compelling enough to make leaders want to use liturgy, or to use it well.

It was very striking, therefore, to discover that Focus Group members were not as negative about liturgy as their leaders believed. As the discussion progressed and we began to speak about liturgy, the immediate reactions, which appeared to toe the party line, began to give way to a sense of curiosity and a desire to learn more. One member's immediate reaction to the word 'liturgy' was:

> Routine. Unless I put extra mental effort in to actually think what the words mean, which I don't always feel like doing on a Sunday morning. (FGSiljaT)

Another agreed:

> I don't think I've ever kind of considered the beauty of liturgy and things like that before, and actually having heard what Paul and others have said I think I'm with Silja; it feels more routine. I don't think I've ever really noticed it that much before. I notice it's happening in the service, but I don't think I fully focus on it, I just read the words kind of as routine. (FGMarieT)

However, it soon became clear that there was a hunger to learn more about this slightly alien-feeling style of worship. The exchange below is highly significant from the point of view of this piece of research. I asked the group:

> JL: Do you feel that you have been given enough help to understand liturgy; what it is, how it works, what you're to do with it?
>
> FGSiljaT: No!
>
> (Laughter, chorus of 'No!' echoed round the room)
>
> FGSarahT: It's never really been explained, has it? It's – you just come into the church and they … you kind of like repeat something, 'cos you're told to. It is that, isn't it? You're told to, and you're supposed to and so you do. But I don't have much understanding about why we do it, and, you know …
>
> FGSiljaT: It would be … I would really appreciate more … focus, and it doesn't have to be like a whole sermon on it really, which could be nice, but it doesn't have to. [Talks about past

experience in a church where liturgy was explained] I found that really helpful, and would love to understand more, maybe even to have a history night, you know? That'd be fun, wouldn't it? A history of liturgy night!

(General murmurs of approval and delight)

The tenor of this part of the discussion was that whilst liturgical worship may not be instantly accessible to younger people, particularly those from non-Anglican backgrounds, there was a hunger to understand it better, where it had come from, and how it might be used well in worship. This ties in with the comment of Dawn (1995, 12) that 'Most children and adults are eager to learn more about the Church's worship'. This was in stark contrast to the contention of the leaders that liturgy could simply be written off as a lost cause since no-one from the target audience would be able to appreciate it, (HT1T, HT2T, HT3T, HT5T, HT8T, NW2T). Only two interviewees mentioned the need to help congregations to understand and therefore enter more fully and appreciatively into liturgical worship (HT6T, HT8T). This discrepancy between leaders and congregations provides a clear example of the need for different theological voices to enter into dialogue with one another, and perhaps for leaders to listen more deeply to the worshippers rather than simply continuing the inherited culture of the network. Assumptions about what young people will appreciate apparently need to be challenged. However, if, like HT2 and HT5, leaders brought with them their own negative memories of liturgy, it is not hard to see why they might not think it worth the trouble of teaching others about its supposed value. There was an awareness, by contrast, in some of the *NW* churches, of the importance of putting something into people which would last them a life-time, a spirituality for the long haul. And it was only in *NW* interviews that there was any concern for catering in worship for those not in the prime of life. NW2T and NW8T mentioned the elderly receiving home communions and dementia care respectively, and, as mentioned, there was provision for differently-abled people only at NW10D.

A much greater use made of singing

If formal liturgy was perceived as 'a massive switch-off', the fieldwork demonstrated a very different attitude towards the extensive use of worship songs. As one might expect in churches heavily influenced by charismatic renewal, and in particular by the Vineyard, sung worship took pride of place. This was demonstrated both by the amount of time spent in singing, but also, particularly in *HTB* churches, by the physical layout of the space, where the band, and not an altar-table, or a pulpit, were quite literally centre-stage, sometimes obscuring the normal furniture and physical symbols. The well-worn charismatic caricature of singing as worship and everything else in the service as not-worship proved to be alive and well in the almost universal equating of worship with singing:

> We'll have a bunch of worship in the beginning part of the service, then we'll all pray, and then refocus, and then someone will lead a sermon, and then out of that there'll be a response, and some more worship. (HT1T)

> Usually our services are basically 25 – 30 minutes of worship, and then whoever is taking the service would get up out of the worship and maybe lead a time of intercession … um … then go into like all our notices, and the offering. Then we'd have our teaching, and then we'd respond with a time of prayer ministry. That's kind of the default. (HT5T)

This last comment is interesting: you have to 'get up out of the worship' to pray. This kind of language was used frequently, notably in HT2T, NW8T, NW9T, and interestingly in NW1T, where the interviewee rejected the fallacy in this understanding, but still used the same language:

> It's practising God's presence, yeah, experiencing God's presence, pursuing God's presence. But I don't think it's just about the worship, I think it's about the whole service. (NW1T)

I specifically asked the focus group what was worship and what wasn't.

> I think for me the bits that aren't worship are all the administrative stuff that goes on in a Sunday morning service. I understand that you need to announce notices and you know, publicise events and all of that sort of stuff, but to me that isn't necessarily what coming together on a Sunday is about. Actually it's about coming together as a community or as a church and … but things like Communion, or prayer, things like the Lord's Prayer or whatever – to me that's *a* form of worship and I totally understand that, and some people find that is the way they *really* worship God, just by reciting the Lord's Prayer or by taking Communion, and I'm not saying that that's the 'other stuff', but it's all like the admin in between. It's like we'll sing a couple of songs and then the kids'll go out, and then we'll sing another couple of songs, and then there'll be an announcement about Alpha, and then all the notices. To me that really limits like really getting into worship with God. (FGPaulT)

FGMercyT expressed similar sentiments. This 'hymn sandwich' model was clearly felt to be unhelpful in that singing could be split up into small pieces which limited the sense of 'pressing in' to the presence of God. After further discussion, however, one member of the group experienced something of a lightbulb moment:

> Listening to all the stuff people have been saying I've never really thought of … um … I think I've kind of known it, but I've never thought of the fact that the other stuff that we do do in the service, the games, the being together, the talking afterwards, the prayer, the … all of the stuff, the sermon, is a form of worship as well. I've never really thought of that and how that affects my attitude.

> I think I've limited worship to the songs and then if I'm not really happy with a song cos I don't know it or it's not the style that I like or it's been done in a way that's really noisy so I'm distracted, and then suddenly worship is over and I don't feel like I've been able to worship, but then there's a whole service … I've learnt something! (FGSiljaT)

Every church visited gave a significant proportion of its service time to corporate singing, and every interviewee took it for granted that singing was just about the most important ingredient of the service. After exploration in the interviews it became clear that it was the worship style of choice because it would 'connect' with people in a way which spoken liturgy would not, but in particular

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because it was the route to emotional engagement and then to 'intimacy' with God (HT1T, HT2T, HT5T, HT6T, NW1T, NW2T, NW3T). Indeed what was very clear and unequivocal was that this extensive use of singing had a key purpose: the song slots were the roads to intimacy with God. This emphasis bridged both networks, and is pure Vineyard in its theology and praxis. Vineyard literature is very clear about its theology of worship, and Wimber taught this to the British public at the 1989 Brighton Worship Conference. This idea, that worship is a quest for intimacy with God, was the most common understanding expressed by the respondents in this research. Worship, understood as extended periods of singing, has the function of taking worshippers on a journey towards a moment, or a state, of intimacy with God through the Holy Spirit. Chapter 2 identified this as a foundation of the Vineyard theology of worship, which has been adopted uncritically by both networks.

This theology of worship makes considerable use of the Greek word προσκυνειν, (*proskunein*) which will be examined shortly, and the model was equally prominent in the praxis of both the *HTB* and *NW* churches. Interviews demonstrated that this 'intimacy' purpose of worship is taken for granted, and is very much a part of the culture of both. It is also a major driver for the dislike of liturgy, which can never take people to the same place as can sung worship. 'Intimacy' is a felt and highly positive experience for charismatic worshippers, and something which is seen to be highly effective in the evangelism of younger people. But what exactly is this 'intimacy'? I pressed this further in the focus group, asking the question

> JL: When it comes to the end of the singing slot, where do you hope to have got to? What do you think is happening when we've sung all our songs and we've stopped? For you personally, what does having sung through that slot feel like? Where has it taken you?

The discussion revealed an emphasis on personal feelings, perhaps best summed up by this comment:

> I like to feel that I've been raptured into the throneroom for a bit, that's how I like to feel after the end of the worship. (FGMercyT)

Note once again here the use of the word 'worship' to mean singing, as it was in virtually all of the comments in this section of the group. However, while nearly all the members spoke about feelings, several of them (FGSiljaT, SGBillyT, FGSarahT and FGPaulT) were uncomfortable with too much emphasis on one's feelings, either because they were unreliable guides (FGSarahT, FGBillyT) or because they were less objective than theological truths about who God is (FGPaulT). Similarly HT3T was concerned with the idea that if worshippers somehow failed to reach that state of intimacy, they would feel that they, or the worship, had failed. However FGMercyT defended the emphasis on feelings, since 'God inhabits the praises of his people. I think his presence is there when we sing' and because we are human our emotions are a part of us.

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In the fieldwork churches sung worship is meant unashamedly to be an experiential encounter, and that that encounter will affect people emotionally. We know when God becomes present among us because we feel him. We know when we have reached our goal of intimacy because we feel it. Vineyard worship gave back the gift of an emotion-filled encounter with God to a church which it believed had lost it. The worship at Anaheim Vineyard was about direct adoration of God. The church and its worship-leaders were central in establishing a sense that real worship songs ought to be sung *to* the Lord, not just *about* the Lord, a sensitivity that has leavened the entire contemporary worship world. (Park *et al.,* 2017, 4-5) One common mantra in the Vineyard literature concerns the distinctive nature of the worship songs used:

> Many of the first participants felt dissatisfied with older church music that seemed to have been sung more *about* God than *to* God. Therefore, this congregation valued songs that allowed them to speak directly to God in love. (Park *et al.* 2017, 24)

Wimber himself described this all-important purpose for worship in a teaching session from Anaheim:

> Some of you are brand new with us, and you might wonder what in the world we're doing here, you know, the first half hour or so. What we're doing is, by the songs that we sing, trying to express in contemporary idioms and in intimate language, the love that we feel for God. And we believe that, as we do so, that God is touched by that, and that he will respond and confer on us his presence because of that love-making that goes on with the expressing of our intimate care for God. And over the years we've experienced his presence when we do that. We've experienced his favour as we do that. (Quoted in Park *et al.* 2017, 104)

This journey, or sense of progression, towards the moment of intimacy with God, is the driving force behind the worship, and songs are chosen less according to their themes, and more for their BPM (beats per minute, a measure of musical tempo). As the journey progresses the music slows, becomes more thoughtful and less exuberant. I have often found it helpful when planning worship to draw 'worship graphs' of exuberance against time, so a typical Vineyard worship-slot would look like this:

Figure 1. A Worship graph
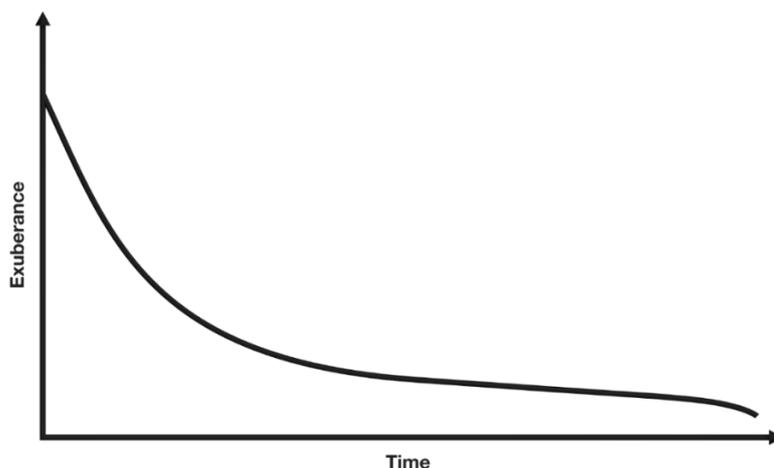
The shape of this graph was highly typical of song slots experienced during fieldwork, and particularly in *HTB* churches where there was far less likelihood of using traditional hymns or a 'hymn sandwich' shape. Two questions to which this study will return concern whether this is the *only* acceptable shape for the graph, and whether 'intimacy' is in fact a biblical model for worship. But it does seem very clear that for Wimber and for the Vineyard, and therefore for *HTB* and *NW* churches, this is the way to worship. The contention of Park et al. (2017, passim) that one of the highest values of the Vineyard movement is 'intimacy' with God in worship was reflected in virtually all of the interviews. People who came to worship were not just doing their duty, or being entertained: the hope and expectation was that by being present there would be a palpable encounter with God. When church leaders were asked which theological principles had driven the changes they had made to inherited worship praxis, the possibility of transforming encounters with the Spirit featured in almost all the responses, and most explicitly in HT2T, HT4T, HT5T, NW1T, NW3T, NW5T, NW6T, NW7T, and NW9T. These encounters with God might have all sorts of effects on the lives of the worshippers, but the short term goal was 'intimacy', which was often described in terms of a felt and very positive, even euphoric, sense of the closeness of God:

> So that sense of intimacy, two-way connection, that we're not just singing songs, but we believe in that two-way response, and as we worship God begins to speak to us, and meet with us, and encourage us, and build us up in worship. (HT5T)

It was taken for granted that this was a laudable goal for worship, or even the only genuine goal. This theology will be critiqued shortly, but it became clear that it is singing, and certainly not spoken liturgy, which is capable of taking people to this state. Whilst outside the scope of this study, the other thing to observe is that through the ministry of the Vineyard many mainstream churches have rediscovered the value of prayer ministry, and made it a significant part of their church life (Park *et al.* 2017, 9). This was very much in evidence at some of the fieldwork churches.

But apart from its use to lead to intimacy, worship music was also believed to be a useful tool in evangelism:

> Sometimes you're just singing truth, and it's not adoration and worship. And so you want to bring people … you want to sing truth, but you also want to bring people into a sense of adoration and worship of God, and experience his presence as you worship him. So there's a very strong sense, I think, of being the body of Christ, and being the temple of the Holy Spirit. And so the people … the presence of the Spirit being present with us, and we experience it. So when people, strangers, come in and they're weeping in the service, and they say 'I don't know why I cry when I come here' I say 'It's cos, well, you haven't got the language for it, but it's the presence of God … you're in amongst God's people and his Spirit is here. That's what you're experiencing. (NW1T)

Singing was the medium of choice in HT4, because

when you're trying to reach out to people in their late teens/early twenties, even *CW* today is quite wordy, and it's quite difficult for young people to grasp that, particularly if they're from a non-church background, if they're unchurched. (HT4T)

However, in spite of the belief of leaders that their congregations 'connected' with sung worship, the Focus Group revealed that this might not always be the case. Indeed, when, the terminology of Theological Action Research was used to explore the operant theology of the Focus Group members, this espoused theology was called into question. The members of this *HTB* congregation were not as comfortable with long periods of noisy singing as the leaders had assumed. My opening question to the group, about what was going on for them when they participated in worship, released a stream of negative comments about their Sunday church experiences.

> For me on a Sunday morning worship is very distracting. It's just filled with a lot of distraction – I don't find it easy to worship in a congregational sense with a lot of stuff going on around me. (FGSiljaT)

Similar opinions were expressed by other members of the group, FGMarieT, FGPaulT and FGSarahT. Apparently the Sunday morning worship in this church was not as appealing to these younger people as the leaders believed it to be.

A demeanour of informality rather than reverence

So liturgy was replaced to a high degree by singing, but how was any liturgy which was used handled by leaders and the congregations? Participant Observation demonstrated that informality was almost universal, and this showed in the dress and general demeanour of the leaders, whether lay or ordained. It is of course difficult accurately to define terms such as 'informality' or 'reverence', and possibly inaccurate to draw too strong a contrast between the two, but some suggestive factors could be identified from fieldwork visits. Liturgical greetings ('The Lord be with you …') were almost universally replaced with informal 'Good morning's, and introductions to any liturgical texts used were jaunty and extempore ('Why don't we join in the Lord's Prayer?') rather than liturgical in themselves ('As our Saviour taught us, so we pray …'). It is likely that in many churches these informal phrases will themselves have become liturgical, although on single visits it was impossible to confirm or deny this. That was certainly true of the *HTB* church I attended regularly. In only one church were any clerical robes worn (HT9D), and dog collars for the clergy were largely absent, apart from NW1D, NW3D, NW4D and NW8D, and HT6D.

Once again interviews provided the opportunity to explore more deeply, and suggested that this informality often came as a reaction to perceived notions of Anglican worship as being over-formal,

stuffy and soulless, and the ability of public school worship to be a turn-off has been noted. There was a sense that faith coming alive meant that past experiences of liturgical worship could be cast aside now that new freedom in Christ had been discovered. Since many of the founding fathers of the *HTB* network would have been brought up through the public school system, there was a particular sense there that informality as opposed to a more reverent approach was less likely to confirm these negative images of 'churchianity' (my term, not theirs) (HT6T). It was therefore more attractive evangelistically to keep things light and chatty. In one church (NW3D) the sermon was followed by a round of applause for the preacher, and in another (NW9D) the vicar publicly gave the curate marks out of ten at the end of his sermon. When asked what that was about, the interviewee said that it was:

> just as a bit of banter really. A normal line, which I don't think I said on Sunday but I say almost every Sunday, is something like 'Welcome to our church; we're a church where we don't take ourselves very seriously, but we do take God seriously'. I use that quite a lot. (NW9T)

But another feature, which is even harder to describe or define, was the lack of any sense of either reverence or panache in the liturgical parts of the services. The old joke about the vicar, with nose in book, saying to the congregation 'It says here: "The Lord is here"' was not quite replicated in any of the services attended, but there was an underlying sense that leaders were not as comfortable with leading liturgical texts as they were with the more extempore parts of the service. It felt at times as though there was a sense of relief when more lengthy texts such as Eucharistic Prayers were over (notably in NW4D and HT12D), and the congregation could re-enter the mode of relaxed informality, and perhaps return to the more familiar song-singing (NW9D). Neither, in most of the churches, did it seem that the congregation were any more at home with liturgical texts than were the leaders, and participation sometimes felt uncertain and half-hearted. Two joyful exceptions to this were HT6D and NW7D, where people seemed familiar and relaxed with liturgical texts, but this was not generally the case.

Neither was there very much in evidence of what we might call 'fear and trembling' in the worship, either among leaders or the congregations. Later the work of people like Bishop (1909), Otto (1917) and indeed Cyril of Jerusalem will be discussed, with their encouragement to worshippers to approach the exalted Christ with a profound sense of holy fear. Again, following the logic of informality as an evangelistic tool, it is easy to see why this strand of spirituality did not seem to be very much in vogue.

One element of this informal approach to worship was the frequently expressed idea of 'freedom' in worship. Often liturgical worship was contrasted with non-liturgical, about which the terms 'freedom' and 'openness' were used frequently. To remove formal liturgy would make worship free and open

(HT1T, HT5T, NW3T). That worship is better if it is 'free' was one of the taken-for-granted assumptions among leaders in both networks, as was the belief that liturgical worship somehow restricted that freedom. Linked with this cluster of ideas was the ideal of 'openness to the Spirit', that good worship was led and directed by the Holy Spirit, and not from prescribed words from a book (HT2T, HT5T, FGMarieT, FGTheoT). This high value on 'freedom' and 'openness' seemed to map onto the desire for an informal relaxed approach to worship, but also onto the idea of 'novelty', which meant that simply to do the same thing every week as a routine, with no option to do anything differently, was anathema. There was little appreciation of the value of the regular, structured and ordered, and the Spirit was seen as the disrupter of routine (HT6T). Neither did there seem to be much awareness that liturgy itself could be used flexibly, as scaffolding rather than as a cage, or as one rather more sympathetic respondent put it, as the trellis which could support the vine (HT6T). Nevertheless there was a clear sense that one of the differences between *HTB* and *NW* was the degree to which the worship was indeed 'free'. As mentioned, one *HTB* leader had previously been employed as a worship-leader at a *NW* church, and so was in a good position to comment on the difference between the two streams:

> I think … I would say that *NW* has a little bit more of the Vineyard – it's kept the Vineyard sense of the high value on the charismatic a little bit more than *HTB* has. *HTB* hasn't lost that, but *HTB* plants are all a lot more professional, and there's a bit of a … a bit more where it … I'm just trying to find the right words to say this … it's quite … sometimes I'd say it's a bit more slick: that comes across in a negative way, but I don't mean it like that. But maybe it's a bit more honed, a little bit more modern … I think in a *NW* type setting I think it's more likely that there'll be more of the charismatic gifts coming out in worship, and more time spent on like prayer ministry and things like that. (HT3T)

Other leaders agreed with this sense of a tighter approach in *HTB* congregations, and an awareness of a possible tension between openness to the Spirit and the need to keep to strict timings (HT4T, HT5T). This was a surprising finding, as one might expect that the network less closely tied to the Anglican heritage and more sold out on the Vineyard approach would be more 'free' than the one which might be seen as something of a compromise between the need to be open to the Spirit but also to be Anglican in form. A couple of respondents, though, rejected the dichotomy between liturgy and freedom in the Holy Spirit:

> I guess I historically would have said that, you know, whenever you go to a really liturgical service, it's dry, the Spirit's not moving, therefore liturgy must be what causes that. I think probably I've learnt since that that isn't the case, but if you take elements out and put elements back in, I use liturgy because practically it works, and it's what God has done, and the way that God has blessed our services has been sometimes through the liturgical bits. (NW9T, echoed by NW5T)

Neither did anyone explain why standing and singing together the songs which we are given by the band is any more 'free' than standing and saying words which are given by books or screens, particularly if the music is provided by digital backing tracks which are by nature inflexible. But perhaps one key to understanding this set of attitudes towards formal liturgy that it gets in the way of

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'real' worship, 'free' worship, which of course is singing. This was summed up when NW8 was asked what he thought people believed was gained by eliminating or minimising the liturgical content:

> Um … Time, probably. Time in a service to worship in song, which is one of the sort of high values of both *NW* and *HTB* that somehow … there is a movement in sung worship from praise to worship to a sort of intimate being in the presence of God. And that takes time. (NW8T)

There is thus a clear link between the desire for 'freedom' in worship and the fact that liturgy gets in the way of that freedom, and between the desire to 'feel' the presence of God and the fact that liturgy, which is only spoken, not sung, can lack emotional impact. Add to that the belief that liturgy comes from a past age whereas we are able to sing songs released maybe a matter of days earlier, and it is easy to see how a negative picture of liturgy builds up. And if that liturgy is led, as is the general expectation, in a stuffy and formal way, that would clearly not feel 'free'. But although both networks articulated the value of freedom, neither really described what that freedom might look like.

A lack of creativity when liturgy was used

This policy manifested itself in two different ways: *where* liturgical texts were used, and *which* texts. Where liturgical texts were used, they tended to appear in set and limited parts of the service. As was apparent from the descriptions of services at the start of this chapter, the churches tended to use the same limited amounts of liturgy in the same places. Typically liturgical texts were used for the Confession, the Peace and the Dismissal, and possibly the Lord's Prayer. This was particularly the case in the *HTB* churches. It is interesting to ask what effect it has on people's appreciation of liturgy if the only purpose for which it is consistently used is to confess our sins to God, but never to praise or exalt him, and then to go home. Since little attention was paid to the liturgical calendar and the different seasons of the Church Year, there was virtually no use made of the wealth of seasonal material available in *CW*, and textual choices seemed to have been made on a once-for-all basis: 'We use Prayer H here.' (NW9T). Even when the visits were made during ordinary time, there was no evidence of variety in the many texts, for example for blessings, being used. If there was a liturgical blessing, it was mostly the generic version, while at HT12D the blessing was an extempore one. There was no attempt to choose texts which related to the season, or, in ordinary time, the theme of the service. Interviews yielded some more information about this, and several leaders confirmed that the greatest factor in making choices was brevity. Liturgy was clearly felt to be useful only in short doses. Particularly within the *HTB* network the Eucharistic prayers used were either Prayer H, the shortest of the six original prayers published in 2000, or the later Additional Prayer 1 (2012) for use 'when there is a significant number of children present'. The desire appeared to be to keep any liturgy as short as possible (NW8T, HT6T, NW2T). In order to achieve this it was common when a legal

Eucharistic Prayer was used, for only the central section, the actual words of consecration, to be spoken. Any preamble such as table prayers, the two 'Roman' prayers of thanksgiving[66] or even in some cases the *Sursum corda* were omitted, as were words after the Eucharistic prayer for breaking bread, the Lord's Prayer, the *Agnus Dei* and even the words of invitation. Two exceptions to this were NW3D and NW5D where the full Eucharistic Prayer and surrounding texts were used. In the church (HT12D) where the diocesan bishop presided using only 1 Corinthians 11, he proceeded straight to the administration. This value of liturgical brevity was not confined to the Eucharist: even in non-eucharistic services the shorter options were usually preferred (NW3T).

The issue of creativity was raised during interviews, and was greeted with a complete lack of interest in making the liturgy more varied or interesting. Since any liturgy was almost by definition beyond redemption, why waste time working to try to make it better? HT5T expressed the opinion that 'liturgy has been done in such a way for so long that it's disengaged for young people, who don't necessarily understand it.' I asked

> JL: You say that people don't know what to do with it, and so the response has been not to help them to know what to do with it, but to say 'Oh, we won't do it then'?
>
> Yeah, well I think, I mean I don't know where, when it started, but I think probably, particularly churches that have thought 'We need to engage young people' particularly that, churches have probably … OK, what seems to work is contemporary worship, and a host that kind of guides people through the gathered time, and you know, a talk … I think we've gone down that route. (HT5T)

In some interviews the question of sung liturgy was raised. The singing of liturgical texts was almost completely absent from the churches visited, the only exception being HT9D. Interviewees had often expressed the opinion very clearly that music, rather than mere words, would connect with people's emotions:

> There is definitely something about music that definitely connects with our emotions … equally it can be something which just lifts whichever emotion you're feeling, it can slightly up it. Definitely there's an emotional connection. (HT1T, echoed by HT2T, HT5T, HT6T, NW1T, NW2T, NW3T)

This raised the question of whether the use of liturgy might therefore be enhanced if it was set to music. I mentioned the wealth of charismatic material in the 60s and 70s which provided worship song-type settings of liturgical texts, something that is almost universally absent these days. None of the interviewees with whom this was discussed were at all interested in musical settings of liturgical texts, although HT3 mentioned the fact that worship songs did exist which were based on texts. In the repertoire experienced during Participant Observation there were only two, one which is based loosely on the Nicene Creed and another around the Lord's Prayer. But this was not a major theme, and neither of the songs are actual settings of the *CW* texts, but rather use and allude to them, and

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[66] 'Blessed are you Lord, God of all creation, through your goodness …' See the *CW* Main volume (2000, 291).

were more likely to appear within a longer song slot than in their appropriate places in the liturgical flow of the service. One interviewee, though, (HT3T), mentioned a service he had once led in which worship songs were used which functioned in the same way as liturgical texts. Even though the service had been greeted with some acclaim, the experiment had not been repeated. NW9 was also asked whether this lack of sung liturgy had anything to do with the kind of songs which are currently being written, which were not designed to function liturgically, and his response was that although they had in the early days of his ministry tried to compromise by using such an approach, they had not sustained this on the journey towards much more singing of worship songs. He was speaking for most of the respondents when he said:

> If we were going to get rid of liturgy or songs, then I would get rid of the liturgy in our service. For me the singing is still the more important, or the bit where the connection happens the best. And I think probably the hardest bit to sing would be the confession, which is the bit that we say.
>
> JL: Is that hard to sing because nobody's written any songs that say that anymore?
>
> I think that it would be hard to lead somebody, or a congregation, in an act of confession through song. I'm guessing, I'm guessing, I don't really know but I get the … I'm trying to imagine myself in a scenario that says 'Right, now we're going to come before God in humility and repentance, and we're going to sing …' I mean I'd be up for exploring it in some way if someone would have to write a good song. (NW9T)

This lack of interest in sung liturgy may reflect difference in the early charismatic days between American and British renewal. In the States renewal seemed to take root easily in more catholic parishes, whereas in the UK it tended to do so more in low church evangelical parishes, whose love for the liturgy was perhaps not so strong in the first place. There was also, as previously noted, the sentiment that worship songs had completely replaced liturgy (HT2T, HT3T, HT9T), which raises an important question which will be explored later. But there seemed to be little appreciation of the possibility that there was a vicious circle by which liturgy was known to be dead and boring, so no attention was paid to making it creative and vital, so it was indeed dead and boring. A few of the respondents mentioned their opinion that liturgy was unhelpful because it was badly led:

> It puts you to sleep before you've even begun, because it's led in a very dirgy way, and the congregation join together in quite a dirgy way. I know some people love that sort of thing, but how can you breathe fresh life into that sort of liturgy? I don't know. (NW6T, echoed by NW9T and HT2T)

However, the response to this was not to learn and to train others to deliver the liturgy well, or to lead it enthusiastically or in a way which allowed the Holy Spirit some freedom, but rather to abandon it as much as possible in order to make room for the Spirit at work through sung worship. HT8T could remember nothing from his ordination training which had helped him to use liturgy well.

A lack of evidence for a 'Liturgical Approach' to worship.

A future chapter will argue for the benefits of a 'liturgical approach' to worship, which is different, it will be suggested, from merely using some liturgical texts. What exactly this means will be explored in due course, but for now the data make it clear that the extent to which any liturgical resources were used during Participant Observation was limited to some occasional text. Apart from the Good Friday and Easter services there was little interest in the liturgical calendar, and although NW3D used some seasonal material, it bore no relation to the actual season during which it was used. There was little creative use made of the liturgical environment, colour or décor, with several of the *HTB* churches deliberately having cleared the space of any of the accoutrements of Anglican worship in order to create instead the feel of a club or concert venue (HT1D, HT4D, HT5D, HT10D, HT11D, HT12D). Only at HT9D was incense used, although ironically at HT11D smoke from a machine filled the room. Where ecclesiastical furniture was still in place, it was sometimes obscured by the placement of the worship band, screens or stages (NW2D, NW6D). Liturgical action in response to the theme was only used in one church (NW10D), and gesture was limited to the obligatory charismatic raising of hands during singing. There was minimal deliberate use of silence, with NW3D and HT10D being the notable exceptions. The interviews confirmed that for 'liturgy' read 'text', and there was little awareness that there was a significantly wider definition of liturgical worship than the mere recitation of words from books or screens.

In summary, the Participant Observation revealed a lack of use of liturgy, which when explored in the interviews was a deliberate policy by leaders who believed that at best liturgy had little value, and at worst was positively harmful. Extensive singing of worship songs replaced liturgical worship, since it was deemed to connect more strongly with people, touching them emotionally and helping them towards the state of intimacy with God. Informality was valued more highly then reverence, and a relaxed, casual and at times jokey approach to worship was in evidence almost everywhere. When liturgy was used it was largely minimalistic and was led with little panache or creativity. Words tended to be used half-heartedly, by leaders and congregations alike, text appeared to be used in set and limited places in the service, and while it might be useful for penitence, it certainly was not for praise. And for the interviewees 'liturgy' meant nothing more than the use of texts. All this was revealed by the interviews to be due to a lack of affection for liturgical worship among church leaders, believing as they did that liturgy was unhelpful either for evangelism or for leading people towards intimacy with God.

Liturgy and Legality

These findings, evidenced from the Participant Observation and the interviews, do, however, raise one further question, that of the legality of these policies. Given that leaders expressed little love for liturgical worship, and little faith in its power to connect evangelistically with their target groups, contentions which will be explored more fully in the next chapters, it is easy to understand their desire to minimise the use of the liturgical in their worship. There is, however, an elephant in the room which it would be inappropriate not to address, in the shape of the 'Declaration of Assent'. Anglican Canon Law requires that licensed clergy and Readers formally declare their intention to use only legal forms of worship. In a study which has indicated that in virtually all the Anglican churches visited formal liturgy has been minimised, used badly or ignored, some exploration of the legality of this position is required. Whilst this discussion will not directly answer the research questions concerning the relationship of the churches in question to formal Anglican liturgy, it will shed some light on the attitudes among clergy to Anglican *polity* and Canon Law, and will therefore serve to enrich the data recorded above. In fact only one of the services attended, in either network, was strictly legal, according to the *CW* General Notes for the Eucharist or the *SoW*[67]. So why is the *Declaration of Assent* so important to the Church of England, and how did the clergy of this study negotiate its strictures? In short, is it permissible to ignore or break Canon Law, and the vows one has taken to keep it, in the interests of the evangelistic task?

One of the identifying characteristics of the Anglican Church is that, rather than using statements or 'Confessions' of faith', for example the *Westminster Confession* of the Church of Scotland and other Presbyterian Churches, doctrine is defined through liturgy, the principle of *lex orandi, lex credendi*. This means that the words used in worship are seen to be central by the Church and so are heavily controlled by Canon Law, lest any heterodox doctrine is expressed in our worship. Currently liturgical texts are either authorised or commended by General Synod, and clergy are required to take an oath called the Declaration of Assent at their ordinations and each time they are licensed to a new post. The bishop or archdeacon asks them, in the presence of the Registrar, the diocesan legal officer:

> In the declaration you are about to make, will you affirm your loyalty to this [Anglican] inheritance of faith as your inspiration and guidance under God in bringing the grace and truth of Christ to this generation and making Him known to those in your care?

and the candidate responds:

> I, *A B*, do so affirm, and accordingly declare my belief in the faith which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds and to which the historic formularies of the Church of

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[67] *CW* Main Volume (2000, 158-9 and 21-4 respectively).

England bear witness; and in public prayer and administration of the sacraments, *I will use <u>only</u> the forms of service which are authorized or allowed by Canon.*[68]

Whilst this appears to be a completely unambiguous statement, particularly the phrase in italics, and even more particularly the underlined word 'only', the fieldwork demonstrated a high degree of diversity in its application, both by parish clergy who participated in the fieldwork, but also apparently by bishops and other diocesan hierarchs. Clearly clergy who wished regularly to use forms of service *not* authorized or allowed by Canon needed to find ways of justifying their actions, and one question in the interviews sought to discover how they negotiated this tension. Every interview with licensed clergy included a question about this, and it was possible to analyse the results into a taxonomy of seven main responses, each demonstrating a different approach. These approaches, named from quotations from comments of the respondents, are

1) 'I'm a follower of Jesus'
2) 'That's what a lot of churches are doing'
3) 'It's just a game'
4) 'I don't think I'm dishonouring it'
5) 'The principle rather than the letter'
6) 'Civil disobedience'
7) 'I'm giving you permission'

The respondents seemed to use these understandings as ways of coping with the tension caused by having to make vows which they, and indeed the bishop and/or archdeacon administering the vows, knew full well they would not keep. One respondent stated this clearly:

I find it deeply uncomfortable that I said that and then don't follow it. (HT8D)

He went on to suggest that part of the blame lay not just with clergy breaking their vows but also with hierarchs for not policing or enforcing them:

My sense is there's a fault on both ends here, not just with the clergy leading the churches, but with the bishops and the archdeacons. Either you've got to police this and say it's important, or you've got to admit that it's not, and therefore allow changed rules. I think to hold a position where you make people make this oath, which I don't think we should take lightly, but then you know that you're not going to check up on them, and they know they're not going to do it, I just think that's a weird piece of unintegrity that just feels odd that we haven't dealt with that. So I suppose I put the fault both sides of it. If the archdeacons aren't going to check in on this, and the bishops aren't going to say anything about it, then they can't really expect anybody to follow the rules, can they? (HT8D)

This comment led me to conduct an interview with an archdeacon, who is a liturgist and a canonist. I asked him what he thought he was doing when he administered these oaths:

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[68] *CW* Main Volume (2000, xi) Italics and underlining added.

> I watch them bind themselves by the three canonical oaths to three really important things about the C of E. One, that's it's part of the wider catholic church, and I suppose a good half of the people who make that oath probably don't understand by that the same thing as I understand, but the legal definition of any oath is the plain meaning of the text as it is written. So in order to be part of catholic with a small 'c' is to profess the faith uniquely revealed, to use as your ground and undergirding in preaching and ministry that which has always been believed everywhere and by everybody, and that in order to make sure that one stays within that, to use only those forms of service which are authorised or allowed by canon. (AD1)

I mentioned to him the previous comments from the HT8 interview above, without of course disclosing the source, and asked for his opinion on the idea that policing by the hierarchy was required:

> OK. I would like to go back to that priest and say 'Why should this oath be policed, when other oaths like your marriage oaths, um, or any other time that you swear solemnly that you will or won't do or be something; if they don't need to be policed, if I don't need to be checking whether or not you're straying from your spouse, why do I need to be checking that you're breaking the oath that I assume in all good conscience you've taken? (AD1)

Whilst this response might be described as possibly rather 'head in the sand', it was clear from the interview as a whole that this particular archdeacon was trying to be as permissive as he could in order to facilitate the mission of the Church. Although he would describe himself as a 'modern catholic' he clearly had respect for the evangelistic endeavours of the kind of churches which are the subject of this study. One wonders whether other hierarchs would take a similar view, but in fact none of the respondents reported any significant opposition from the Church authorities. The responses could fairly easily be classified under these seven general headings, although some interviewees expressed more than one approach to this tension:

'I'm a follower of Jesus'

This point of view suggests that allegiance to Christ and to the gospel is far more important than any particular human expression of faith, especially liturgical Anglicanism. Some of the respondents made this explicitly clear (HT5T, NW2T). We can sit lightly to Canon Law because there is a much higher priority at stake, which, incidentally, appears to be directly opposed to the observance of Church Law. Whilst it is difficult not to hear in this response echoes of Paul's Corinthian correspondence, with the declarations of church members that 'I follow Paul', 'I follow Apollos', 'I follow Cephas' and the *really* spiritual-sounding '*I* follow Christ!' (1 Cor 1:12), it was clearly the case that the need to fulfil the Great Commission was felt to trump the need to keep human rules and regulations, even those which one had solemnly sworn to keep. The abandonment of liturgy, the quest for informality, and the lack of interest in anything which liturgical worship might have to offer were seen to be justified because of the higher calling to follow Jesus.

'That's what a lot of churches are doing'

There were a few comments from interviewees about others who flout the Law, particularly catholic Anglicans who use the (similarly illegal) Roman Missal for their Eucharists. HT1T interpreted the oaths to mean that clergy were merely promising that if they *did* use any liturgy they would not use anyone else's, but only Anglican texts, and NW1T suggested that bishops were likely to be lenient of others, for example those using Roman rites, so why not of charismatics using worship songs? The general tenor of some other comments suggested that it was acceptable to reject liturgy because it was widely done in their respective networks, and was modelled at their summer holiday/festival weeks (NW6T, NW7T). It became clear from some comments that it was from these networks and events that much of the clergy's 'inspiration and guidance' for mission came, rather than from the Church of England. The fact that 'everybody does it' seemed generally to validate the anti-liturgical stance of churches from both networks. Given the frequent stated negative attitudes towards liturgical worship, there is no good reason not to join in with the respective networks' anti-liturgical stances.

'It's just a game'

One *NW* leader made this explicit:

> It's quite an interesting one really because it's just a game we're all playing. (NW4T)

but others described elaborate ways of breaking the rules of the game and getting around the need to take an oath which everybody knew was not going to be kept. There is well-worn joke about clergy crossing their fingers behind their backs whilst making the vows, which NW2T and NW9T specifically mentioned, but there were other mechanisms in evidence: coughing over the key word 'only' was mentioned, and not just coughing by the candidate:

> Well when my Archdeacon, who licensed me … it was done by my Archdeacon who at that point coughed deliberately as if the words somehow didn't apply, which I thought was quite interesting in and of itself. (HT4T)

NW7T 'decided to be cheeky' and simply omitted the word 'only' from the oath, assuming that people would not notice. Another approach to playing the game was to use the get-out clause of 'experimental' services, but to do them every week (presumably the same experimental service) (NW4T), and HT5 played the game by simply admitting that he merely repeated the words of the

oath without thinking. Responses like these, from both networks, gave the impression that these vows were not really words to be taken too seriously.

'I don't think I'm dishonouring it'

Some leaders, though, did believe in the import of the words, and instead attempted to claim that all they were doing lay within the strictures of the law, seeking to justify their breaking of the clear sense of the oath in various ways. HT2T suggested that their extensive use of worship songs was in itself liturgical, an approach which the data have demonstrated was almost universal. HT5T believed that in spite of the words of his vows he had a clear mandate from the bishop to plant a church for the younger generation, which therefore left him no choice but to be non-liturgical, a mandate which obviously trumped any canonical oaths. NW7T felt able to interpret that oath in his own way, as promising a form of service rather than a form of words, adding, 'That's *my* interpretation of what I was being asked to do'. NW1T and NW3T felt that in making the oaths they were merely promising to be broadly and recognisably Anglican and not to abandon the liturgical altogether. One common subset of this response is to claim that the use of liturgy *somewhere* in the diet of the church means that it need not be used *everywhere*. The 'somewhere' might be at a different, and often minority service (HT2T, NW1T, NW3T), or at another church within the Team (HT5T). Among those who felt that they were keeping to the law, one could not escape a slight sense of grudgingness (HT8T), like a schoolboy forced to wear a tie, but making sure he wore it as scruffily as possible, staying just within the rules but showing clearly that he was doing so under protest. But more common was to use liturgy for some aspects of worship, usually that which is sacramental. HT2T, HT3T and NW7T spoke of using liturgy for sacramental worship (although, as has been demonstrated, in a very minimal way), and all of the services which included the Eucharist and/or Baptism did make some use of official texts. This issue was raised at some length in the interview with the archdeacon, and it was his opinion that probably this was not a bad approach, although some aspects of it could allow someone who didn't like it to make a formal complaint under The Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure (1963), which is still in place for offences of doctrine and ritual. However, he would tend to be lenient:

> Myself, I would say 'For goodness' sake, the proscription these days is so broad, why can you not choose your worship songs, that fulfil this?' I'm very happy for 'these or similar words'. It would be so easy for everyone to be strictly within the law, that I don't really understand why they're not. (AD1)

As suggested above, though, the key word in the Declaration of Assent is the word 'only', and this word proved the most problematic among respondents, hence these strategies for rationalising it away or obliterating it from the vows.

'The principle rather than the letter'

A common form of justification was the claim that leaders were promising to keep the spirit behind the law rather than carrying out a literal obedience to it (NW3T, HT5T). NW3T admitted that he was not actually living out the letter of the law, and NW1T felt that the principle behind the oath was that he would be 'recognisably Anglican'. This attitude was seen to validate the approaches of some leaders, who used liturgy in ways they perceived to be just about legal, but without any real sense of its value, and without any creativity or investment in making it live, or in helping others towards an appreciation of its value.

'Civil disobedience'

The principle of civil disobedience has been highly important in the Church, not least in the world of liturgical reform. Some examples, both positive and negative, will illustrate this. In the notes to the Holy Communion service in the *ASB* (1980) worshippers are discouraged from the well-established Anglican custom of dropping to their knees after the *Sanctus* in the Eucharistic Prayer:

> The Eucharistic Prayer … is a single prayer, the unity of which may be obscured by changes of posture in the course of it.[69]

But the equivalent note in the *CW* Main Volume has changed:

> Local custom may be followed and established in relation to posture … Any changes in posture during the Eucharistic Prayer should not detract from the essential unity of the prayer.[70]

In other words, 'If you must suddenly kneel down, at least try to do it nicely'. This appears to be a case of 'If you can't police it, legalise it', as does the *CW* provision for the abandoning of the Lectionary during Ordinary Time, a response to Evangelicals who have a long tradition of teaching series rather than adherence to Lectionary readings[71]. A similar principle was at work in the more recent decision of General Synod to change the rules about vesture for public worship[72]. Civil disobedience is clearly an important factor in liturgical development, and the archdeacon recognised this, although the disobedience did have to be 'principled': 'We've got to accept, as law-keepers, that the whole business of liturgical revision, not unlike the Suffragette Movement, began with civil disobedience … and *principled* civil disobedience.' (AD1)

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[69] *ASB 1980,* 115.
[70] *CW* Main Volume (2000), 330.
[71] See *NPfW* (2016) 103-4 and the *CW* Main Volume (2000), 540, n7.
[72] At the July 2017 General Synod. Reported at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/07/10/clergy-can-dress-church-votes-let-ditch-vestments/ [Accessed 8th August 2019]

Some respondents clearly did feel themselves to be on a mission to loosen up the Law of the Church. NW6T explained:

> I joined the Anglican Church because I recognised it needed change, and I wanted to be a catalyst for change, and sometimes to bring change you've got to be a bit of a rebel. So having permission in leading a service to go completely off-script; sometimes to use liturgy, sometimes not to, should be something which is approved from the top …
>
> JL: So there's an element of 'civil disobedience'?
>
> Yes.

Again, it is easy to see how a fundamental belief in the unhelpfulness of liturgy, and a quest to subvert the perceived stuffiness' of Anglican worship might result in a policy of creative disobedience.

'I'm giving you permission'

Perhaps the most common response, though, was the sense that some bishops felt as hampered by the rules as did the parish clergy they were licensing, and were prepared in different ways to signal a greater degree of latitude than the clear sense of the oaths stated. NW6 had discussed this point with a bishop earlier on in his ministry, and had gained the impression that there was a growing inevitability about the need to sit lightly to the law. Another common view was that the bishop had put a priest into post to do a particular job and was happy however that might be achieved (NW2T, NW3T, HT5T). NW3 felt that the bishop was complicit in this in that he had conducted worship in that church's style without complaint, as did the bishop who presided at HT12. Another strand under this heading is the oft-quoted maxim that 'it is easier to ask for forgiveness than for permission'. This was mentioned by NW3T as having been said to him by his bishop, with whom he felt that a good and open working relationship was vital. In fact most of the respondents expressed their relationship to the bishop in positive terms, of having felt understood and supported rather than policed (HT5T, NW1T, NW2T, NW3T, NW4T, NW6T). The archdeacon clearly felt that his role was to encourage and protect rather than to police:

> I don't want to police it to restrict them; I want to police it so they're safe. There are others in the city who are making murmurings about unauthorised preaching [at a new *HTB* plant], and I'm not sure if that's because they're worried that God's word is being misrepresented, or maybe they're envious of the opportunities given to [that church]. So I would rather make it clear that there are no bricks which can be thrown. (AD1)

There seemed to be little difference between the two networks in these strategies for coping with the Declaration of Assent, although since HTB Kensington will only send teams to plant or graft at the invitation of the diocesan bishop concerned, this final way of thinking was more prevalent in *HTB* churches, who felt themselves particularly tasked by their bishops to do whatever it took to reach the young adults and students whom they so ruthlessly target.

Why does this matter? Is it all just a game which leaders are playing? Whilst on one level liturgical disobedience might seem to be trivial in comparison to the evangelistic mandate, there is a more serious side to this issue, which concerns leaders' attitudes towards authority and submission to it. It has been noted that we live in anti-authoritarian times, yet the NT contains much about the value of submission to authority[73]. Whilst there was no hint of anything remotely sinister going on, the fact is that tragic stories of abuse often begin with gifted people who feel that they are above the law, and somehow a special case. They are often prophetic leaders, and have ministries which up to a point are successful, but fall because they believe that they know better than anyone else. Howard's account of the Sheffield Nine o' Clock Service paints a picture of a community 'overawed by their exceptionally gifted and dynamic leader, and his insight, determination and vision. He was seen as truly a modern Moses or John the Baptist; a latter day prophet.' But he also had 'an insatiable desire for power, which was fulfilled by money and sexual involvement. This power was power to damn, to humiliate, power to enter people's minds and power to control them.' (1996, 22, 6) The subsequent tragic downfall of NOS grew from the seeds which were planted in the soil of the belief that nobody else really understood; that we know better. This is obviously an extreme example (in which I was involved personally) but it ought to sound a note of caution to leaders who believe that submission to lawful authorities is only a game.

Summary

This chapter has examined some of the more prevalent themes which emerged from the data collected during Participant Observation, from interviews with church leaders, and from the Focus Group. It has set out to demonstrate, from the evidence of fieldwork, that five particular policies are guiding the churches of both networks. There is a desire to minimise the liturgical in worship, since it is perceived to be unhelpful or even actively harmful. Instead worship songs, the 'new liturgy', have largely or completely replaced liturgical texts. There is an overriding quest for informality in worship, at the expense of reverence, based on the belief that this approach will subvert the rather stuffy image of Anglicanism which it is perceived that the target groups hold. When liturgy is used, sometimes

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[73] For example 1 Cor 16:16, Eph 5:21, Heb 13:17, and 1 Pet 5:5.

merely as an obligation, it is used uncreatively and unenthusiastically, and there is little interest in exploring the riches which a liturgical approach might bring, quite apart from the use of texts. Because they have chosen these policies, and because they have also chosen to remain within the Anglican Church, licensed leaders face some issues regarding Canon Law, which they negotiate in a variety of ways. In spite of some fundamental differences between the two networks of this study they share much in common which flows from their shared inheritance from the Vineyard. Both networks place a high emphasis on mission and evangelism, freedom in worship, worship as intimacy with God, and share attitudes to Anglican Canon Law. Throughout all these differences and similarities, praxis, if not always interview responses, has indicated the common feeling that formal Anglican liturgical forms of worship and texts are outdated, unhelpful in mission, particularly among younger people, and restrict freedom in worship. So much is liturgy seen as a lost cause that there was very little evidence of the desire to explore its possibilities, teach about it, or to use it well and creatively, apart from within the operant theology of the Focus Group members. The next chapter will continue to explore these themes, addressing Osmer's interpretive question, before attempting to critique such practice in two final normative chapters.

5. Data Analysis

This chapter moves on from a report of the data to ask some deeper questions about what this information has revealed about attitudes to worship and liturgy, and how the data speak into the research questions. In terms of Practical Theology it seeks to go beyond a mere description of the situation to explore more deeply the reasons behind what is actually going on, what the practices observed in the fieldwork and illuminated in the interviews might mean, and why they are significant. In Osmer's terms this chapter deals with the second question of Practical Theology: *Why* is this going on? It will do so by identifying some of the more major themes and constructing a narrative arc which tells the story of *HTB* and *NW*'s relationship with Anglican liturgical worship. The last chapter demonstrated the networks' abandonment of liturgy, their preference instead for worship-songs, their informal demeanour, their lack of creativity when liturgy was used, and their restriction of their understanding of what it means to be 'liturgical' only in terms of text. This chapter seeks to explain why those factors are in place. It will describe the culture of both networks, as well as reflecting on the subtle differences between them, suggesting that in order to understand the praxis of the churches and the reasons for those policies, it is necessary to understand four things about them. Then the following chapters will move to ask some critical questions about this narrative.

Firstly, from their points of view, they regard themselves as legitimate expressions of Anglicanism, as valid parts of what is already a very broad church. They have as much right to belong as do other kinds of churches within the Anglican denomination, and perhaps even more as they are unusual in seeing consistent numerical growth. It has been noted that there was little expressed in terms of negativity towards the Anglican Church as a whole, even if its traditional modes of worship were found wanting, and at times some civil disobedience was seen as necessary. Secondly, it is important to understand that both networks, in slightly different ways, are driven by mission, and have as their highest values either numerical church growth (particularly in *HTB*) or mature discipleship (particularly in *NW*). Therefore the effectiveness of their worship in helping to achieve these aims is of paramount importance, and provides the main criterion in assessing worship and forming policies. Thirdly, as the data have shown, there is a high value placed on the Vineyard theology of worship as helping worshippers to the point of intimacy with God, and the belief that sung worship is far more effective at achieving this than is spoken liturgy. Therefore, fourthly, since liturgy is seen to different degrees in the two networks as not just unhelpful in achieving these ends, but even as actively hampering encounter with God and evangelistic effectiveness, it is largely or completely abandoned, in favour of the more emotionally engaging use of sung worship. The anti-liturgical policies, therefore, flow logically from the second and third factors here, the desire for growth and the aim of moments of intimacy and encounter, so even if this does cause conflict with the first, being

legitimately Anglican, that is not a strong enough driver to attenuate these policies. There is therefore the need to find ways to negotiate Anglican Canon Law, as explored at the end of the previous chapter. Each of these four factors will be discussed in turn.

Legitimately Anglican

It became clear that both these networks feel themselves to be legitimate expressions of Anglicanism, as did the emerging Anglo-Catholics in a past generation. Reed (2017) provides a fascinating source in his work subtitled 'The Cultural Politics of Victorian Anglo-Catholicism', and although there are obviously substantial differences between the movement described by Reed and the *HTB* and *NW* networks, there is also an uncanny number of similarities in their trajectories. Like our networks, Anglo-Catholicism provides a good example of a movement or party within British Anglicanism which nevertheless takes its inspiration from elsewhere.

> From the beginning, the movement had a special appeal to the young, and children of the privileged classes seemed to find it particularly attractive. Some observers took a tolerant view, seeing it as a harmless outlet for youthful high spirits; others argued that all could learn from its adherents' high-mindedness and seriousness, that they were recalling the nation to its own ideals; some said that the movement offered spiritual meaning and purpose in a crass and materialistic society. But these voices were drowned out by the chorus of condemnation. Many more saw the movement as an expression of hedonism and self-indulgence, an unfortunate sign of the times, a symptom of the nation's moral decay. On the fringe, a few even argued that the movement's leaders were agents of an alien ideology, covertly serving a foreign power and seeking to subvert the nation's constitution.
>
> Certainly the movement's gatherings were sensual experiences, marked by vivid color and light, exotic costumes, the sweet aroma of incense, and music—powerful music … their music had an undeniable appeal. Few took seriously the warnings of Evangelical Christians that its words were often code for dangerous, soul-destroying doctrine, and it was played and copied by many who had no other use for the movement.
>
> The religious views of the young partisans frequently did depart from their parents' conventional religiosity, toward an ornate and antirational mysticism that struck many observers as an anomaly in a scientific, rational, modern age. A few young people even ran away to join religious communities, where (it was said) some were held incommunicado, denied contact with their despairing families. Most of the movement's young adherents stayed at home, of course, but their beliefs, their mannerisms, and their like-minded friends often set parents' teeth on edge. (Reed, 2017, xix-xx)

Jumping to the end of the story, Reed asserts that by the end of the 19th century

> Anglo-Catholicism itself had become respectable. By then it had also become clear that it could not be put down by law, and some former opponents had begun to doubt that putting it down was a good idea anyway. The movement had won its right to exist as a legitimate, tolerated party within the Church of England. Paradoxically, that victory removed some of its outlaw charm, although its fringes have retained some of the earlier flavor (*sic*) up to our own times. (*Ibid.*, xxiii)

Issues perceived as significant included the use of unauthorized liturgical texts and practices, the dress-codes of the clergy and other ministers, and a great concern for the layout of the church

building. The abolition of pews became a major issue for many Anglo-Catholics, although to set that in context it had to do with the distaste for pew-rents and hierarchies among the congregation.

The new Anglo-Catholicism was, according to Reed,

> largely an urban phenomenon. Rural conservatism may have contributed to that, but we can explain it entirely in the language of ecology, or of marketing … In many a village the parish church was the only place Anglicans could worship … An Anglo-Catholic clergyman in an English city stood a fair chance of attracting enough sympathetic layfolk to fill his church; he could also truthfully say that those upset by his innovations could go elsewhere.' (*Ibid.,* 96)

Even more attractive were settings where there were few or no congregants already worshipping. Where there was 'no established congregation with settled habits to be upset … the minister had an even freer hand' (*Ibid.,* 96). There seem, at least in some cases, to have been some success stories: Father Mackonochie of St Alban's Holborn in London, wrote to his Bishop:

> It must be remembered that we came to a new church without a congregation, so we could not alienate those in possession. We may have failed to attract some, but we have filled the Church, and that mostly with parishioners. What could we do more? (Quoted *Ibid.,* 97)

Many churches which were almost at death's door were revived when an Anglo-Catholic priest was appointed, although not always without resistance from the remaining parishioners. Reed reports of a church in Helston, Cornwall where under the Anglo-Catholic vicar William Blunt one of the churchwardens had written to the Bishop of Exeter to complain that

> many had stopped coming to church altogether, and many who continued to come 'are not able to rid themselves of the fear that some strongly exciting event is about to take place.' He knew of many 'ladies who have been incapacitated from performing their religious and other duties for the remainder of the day, in consequence of the excitement they have been subjected to at church.' (*Ibid.,* 35-6)

However what really drove the Anglo-Catholics was a deep desire for evangelism, and for worship which was evangelistic, a 'genuine interest in services that could lay hold of souls' (*Ibid.,* 72). The new culture of Anglo-Catholicism was reinforced firstly by its festivals, where, because of the greater ease of transport, allowed first clergy and then lay people to gather. These gatherings

> allowed, even encouraged, the like-minded to come together to support one another and to oppose what they disagreed with. In particular they had the effect (not always intended) of bringing clergy together, giving them a sense of themselves as a group with common problems and common interests, and providing them with opportunities to meet, to discuss, and to engage in ecclesiastical politics. (*Ibid.,* 97)

Not far behind came the establishment of their own theological colleges at which the true Anglo-Catholic faith could be taught to the next generation of priests. Colleges in Chichester, Cuddesden

Wells and other places 'trained prospective ministers in High Church principles, and offered a rich liturgical diet' (*Ibid.,* 98) Evangelical colleges such as Ridley Hall and Wycliffe Hall followed as evangelicals tried to oppose this trend.

From this brief survey of Reed's fascinating work, it is not difficult to spot the parallels with current movements within the Church of England. *HTB* particularly, with its aggressive urban planting and grafting strategy, its 'Focus' summer holiday week, its colourful but non-Anglican worship and its distinctive dress codes, seems to be uncannily similar to the strategy of the earlier Anglo-Catholics. More recently its own brand of theological training has been marketed at its own theological colleges, while the St Paul's Theological Centre provides non-vocational theological training for lay members of *HTB.*

This is significant, as there are so many other options available. Indeed just as several leaders of the original Anglo-Catholic movement felt themselves to be left with no option but to make the move to Rome (*Ibid.,* 11-12), so there have been casualties as Anglican clergy and lay people have moved over first to the House Churches and later to Vineyard congregations. Indeed the first Vineyard church in the UK was planted in South West London by an Anglican priest, John Mumford, in 1987 (Pytches, 2002, 358). Nevertheless our two networks have chosen to remain Anglican, and do largely show loyalty. This is particularly notable in the respect shown to bishops, the good relationships which many enjoy with them, the positive ways in which they were spoken about by the respondents. They may need to work at their loyalty to Canon Law, but the previous chapter demonstrated that at least some of them are making serious attempts to make the Declaration of Assent with at least the intention of integrity. Obviously the research sample was chosen from those who have chosen to stay rather than depart for other denominations, but there is a significant number of such leaders trying hard to remain loyal. From the other side it is clear that many diocesan bishops, whilst not necessarily finding this kind of spirituality appealing personally, have nevertheless welcomed *HTB* plants into their major cities, recognising as they do the life, vitality and youthfulness which they add into the diocesan mix[74]. One question presents itself: do these networks see themselves in any way as 'cultures of protest'? Whilst there were many comments which were critical of Anglican forms of worship, there was little which was negative about the Anglican system as a whole. Indeed pervading the interviews was a generous spirit which very much reflected the attitude of Wimber himself, and a desire to 'equip the saints' by sharing what they felt God had revealed to them with the Church as a whole. Both networks seem to have inherited this same attitude to the wider church. The one comment from NW6 about civil disobedience notwithstanding, churches did not commonly see themselves as crusading or flag-waving for their particular networks, but rather there was an attitude of getting on and doing church well, whilst seeking to bless other churches as they could, and as

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[74] From a private conversation with a diocesan bishop.

other churches wanted them to. *HTB* tend to see themselves as 'doing their thing' and prioritising their internal style and agendas, while *NW* tend to see themselves as attempting to be good Anglican parish churches which are effective at pastoral care, evangelism and discipling.

This planting strategy, however, is not always welcomed, and some have reacted against their familiar churches being taken over by these strange Midwich cuckoos. One example which hit the news in 2017 was that of St Thomas' Norwich, where, according to a letter to the *Church Times*[75] the 'Church-plant … swept away a congregation and its liturgical life.' The writer states

> Many of the original congregation have left, including two Readers, some to other more traditional churches or the cathedral, but some to no church. Some elderly people in the parish and beyond have become unchurched in their old age, to their great distress.
>
> All this has come at great cost and heartache to the original congregation.
>
> Of course, a lot of money is involved: a very expensive sound system, screens, computers, and many paid staff, who have evidently come from other churches.
>
> Obviously, it has not been possible to keep faithfully to different traditions in the same church. Although "Common Worship Eucharist" continues at 9.30, it has no procession, no robed choir or clergy, some of the liturgy is missed out, hymns and organ are used at only two services a month, and the communion is administered sometimes by lay people who do not have the permission of the Bishop. Apparently "anybody" can do it, and take communion to people's homes.[76]

It is fascinating to see, in the letter, how certain liturgical motifs have become symbolic of a deeper discontent. Naturally there is the desire to avoid the kind of negative publicity which the Norwich story produced:

> My impression has been that when *HTB* has planted into places that have an existing service like that, it's tended to be 'How do we keep the old guard happy, not destroy it because that's a bad story, we don't want that', but if you look at the effort going into really growing it, it's minimal. (HT8T)

Whilst in context this comment is about how *HTB* grafts cope with pre-existing services, it is natural not to want to bring one's ministry into disrepute by allowing 'a bad story' to be told, and whilst others may misunderstand and resent *HTB* congregations (perhaps resenting their rapid success in numerical growth, or, as AD1 suggested, the resources they have received) leaders do try hard not to give any more cause for criticism than is necessary for them to get on and do what they believe God has put them there to do. Byassee (2020, 93) claims that the growth in *HTB* churches is around 80% transfer growth, so it is easy to see why other local churches might feel resentful if life and vigour (and often youth) are being sucked out of them.

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[75] *Church Times* Letters to the Editor, Friday 26th May 2017.
[76] http://www.christchurchbelper.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/HTB-Church-Plant.pdf [Accessed 28 September 2019]

But although there is this fundamental loyalty in both networks, it is sometimes negotiated differently. Underlying this issue is there is a deeper tension, a tension which has existed for millennia. In his call for the need for a new *via media* Cartledge (2000) suggests that this has been present throughout the history of God's people, that of Spirit *versus* institution. In the OT this tension might, as mentioned, be seen between the 'prophetic' and the 'priestly' strands. A better church historian than I am would be able to trace this tension through the last 2000 years, including no doubt second century Montanism, the tensions which resulted in the Synod of Whitby in 664, and more latterly the dynamics of Anglican and Roman Catholic charismatic renewal. It is helpful to realise that this liturgy/freedom tension may be one which has always existed in God's relationship to humans. Cartledge suggests that a *via media* is essential, in order to prevent the Anglican Church collapsing into either 'liturgical institutionalism devoid of spontaneity (and indeed of the 'charismatic') or … a loss of order provided by the liturgical form.' Before the advent of charismatic renewal 'The established liturgical order predominated and there was no spontaneity of any kind.' (2018, 12-13) He notes from his own experience that in the early days of renewal at St Andrew's Chorleywood, where he was a member, prayer for healing, accompanied by 'words of knowledge', a process learnt from Wimber, nevertheless took place after the service had ended. Later, however, at St John's Harborne,

> The Anglican liturgy as a governing framework had been displaced. Instead, it began with a confession and possibly the collect for the Sunday. When it was a service of Holy Communion, a full Eucharistic prayer was used, normally after the sermon and before the prayer ministry, but sometimes it occurred after the prayer ministry. (2018, 15)

But underneath all this there is a more fundamental issue which comes between Anglican and Vineyard worship – the question of shape or *'ordo'*. No doubt thinking about *ordo* rarely features in local church life, but it is an important issue in liturgical theology, and has created a gulf between Anglican and Vineyard worship, and to some extent between *HTB* and *NW* churches. Based on the anthropological work of Levi-Strauss (1963), various scholars such as Dix (1945), Taft (1992) and Schmemman (1963, 1975) have sought to discover the 'deep structures' or 'shape' inherent in rituals and therefore in religious worship. Moore-Keish explains that while the term, which simply translates 'order', has been used to refer to rules and to ingredients in worship, she explains that

> While Schmemann acknowledges that the term ordo has been used to refer primarily to the texts themselves, he argues that it more properly refers to the basic structure, the underlying principle of worship. What is the basic principle of the church's worship through the ages? What is it that unites Christian worship across time and space? The search for this basic principle is what Schmemann calls the "problem of the Ordo," which has fundamentally shaped the use of this Latin word in liturgical theology ever since. (2006, 15-6)

Liturgical theologians have sought, by studying Christian worship through the centuries, to identify common shapes or journeys through worship. So Dix (1945), for example, suggested that the

fundamental shape of the Eucharist was to take, bless, break and distribute. Whilst this simple shape has been much disputed in the years since his landmark book's publication, the fundamental idea is that shape or *ordo* is important, and seems to have emerged naturally from the internal logic of the rite as well as the biblical material on which it is built. It is at this level of *ordo* that there is a fundamental difference between the traditional liturgical churches and the Vineyard, which goes deeper than merely whether or not they use any liturgy. In Anglican churches (and of course the same is true of other 'liturgical' denominations such as Roman Catholic, Orthodox and to a high degree the Methodists), the nature of the worship is dependent on the 'theme' of the service. This theme may come from the lectionary readings, an event in the Church Calendar, a preaching series, or from other sources, but the habit of Anglicans has always been to interweave that theme throughout the service. So the relationship between the 'teaching' or theme of the service and the rest of the 'worship' (readings, prayers, music …) might be represented diagrammatically like this:

Figure 2. Anglican *Ordo*

Very simply this means that we sing *Thine be the Glory* on Easter Day, *Lo he comes* during Advent, and *There is a Green Hill* on Good Friday, and we take advantage of the many resources in the *CW* corpus for thematic and seasonal liturgy, so that the theme of our worship is reflected in all that we read, pray and sing. Quite apart from giving the service integrity, this would seem to be a sound educational principle, that we reinforce the message through expressing it in other ways throughout the service. This has been the way that God's people have worshipped him for millennia. Indeed the form critical study of the Psalms is based on the presupposition that the words would reflect a theme or occasion. It was reported that during the fieldwork only a couple of churches, notably HT6D, appeared to show any interest in using songs which were thematically linked.

In addition to this thematic integrity, there is also in liturgical churches a logical sense of flow or journey within each act of worship. So within the Eucharist there is an internal structure which means that we gather and are welcomed into God's presence, we use a period for penitence and a period for praise, before we study Scripture together, respond in prayer, and receive the sacrament. We are then sent out to live Christian lives in the days ahead. This is not the only possible journey through the Eucharistic liturgy: indeed the *BCP* has quite a different *ordo*, but it is one which makes

sense, and has worked for most of the liturgical denominations for centuries. Similarly non-Eucharistic services have their own internal logical, although with more flexibility, leading worshippers through penitence and praise, encounter with the Bible, and intercession. So many churches worship broadly in this way because it works.

But suddenly, seemingly from nowhere, this centuries-old *ordo* has been swept away and replaced by a different one, that of the Vineyard. Even the early charismatics managed to find freedom and good sense within the traditional *ordo*, and there was no shortage of songs which would do a multitude of tasks within the theme or teaching intention of the particular service. But what Wimber brought to the UK was a whole new shape for services, which can be represented like this:

Figure 3. Vineyard *Ordo*

This is a simple three-fold structure, but the point is that the three parts need not have any connection to each other, nor with any particular theme or season. Cartledge agrees that this Vineyard *ordo* is becoming the prevailing model:

> Anglican liturgy has always had a shape or framework to it … However, the influence of John Wimber and the Vineyard movement on the Church of England brought a new liturgical structure. Instead of historic liturgy giving an overall shape, a new paradigm emerged … Daniel E. Albrecht described it as a basic structure of three rites: a period of sung worship, the sermon, and the time of prayer, often called prayer ministry. This threefold structure became the new norm in Anglican churches influenced by the New Wine network and the Vineyard movement (sometimes called the Third Wave). Instead of integrating charismatic spirituality within an Anglican framework, components (e.g., confession and absolution, intercessions using liturgical forms, and Eucharistic liturgy) were integrated into this Pentecostal structure. (2018, 14-15)

Albrecht (1999, 152-70) notes the insertion of what he calls 'micro-rites' such as singing in tongues or prophecy (neither of which have been seen to be very much in evidence in any of the churches visited) into the spaces between these three segments. These micro-rites are 'smaller units of practices that are fluid but nevertheless act as bridges between the main liturgical rites of praise, sermon, and prayer ministry.' (Cartledge, 2018, 16) He suggests that parts of the Anglican liturgy, such as penitence and intercession have often been reduced to the status of micro-rites within the bigger worship-word-ministry *ordo*. Fieldwork demonstrates that even the Liturgy of the Sacrament and reception of Communion is sometimes reduced to the level of a micro-rite. The evidence from the

previous chapter demonstrates that this Vineyard *ordo* was overwhelmingly the model which was observed during fieldwork, although sometimes expressed differently in the two different networks. Beneath it all is a significant departure from the way in which Anglicans, in common with other liturgical denominations, have always understood worship, which calls into question the legitimacy of the Anglicanism practised in the two networks, at least as far as the liturgy in concerned. Of the two networks the *HTB* churches were far more likely to adopt wholesale the Vineyard *ordo*, while, as has been reported, *NW* churches were ranged far more widely along a spectrum between fairly strict adherence to a traditional liturgical shape and a complete lack of anything liturgical. However, even in the two *NW* churches where no liturgy at all was used, the model was often more like a non-conformist hymn sandwich than a Vineyard service. In that sense *HTB* seems to have bought more completely into the Vineyard model, where *NW* churches which minimised liturgy seem to sit in the low-church Anglican tradition which has been in evidence in evangelical churches for decades.

So whilst leaders in both networks expressed loyalty to the Anglican system, and largely demonstrated it in terms of their ecclesiology, when it came to their worship there was a clear departure from Anglican tradition. However, it is notable that they *were* trying to find ways to negotiate this tension, rather than simply abandoning it to move to other denominations where that struggle would not have been needed, or perhaps needed a lot less. There was also, as indicated in the previous chapter, some appreciation of the value of some aspects of Anglican worship, even if that appreciation did not seem always to have translated into practice. The final chapter of this thesis will suggest a framework for a liturgical *via media*, which, it is argued, takes us even further on than those of Cartledge. But the degree to which this tension can ever be negotiated with integrity is a question to which this study will return.

Driven by Mission

This leads on to the second major theme which emerged from the interviews and visits: both networks are strongly driven by mission, and more specifically by evangelism. This almost did not need saying explicitly in the interviews because it was such a fundamental taken-for-granted assumption, but virtually everyone who was interviewed spoke of having the goal of seeing numerical growth in the church as new people came to a relationship with God through Christ. This became the yardstick by which the success of the church was measured, and the main rationale for the style of worship which was adopted: it must relate to non-Christians. It was not surprising given the evangelical heritage of the churches that there was no hint of any liberal universalist thinking: boundaries were clear and non-porous, and people outside the Kingdom need to be brought in. It was clear from the interviews that the quest for numerical growth was the compass and map for

these networks' mission and ministry, and the decisions they made about everything, and especially about their worship, were driven by whether or not they were considered likely to help people encounter God, and particularly encounter him for the first time. Since some of the leaders' experience of Anglican liturgical worship in the past had been negative, it was taken for granted that this would be true for anyone seeking to find out more about Church and faith. Whilst many could see its value, in terms of theology, richness and connectedness, few deemed it important enough to work hard on so that these strengths might be appreciated by those coming to faith, even though there was actually some interest in this from the young congregation members who made up the Focus Group. Nor did they see it as a helpful tool in commending church and faith to those outside. Leaders believed that liturgy does not have instant appeal, which singing apparently does, but rather requires time and effort, and is therefore not a helpful evangelistic tool. Later the analogy of fast food will be considered, and whether this quest for instant appeal is playing a part in the cultures of these networks.

However, there was again a divergence between the two networks, particularly in terms of the nature of the target group for mission. The very idea of a 'target group' and a deliberate strategy for reaching that group is a relative novelty within Anglicanism. Until fairly recently the target groups of Anglican churches would have been seen as the parishioners, that is those resident, or working or studying within the geographical parish boundaries. The move towards 'Mission Action Planning' is a more recent development to help parish churches think more insightfully about their ministry (Chew and Ireland, 2016), but usually that is seen in terms of how best to reach the parish as a whole, rather than how to target a particular segment of the demographic. Because of *NW*'s awareness of the need to be primarily parish orientated, the issue of specific targeting is nowhere near as prevalent as in *HTB* churches, which the data indicate deliberately aim their ministry at young people, students and young adults.

Moy (2023a, 95-124) discusses in depth what he sees as the 'success culture' of *HTB*, seeing it as a major motivator for the network, which is not without its pressures on leaders. He notes that in spite of its heritage within evangelicalism, it has

> breathed the air of 'success culture' as it has grown up. This culture is fuelled not just by factors inherent to that charismatic and evangelical heritage but also by the socio-economic setting and expectations in which it is primarily located, and the psychology of some of the key leaders drawn to work and minister there. (*Ibid.,* 95)

As an illustration of this 'success culture' he quotes from *HTB* leader Bishop Ric Thorpe's bid to the Church Commissioners for Strategic Development Funding for the Diocese of London in 2017, with its bold ambitions for church planting:

> The expectation will be for each City Centre Resource Church [CCRC] to grow and plant onwards within three years, and subsequently to then further plant every three years. Following this model, we could see 15 new churches by Year Three, 30 by Year Six, and 45 by Year Nine. This has been shown from experience to be an ambitious but realistic target. Assuming that each CCRC will eventually grow their congregation to 1,000, and that each '2nd generation' plant will grow to 500, this will result in around 30,000 additional churchgoers by 2025. If current trends in declining weekly attendance continued at the same rate, these additional attendance numbers would represent an increase in 2025 in national weekly attendance of over 3.5%, helping to reverse the long-term decline of the Church of England. If growth happened at a slower rate than we have already evidenced and the 15 grew to 500 and planted a further 30 churches with 250 each in them that that would still be an increase of 15,000 attendees per annum, mainly from a younger demographic, and would have sparked or birthed a range of other ministries including (as we have seen already) vocations to ordination in the Church of England. (*Ibid.,* 96)

This kind of language leads Moy to question 'how a "success culture" may have put pressure on how discipleship goals are described, packaged, branded and marketed, and the corresponding impact on espoused and operant theology.' (*Ibid.,* 95) He also discusses the effects of this culture on church leaders, and the pressure upon them to see numerical growth. One of his interviewees told him

> Success has been too strong a motivation, I think. Only it was always dressed up in godly language and that sort of thing. I acknowledge that it's far too easy to be over concerned about growth and numbers for the wrong reasons. So, at its best, it's concern for spiritual growth. But the danger is always, you spill over into adding up the wrong things. (*Ibid.,* 99)

He goes on to recount stories of mental ill-health, burnout and disillusionment among planters, but this issue also raises questions about the degree of cultural accommodation in the proclamation of the good news. He uses a Theological Action Research approach to discover whether the espoused theology of *HTB* churches has parted company with normative evangelical theology, as famously defined by Bebbington (2003, 2-17), and as seen as normative by past HTB vicar and evangelical statesman John Collins. What exactly is the nature of 'the gospel according to *HTB* (and *NW*) ', and has it left behind its evangelical roots? In particular what is the relationship between evangelism and disciple-making, and between quantity and quality? Even within evangelicalism there are different emphases as to what Scripture actually teaches about the message of Christ, and several versions of the gospel have been identified, some of which might be regarded as heterodox, for example the 'Prosperity Gospel', the 'Therapy Gospel', the 'Feminised Gospel', and the 'Consumerist Gospel'. Whilst Prosperity Gospel teaching has made very few inroads into British Christianity, and certainly not into the two networks under consideration[77], there are several critiques of charismatic theology and praxis as being simplified, therapeutic, numerical and feminised. These critiques are often levelled not at *HTB* or *NW* themselves, but rather at Alpha, the evangelistic product of *HTB,* also widely used in the *NW* network.

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[77] Although Gilbert (2015) discusses the visit of American prosperity preacher Joyce Meyer to the *HTB* Leadership conference in that year.

The Simplified Gospel

Percy attacks Alpha in a way which might equally be levelled at the network which created it and does so much to promote it, by suggesting that it is 'Join-the-Dots' Christianity, a 'confident but narrow expression of Christianity' (2007, 16) and that to simplify Christianity is to rob it of some of its essence, that of its 'contestability'.

> In the relentless appeal to "basics", the Alpha course obviates the implicit and explicit paradoxes of the Gospel, as well as its breadth ...

> Any group that offers a course on 'Basic Christianity' needs to address who chose the basics, and why certain 'basics' were selected and not others. In Alpha, the basics turn out to be an appeal to a largely inerrant Bible, attenuation of a homely and powerful Holy Spirit, and expression of an evangelical atonement theory. They are not, interestingly, the Trinity, baptism, communion or community, which might be more appropriate for other groups. Moreover, the authors apparently do not like the course being adapted or enculturated. This suggests that a 'package' of truth is being sold. Yet Christianity is arguably not something we 'possess'; like *God*, it possesses us, but is beyond us too. (2007, 15)

Wilson agrees, and suggests that *HTB* has become the new centre of British evangelicalism, through its tendency to make the gospel bland and attractive:

> HTB represents British evangelicalism's friendly face: biblical but not dogmatic, evangelistic but not ranty, activist but not politicised, Anglican but not really, centred rather than boundaried. Hard not to like, right? And certainly more likely to unite evangelicals, and to get favourable write-ups from cultural gatekeepers in the Telegraph or the Guardian, than the hardline confessional types. (2014)

The use of the phrase 'Anglican but not really' is interesting in the light of the discussion above. The experience of fieldwork suggests that Percy's and Wilson's assessments of *HTB* are not far from the truth, in that *HTB* does seem to preach a somewhat simplistic faith, often robbed of suffering, sacrifice, mystery or paradox. Scripture is largely taken as read, with no engagement in critical questions of scholarship, but then if one's aim is instant appeal to visiting non-Christians it is easy to see why this policy might be adopted. Generally speaking the teaching at *NW* churches tended to be aimed more at discipleship than evangelism. This simplification is evidenced in two of the driving policies mentioned in the previous chapter: the dropping of liturgical texts, particularly those which are not instantly and positively appealing, and their replacement with almost exclusively upbeat and positive praise songs, from which lament, paradox and mystery are notably absent. Hard times may be mentioned, but only in the context of our victory over them. Such a typical song-slot will be analysed in detail under the next heading. Another of the factors from the previous chapter, that concerning informal demeanour, also chimes in with the *HTB* culture of simplicity and instant accessibility. There appears to be no recognition that it can sometimes be 'a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.' (Heb 10:31)

The Therapeutic Gospel

Again (2007) Percy accuses Alpha of proclaiming a 'therapeutic gospel' which is all about Jesus meeting my individual needs:

> The Spirit on offer obviously arises from a personable, therapeutic, home-counties context that is concerned with the individual. The dynamics of the Spirit's work in creation, justice, peace, reconciliation and the wider church receive scant attention. This is because the authors of the course reflect an elite, upper-middle class outlook (Eton, Cambridge, Brompton), which, quite naturally, has also enculturated the Gospel. In introducing the Gospel from here, there is inevitably no real social mandate, no prophetic witness and no serious appreciation of theology or ecclesiological breadth and depth. (2007, 15)

One interviewee would agree with this estimate:

> I think the whole thing is predicated upon a therapeutic model of Christianity, in which salvation is not actually just about an event in history, which secures my justification before God. It's actually about the experience of healing and wholeness, and feeling well in myself. Right? So I think other people, I can't remember where I've picked that up but other people have written about that, that salvation is actually about healing and wholeness in the kind of Vineyard and now probably the Bethel model as well, which is distinct from more kind of reformed views of doctrine and worship and Christian faith, which would be that my salvation is a historic act. (HT6T)

Particularly absent from any of the teaching during visits to different churches was any emphasis on such biblical themes as steadfastness, endurance, faithfulness, suffering or sacrifice. Moy (*Op. cit.*, 135-41) uses quantitative research to ask members and leaders of *HTB* churches about some major themes in worship and preaching, and particularly about the extent to which heaven and hell are addressed. Not surprisingly the results showed that the desire to 'accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative' (to quote Bing Crosby) had affected significantly the espoused theology of the congregations. Similarly when asked why people might want to come to their church post-Alpha, leaders mentioned factors such as 'meaningful community', 'inspiring teaching' and 'encountering God in worship' at a significantly higher rate than other factors like 'to be prepared for life and evangelism' and 'to be prepared for eternity'. Apparently less than 5% of worship songs were thought to mention judgement or hell, a figure which Moy contrasts with the biblical Psalter, 'where 70 of 150 songs are laments, and others invoke and appeal against judgement'. (*Ibid.*, 139)

Luhrmann agrees, and suggests that in the Vineyard a traditional evangelical concern for conversion, active holiness, the cross and the Bible there may be instead an operant theology of a 'vulnerable God, who loves us unconditionally and wants nothing more than to be our friend, our best friend, as loving and personal and responsive as a best friend in America should be.' (2012, 34) Moy suggests that even the Vineyard has changed its gospel from the early days, with the Toronto era having softened the message, since it:

accelerated a 'me-centred' turn in the charismatic world. Where the price of entry in the early Wimber years had been 'I surrender all', the price of entry post-Toronto was 'I need love/therapy'. The Spirit was something (*sic*) I could call on whenever I needed a pick-me-up. (2023b, 29)

Testimony can reinforce this 'attractive' espoused theology. As reported, on a couple of occasions when testimonies were being given, they were all about how meeting Jesus had, in various ways, made the testifier feel better, whether through improved self-image or the lifting of worries and burdens. Brian (2005) analyses a series of 36 testimonies from Alpha courses, and finds a fairly set pattern, almost like a literary genre, which he reads in the light of brainwashing techniques from China. The therapeutic nature of the Alpha gospel shines through, with consistent stories of life improvement, but little emphasis on repentance or intellectual acceptance of the truth of the Christian faith. Collins explores the sense of failure on the part of young mothers who, because of their responsibility for their babies during the service, feel unable to access these kinds of blessings from God:

> (1) OK I keep thinking about that verse about love casting out fear [1 John 4:18]
> (2) and Jesus talking about not worrying because your heavenly father has it all in hand
> (3) but how and where is that feeling
> (4) I can't speak to God about it because it doesn't seem to work
> (5) I feel rising tides of panic that I can't do this stuff
> (6) every time I get to a station where I feel like I can stop the train carries on
> (7) and I have to figure out how to keep going. (2019, 475)

This sense of anxiety might also be experienced by others who, for whatever reason, are not able to engage with God in the ways expected within the culture. This might include those who do not find singing or 'joining in the actions' easy, a group, incidentally, completely unmentioned in any of the interviews. And it might include those whose conversion has not led to positive outcomes, but increased trouble or conflict.

This raises an interesting question which Moy seeks to address in his thesis, as he compares the current espoused theology of the *HTB* network with the normative theology of evangelicalism as formulated by figures such as Wesley and Whitefield, John Collins and David Bebbington. In particular he notes the lack of emphasis on Scripture and holiness. He uses Daniel who traces the trajectory of Vineyard theology and comments:

> The contrast is dramatic. In earlier years, powerful, supernatural experiences of the Spirit were a requirement of group membership and highly valued by the community. By 2002, however, [five years after Wimber's death, and eight years after 'The Toronto Blessing'] the fervour had subsided, the costs have lowered, and the requirements of group membership had mellowed… at the same time, growth had stalled, group identity was hazier, and the denomination had splintered… it is remarkable to see the correlation between the cessation of costly behaviours and the decline in group flourishing. The price of admission, so to speak, in the early years, would have been allowing oneself to be physically

and emotionally bowled over, to lose oneself in that communal/personal upheaval. The price of admission in 2002 was rest. (Markham and Daniel, 2018, 39)

Moy expresses concern that 'merely "preaching the positives" carries with it a grave theological danger to the wider church's health'. (*Op. cit.,* 199) Whilst the concern of this piece of research is different from that of Moy, his work is significant in highlighting a possible danger for the Church, one which this thesis will argue may be related to the loss of liturgical elements in worship.

A Typical song-slot

The previous chapter described three services in detail, but a closer examination of a part of one of those services, that at HT4, will illustrate how many current worship songs reinforce this therapeutic feel, particularly those coming from the Hillsong and, if Hunter's thesis (discussed below) is correct, especially the Bethel stables. The HT4 service described was a typical *HTB* service, but further confirmation of the therapeutic nature of the gospel proclaimed may be seen if the songs which were used are analysed rather than just being listed. This is what the congregation were actually singing (musical copyright details are on p.111-2 above).

The first song, *The Way,* begins with an affirmation of faith that in every battle, heartbreak or circumstance I face, You (unspecified) are my fortress, portion and hiding place. You (presumably now Jesus) are the way, the truth and the life. What is more, in every blessing, promise and even every breath I take, You are the provider, protector and the One I love. Therefore there is a new horizon, and I am set on You. You will meet me with new mercies, and my fears and doubts will soon dissipate.

This moves on to *Love so great,* a standard praise song which asks the question 'How can I praise you enough?' Having caught a glimpse of Your heart, I will still be singing for a billion years. The Lord Almighty is described in images from the created world: he is like shining stars and the wildest ocean. The God of wonders is incomparable, and reigns. Therefore we will lift up all praise.

Living Hope takes a step back and expresses testimony, presumably before conversion, to when there was both a gulf and a mountain between us. So I turned in desperation, and Your loving kindness tore through me. The end has now been written, and Jesus Christ is my living hope. God's mercy and grace in stepping down to me to remove sin and shame mean that I am forgiven, and Yours forever. I praise because I have been set free, because death has lost its grip, and because every chain has been broken.

Great are you Lord continues this theme: You have given me life, love, light and hope, and you restore broken hearts. Even our praise is enabled because of Your breath in our lungs.

Finally, at the end of the service, the congregation used *Build my life,* which expresses the fact that Jesus is worthy of all the song, praise and indeed breath we could bring. We therefore live for You, and pray for the opening of our eyes to see who You really are. Just one line expresses the desire to be led in Your love to those around. (HT4D)

If it is possible to describe the journey through this slot, it is certainly not easy. We begin with both the sorrows and joys of our lives, where Jesus meets our needs in blessing, removing our fears and doubts, and then move to express our praise to this incomparable God. Then we return to pre-Christian times, and acknowledge that we have been saved and are now eternally free. Our great God is praised because he has given us light and life, and finally we express our desire to live for God, see more of him, and go to those around with his love (not, interestingly, his righteousness, which is a far more common theme in Scripture). Clearly there are many major Christian motifs which are untouched here, and one would expect that from any given Sunday: it is not possible, even with Anglican liturgy, to tell the whole story of the gospel every week. That is why we have the liturgical calendar. Neither is it the intent of this thesis to critique the words theologically, for example over the lack of clarity as to which member of the Trinity is being addressed at any given time, or pastorally, for example over the contention that our doubts and fears simply disappear when we are in the presence of Jesus. But given that this kind of diet is very typical of the current wave of songs, and that this sentiment, which is fundamentally, in the words of an earlier song, 'Thank you for saving me', provides for many worshippers their sole diet, week after week, there might be cause for concern. The therapeutic gospel rings out loud and clear through this slot, even if not in a particularly logical order: the predominant expression is of what You have done for me. In only one line is it suggested that I might do something for you: apart from that all I want to do is to praise you, which of course will make me feel good. And in only one line is there any mention of sin and the need for repentance. Perhaps the rediscovery of the positive qualities mentioned above which the traditional *ordo* brings might help our worship to be more thoughtful about where worshippers are taken during song slots but also during the service as a whole. When churches abandon the liturgical worship of the Church, which it will be claimed helps to provide balance, and replace it with a diet of songs such as these, it is far more difficult to ensure that an orthodox, balanced and pastorally sensitive gospel is safeguarded.

The Numerical Gospel

Whilst none of the interviewees gave the impression of flaunting their numerical growth, or trying to impress me with their success, what Ward (1998) says about Alpha as the McDonaldisation of religion might equally well be applied to *HTB*, which he sees in a later book (2020, 151) as having become a 'brand'. He discusses what he calls its 'calculability':

> McDonaldization is driven by numbers. Efficiency is assessed by counting ... Quantity, however does not necessarily mean quality. Indeed … most people eating fast food know that this is not the best food they have ever tasted, but they console themselves by emphasising the size of portions relative to price and the speed of service.

He notes Alpha's frequent use of numbers in its publicity, as though quantity gave it validity, and suggests that 'Alpha has internalised the values of McDonaldization where quantity is a self-evident proof of significance and where numbers sell.' (1998, 281-2) However Moy, reinforcing his comments above about the success culture of *HTB*, brings a sense of balance with some more negative statistics, claiming that within the *HTB* network of plants

> exponential growth has not however been the norm and in such situations where it has been dramatic growth there has sometimes been an implosion of another prominent church or churches in that town, (which may or may not have been directly linked). There are plants that have peaked at a relatively small size, some that have dissolved, and other flagship plants that have since seen dramatic decline. (2023a, 99-100)

It was interesting that discipleship was mentioned far less often than evangelism in the interviews, and my experience of belonging to an *HTB* church would confirm this emphasis. Once someone has been on Alpha and become a Christian, the next stage is that they bring their friends to Alpha, and then perhaps become a helper on a further course. Other materials similar in nature do exist, which are designed to help with spiritual growth, prayer, marriage, parenting and so on, but experience suggests that these are given a much lower profile in the life of *HTB* churches than is Alpha itself. Quantity appears to be more of a priority than quality, even if that fact is not flaunted. Of course it is impossible to gain much evidence about the work of discipling in different churches on the basis of one visit, and this study is not a critique of Alpha, but I was left with the sense that it was the *NW* churches which through their preaching and their midweek activities were paying more attention to discipleship, while *HTB* were driven much more strongly by evangelism, without a strong sense of what to do next (which has indeed been a common criticism of Alpha itself : see Booker and Ireland, 2003, 31). One effect of our concentration on numerical growth is that we fail to learn the lessons set out by Kay (2010) that our goals are often best achieved obliquely. In Robert Warren's work on healthy churches (2004) he suggests that our prime focus should be, in Jesus' own words, on seeking first the Kingdom of God, and that we will then find other things, like numerical growth, added to us as well.

> Evangelism is the natural fruit of a faith-filled and faith-lived community ... Listening, in the '90s, to the stories of 25 churches in one diocese that had grown over 16% in five years, it was interesting to note than not one of them had *'numerical growth'* as a conscious target. Rather … they were simply seeking to *'be the church better'*. Quality, rather than quantity, was their goal: growth was a by-product.[78]

The Feminised Gospel

Murrow (2005) brought to the attention of the Church the notion of feminisation, and introduced us to a body of material, some scholarly (Podles, 1999) and some more popular (Eldredge, 2012). Charismatic worship songs which express tender love towards God have been derogatorily described as 'Jesus is my girlfriend' songs, and Murrow explores what it might mean for men to sing such lines to Jesus as

> 'Hold me close, let your love surround me, bring me near, draw me to your side',
> 'I'm desperate for you, I'm lost without you',
> 'Let my words be few, Jesus I am so in love with you',
> 'You're altogether lovely … altogether wonderful to me' …
> 'You're beautiful, your face is all I seek' and so on. (2005, 139)

He makes the point that (in a non-sexual context)

> when a man loves another man, he uses terms such as *admire, look up to* and *respect*. Men do not speak of passionate, intimate or even personal relationships with their leaders or male friends … More than once I've been exhorted … to *have a love affair with Jesus*. I just saw a new book for Christian men: *Kissing the Face of God*. (137)

(The idea of intimacy will be explored from a different point of view in the next chapter.) Whilst the songs Murrow cites were current when his book was first published in 2005, the same genre is still very much available, and it has to be remembered that the very early Vineyard songs were almost exclusively of this type. Because of its perceived political incorrectness and its links with American 'muscular Christianity' Murrow's book has not been accepted uncritically, particularly, in my personal experience, by women who remain unable see what all the fuss is about. Certainly there appeared to be plenty of men in attendance at the fieldwork churches, but perhaps the shift towards the more 'meaty' Hillsong songs and away from pure Vineyard music have obviated this issue. It has certainly been my experience that many younger women have expressed concern about the 'breathy love songs' which they are expected to sing week by week. The fact remains, though, that according to Murrow women outnumber men in churches by approximately two to one (*Ibid., 5*) and that is just Sunday services: for midweek activities such as homegroups the proportion is nearer four to one[79]. He also notes that this is a problem only for Christianity:

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[78] From a private e-mail to me.
[79] From a talk by Murrow at a conference in Bath, England.

> Male and female participation are roughly equal in Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism. In the Islamic world men are publicly and unashamedly religious – often more so than women. Of the world's great religions only Christianity has a consistent, nagging shortage of male practitioners. What is it about modern Christianity that is driving men away? (*Ibid., 8*)

His answer is that the culture of the Christian church has become slanted to the feminine, because women are the ones who come, and who actually run most of its activities, even when there has been an exclusively male priesthood. Whilst no quantitative data were collected about the gender profiles of the churches visited, impressionistically it seems that perhaps our two networks fared slightly better than the average in their gender balance, but the over-emphasis on Vineyard-style worship songs might be a cause for concern if they reinforce what Murrow calls 'the feminine spirit'.

These issues, about the possible distortion of the gospel and the lack of emphasis on long-term discipleship, are serious, particularly in churches with a strong evangelical heritage which would claim to be thoroughly and biblically orthodox. Might this in some part be a result of the neglect of the public reading of Scripture and of liturgical worship which, as some of the interviewees said, serve to provide balance and a well-rounded expression of the faith (HT1T, HT6T, NW3T, NW7T, NW8T, NW9T)? And are the rituals and worship-styles which have replaced these Anglican values really up to the job? The evidence has demonstrated that liturgical worship (conceived of only as text) is perceived almost universally as a hindrance in mission and evangelism, and so, as was suggested in the previous chapter, is used minimally, and used unconvincingly and uncreatively when it is used. Songs, on the other hand, were perceived to be much more instantly accessible, more emotionally powerful, and therefore more evangelistically powerful. The casual way in which worship is often led conspires with these subtle distortions of the gospel to attempt to make everything more comfortable, so that it will connect painlessly with the target groups. It is not difficult to see how the accommodation of the message of the gospel to this desire for growth and success can make for a more comfortable church experience, and smooth off some of the rough edges such as sin, repentance, endurance, persecution, judgement and righteousness, themes which can more easily be forgotten if liturgy is abandoned.

Seeking Encounter and Intimacy

The data have demonstrated that the Vineyard's core value of intimacy as the goal of sung worship has been taken strongly on board by churches from both networks. Few would want to argue too much with the Vineyard's core values in worship, as outlined in the previous chapter. No doubt Wimber's positive background in the Friends denomination, along with his negative experiences of

Catholicism and traditional Anglicanism, have made intimacy and experiential encounters with God so important to him, since they are so apparently lacking in the worship of other churches. Typical of Vineyard rhetoric is this from worship-leader Carl Tuttle:

> There is no life for us in much of what traditional Christianity offers us. Apart from God's presence, the system and structure of the church including its Bible studies, singing, teaching, programs, and traditions of outward righteousness are only forms without God's presence and power. We need to turn from lifeless forms and begin to draw near to God and kiss His heart through the experience of worship.[80]

This somewhat sweeping statement reflects much thought among not just Vineyard churches but many charismatics in traditional denominations too, and this will be discussed further in due course. The theology behind this emphasis will also be examined in the next section, but for now it is sufficient to note the central importance of this idea to both networks in their worship praxis and their evangelism. It accounts for the whole way in which liturgy is downplayed or ignored, and replaced with singing, and for why there is no apparent interest in redeeming liturgy by using it well and creatively. The logic goes like this: the whole point of worship is to encounter God through the Holy Spirit, and to reach the place of 'intimacy' with him. It is also this encounter, incidentally, which helps non-Christians to find Christ and commit themselves to him, having felt his presence and realised that he is real. Therefore the highest and greatest aim for our worship is to construct the songs in such a way that people are led to this point of intimacy. Since singing can connect with people's emotions in a way which mere saying cannot (HT1T, HT2T, HT5T, HT6T, NW1T, NW2T, NW3T), and since anyway many people will have negative memories of saying words together in church or school chapel (HT6T), and since saying words together may be perceived as 'weird' and 'culty' (HT8T), we clearly need to get rid of as much of the liturgy as we can in order to leave space for the *real* worship, which is singing songs (NW8T). It would not occur to us to attempt to bring out the best of liturgical worship, use it well and creatively, and thus redeem it: it simply needs to be removed as much as possible. This will then allow the worship to be 'free' (HT1T, HT5T, NW3T). Just as 'experience' of God is one of the greatest evangelistic tools at the Church's disposal, so also, particularly for young people, 'novelty' is vital, since young people particularly will not appreciate doing the same thing every week, but will want new and fresh experiences, which of course will be mediated by new and fresh songs. To tune in to what 'God is doing' is of utmost importance, because it is that which will be new, fresh and exciting.

Whilst this search for intimacy and encounter through song was a common factor in both networks, there were some significant differences, particularly in what was sung. There was little difference in the function of singing within the services of the two networks, but the data reveal that there was

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[80] http://www.vineyardrecords.co.uk/web/why-we-worship/ [Accessed 19 August 2016].

considerable difference in the repertoires of the two networks. It was evident that *HTB* churches drew from a very limited range of sources, notably Worship Central (*HTB*'s own 'Worship Academy') and two internationally famous megachurches, Bethel, based in Redding, California[81], and Hillsong, originally from Sydney but now with congregations worldwide[82]. As has been noted, this worship policy was explicitly stated at HT2T. The data have also revealed that some interviewees, particularly from *NW,* claimed that they would not really rule out any sources for their music (NW4T). The reality is that in *HTB* churches particularly there seems to be a fairly limited and small, though constantly changing, repertoire (for example HT1D, HT2D, HT4D).

Hunter (2020) suggests that there is a significant difference between the songs which come from the Hillsong and the Bethel stables. As he began to ponder the repertoire of his church

> I developed a hunch based on the worship songs we were singing in our own church, that Bethel tended towards a more sectarian ecclesiology in their worship song repertoire. I noted that the songs tended to be heavy on response lyrics – which assumed we all knew the God to whom we were singing, and were simply now expressing our devotion and affection. By contrast, I noted that Hillsong were publishing a number of songs with a hymn-like structure, telling the narrative of God's saving works in episodic verses. This represents [a] more missional ecclesiology. (2020, 10-11)

He explains this in part as due to the different cultures in which the churches are set. Bethel, in Redding, California, he suggests has seen dramatic growth in part

> through the 'activation' of latent Christian faith. In other words, many of the young people who have moved to Redding to join the church already had an underlying Christian knowledge having grown up within an American Christendom context. (*Ibid.*, 11)

By contrast Hillsong is set

> within a more starkly secular context (Australia and Western Europe) in which Christian affiliation and awareness is lower than that of its US counterparts. In this context it seems natural that they would tend towards a missional ecclesiology expressed in the worship songs of the movement. (*Ibid.*, 12)

This cultural difference accounts, suggests Hunter, for the different styles of these two stables, both of which have proved highly influential in the worship repertoire of *HTB* churches, although a lot less so in *NW*, which were generally much more eclectic in their choice of music, partly reflecting their desire to appeal across and wider age group and broader church experience. As noted, during the visits *NW* churches occasional Hillsong or Bethel songs were used, but so were traditional

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[81] See https://www.bethel.com/ [Accessed 11 May 2020].
[82] See https://hillsong.com/ [Accessed 11 May 2020].

hymns, along with many charismatic worship songs from earlier decades. The value of novelty seemed to be less important than a wide variety of expressions of sung worship. The visits demonstrated an eclecticism not present in *HTB*, and this comment perhaps summed up in general terms the approach of all the *NW* churches: 'We try and make sure in every service there is something that is less than three years old, there is something that is more than 50 years old, and there's something from the kind of big surge of 90s songs.' (NW9T) Some *NW* leaders were even critical of some of the newer material, particularly Bethel (NW6T, NW7T, NW8T). Generally speaking it appeared that *NW* leaders were more thoughtful and discerning about what they put into people's mouths to sing, and more likely to exercise some kind of gentle censorship, whereas *HTB* churches tended to go with whatever came out of their sources of choice with few questions asked. There seemed to be little if any awareness of the differences suggested by Hunter: indeed there seemed to be little awareness of what people were actually singing as long as it was novel.

The two networks, therefore, showed a considerable difference in *what* they sung in worship, but a much clearer agreement on *why* they sung. A couple of the *HTB* interviewees, though, had some questions about this theology, and about the goal of intimacy (HT3T, HT6T). But apart from these two respondents no-one else questioned the expectation or the theology of intimacy with God, or even whether this was a laudable purpose for worship. Neither was there any deep examination by any of the leaders of what 'intimacy' with God actually meant or looked like.

Under this heading of Encounter and Intimacy, but also linked back to the previous idea of the mission imperative and the target group for that mission, it was easy to discern a further significant difference between the two networks, what we might term the 'cult of novelty', which was particularly a feature of *HTB* churches, but much less so of *NW*. This has to do with time. Smith notes that a liturgical approach to time stretches us both forwards and backwards: we *remember* what the Lord has done, and we *desire* what he will do, crying 'How long, O Lord?' and 'Come, Lord Jesus!' (2009, 158) Our culture, though, has profaned time, in what he calls 'CNN-ization', so that we engage in

> a frenetic pursuit of "breaking news" that merely fixates on what has just happened before others have got the scoop. The thrilling narcotic of novelty is drunk deeply by such presentism; but it is a narcotic with diminishing returns … While such CNN-ized time is hungry for what will happen next, strangely it fails to be expectant about the future. It is an orientation to what's coming that lacks hope; instead, it simply records the onslaught of events ... We are called to be a people of memory, who are shaped by a tradition that is millennia older than the last Billboard chart. And we are also called to be a people of expectation, praying for and looking forward to a coming kingdom that will break in upon our present as a thief in the night. We are a "stretched" people. (*Ibid.,* 159)

It is not surprising that because of their youthfulness as new plants, with little in terms of inherited history, and their specific targeting of younger people, *HTB* churches are far more likely to build a

culture where the 'breaking news' is important and the old is given less value. This came over clearly in several areas, but particularly with regard to the repertoire of songs which were used. *HTB* interviewees frequently explained that the main reason for this repertoire choice was because the songs were front-line, contemporary, up-to-date, and a reflection of 'what God is doing at the moment' (HT1T, HT2T, HT3T, HT4T, HT5T). Underlying these kinds of comments seemed to be the belief that God was constantly doing new things with his Church, and that the best song-writers were those with some kind of prophetic insight which enabled them to capture the essence of this move of God and write songs which reflected it. This was true of both networks, but pronouncedly more so in *HTB* churches. However, there seemed to be little in the way of consensus as to what God *is* actually doing at the moment. HT1T felt that the current songs were focussed around the faithfulness of God, HT5T noticed a resurgence of songs which told the story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus (perhaps echoing Hunter's analysis of Hillsong), but for HT4T confidence, self-image and identity in Christ were the current issues. Perhaps it is the case that different churches are articulating what God is doing among them locally, and then projecting that as a more global move of the Spirit. It is also unclear whether the worship songs *reflect* a move of God, or whether they *cause* one, as their use spreads around the country. But however it is discerned, there is a real concern to be on the front line, the cutting edge, and not to become becalmed in a past age. *NW* churches, though, were generally more ready to affirm the importance of age-old truths, and therefore to find some value in historic hymnody and liturgy (NW3T, NW8T). Certainly the range of music and words used in the *NW* churches visited would suggest that there is a much greater respect for the inherited deposits of faith forged by musicians and liturgists of the past. For some of the churches, however, these benefits of a historically-grounded faith were outweighed by the desire to have a youthful and contemporary image, a sense of 'freedom' in worship, and by a fear of appearing 'churchy' (NW2T).

So to summarise, both networks to differing degrees and in different ways saw themselves as authentic members of the Anglican Church, and the leaders interviewed had stayed within Anglicanism rather than leaving to join the Vineyard or other denominations. They were all driven by mission, predominantly evangelism, and sought to structure their whole church life around Christ's missionary imperative. Worship, therefore, had to connect and be relevant rather than being dull, boring and all the other negative descriptions already noted. This evangelistic purpose was most aided when people found an encounter with God, and felt his presence with them, and this encounter was facilitated not by the recitation of words from a book or screen but by the singing of quantities of worship songs over lengthy periods of time. Given those presuppositions, it is not surprising that the churches were therefore largely anti-liturgical.

Therefore non-liturgical

In the light of these cultural emphases, it is easy to see why *HTB* and *NW* churches have developed a largely non-liturgical style. In fact it makes perfect sense given their presuppositions. However, since 'liturgy' is rarely if ever actually absent from worship, inevitably both networks create rituals in the absence of a formal Anglican style, even if that is hidden as an endo-skeleton. Paradoxically in churches which limit their understanding of liturgy to text, this consists of text, shape and gesture, as well as a dress code and other symbolic activities which serve to reinforce the culture and provide a sense of belonging to those who know, or can learn, the rules. *HTB* churches particularly construct their worship around a very similar shape. Examples of informal text would be 'Grab yourselves a seat', 'Let's greet one another with a handshake or a hug' and 'Why don't we join in the Lord's Prayer?' phrases which are used liturgically by whomever happens to be leading the service, and which have become canonical by default. The dress code is skinny jeans (with or without ripped knees) and dog-blanket shirts, for clergy and people alike, and other activities such as the raising of hands during particular parts of the sung worship, bringing a mug of coffee to your seat to sip throughout the service, and tweeting comments on your phone as the service proceeds have become *de rigeur*. *NW* churches would follow these kinds of activities less rigorously, perhaps due to the wider age range of the people present, and the desire to remain as faithful Anglican parish churches, appealing to the parishioners as a whole rather than a narrow target group. These cultural markers, and especially those relating to gathered worship, are both inspired and reinforced by the respective networks, their training events and their summer festivals, which serve to validate the culture, and provide high-quality examples of the praxis which can be emulated back at home. In his study of Christian festivals, Fraser suggests that they serve to create and reinforce rituals, which

> are the main ways in which a culture expresses its understanding of the world, and the formal method it has of celebrating and communicating 'how things are'. (2006, 13)

> According to the definition of ritual as relatively formalised, repeated, corporate, value-oriented and goal-seeking activities, these festivals are clearly themselves ritual activities. Festival-goers learn how to participate in the rituals of the particular festival including how demonstratively to engage in worship, how to make a personal response to God, the particular jargon to employ, even where to locate the car-sticker! (*Ibid.*, 15)

It is clear that much of the 'inspiration and guidance' for the two networks comes not from the Anglican inheritance of faith, but from taking significant numbers of people to experience the celebration of much greater numbers of people with common values, to hear its keynote gurus, and to experience greater 'togetherness' by holidaying together as a community. It is no accident that Anglican liturgical worship is largely absent from the big celebrations at such events, and so the culture is reinforced.

Chapters 4 and 5, therefore, may be summarised in this way:

Fieldwork demonstrated five policies present to differing degrees, in the churches studied. There was a downplaying, or even a total abandonment, of Anglican liturgy, which allowed much more time for the singing which was real worship. Where liturgy was used, in the context of a relaxed and informal style, it was used unconvincingly and uncreatively, and the term itself was only used to refer to text. The reasons for these policies were that both *NW* and *HTB* churches, who believe themselves to be faithful Anglicans, are driven by mission, with *HTB* especially targeting mission to younger people, whilst *NW* are more likely to see their mission as being to the whole parish. Leaders believe that liturgical worship (or too much of it) hinders mission, because they believe that people (in *HTB young* people) will find it stultifying. In particular it militates against 'freedom' in worship. Whilst they can see some value in it, they basically do not believe it is redeemable or worth doing well or creatively. Therefore liturgical worship is replaced by sung worship, which is believed to be 'free' in a way that liturgical worship is not. The goal of singing is to take people to the point of intimacy with God. This experiential encounter is vital for effective mission, and provides the already committed with a feeling of the closeness of God, and a chance to express their adoration to him. It is also important for effectiveness in mission that things are kept new and fresh, which is not how liturgy is perceived, particularly in *HTB* churches. However, the churches inevitably create new rituals and informal liturgies which are largely driven by the values and praxis of their networks, and modelled at festivals and gatherings, which serve as the networks' 'inspiration and guidance' in mission. And leaders need to find ways to negotiate the fact that their worship policies are at odds with the promises they made when they were ordained and licenced.

Postscript: Worship and the 'spirit of the age'

Why, then, have this model of worship and the Vineyard *ordo* become so popular? Perhaps for two reasons: firstly because they chime in so well with the spirit of the age. What I feel, what I experience and what makes me feel good are of prime importance in a postmodern age; as a consumer I feel I have a right to that which I desire, and a right to feel disappointed if I do not get it. As a child of Romanticism I am, as Wright expresses,

> hamstrung by the long legacy of the Romantic movement on the one hand and Existentialism on the other, producing the idea that things are only authentic if they come spontaneously, unbidden, from the depths of our hearts. (2006, 141)

(Later the work of Root (2017) and his deeper analysis of Wright's contention will be discussed.) Furthermore evangelism has to be conducted on the basis of what will feel good to those who are

being targeted. Our worship and our preaching must 'connect', and must make people want what we are 'selling', because it will make them feel better, happier, more free, more fulfilled. We evangelise by giving people experiences, rather than by calling them to radical repentance and costly sacrifice and endurance through the ups and downs of life. And of course it is the singing of exclusively positive worship songs which will do that.

Secondly, though, it is about the triumph of experience over theology, another clearly postmodern phenomenon. Wimber's conversion to the Christian faith has been outlined above, a conversion which came about through joining in singing worship songs in a small group, against a backdrop of a very negative experience of Roman Catholic liturgical worship. But even that came with a background: quoted in the *New York Times* in 1981, Wimber stated that in the Anaheim Vineyard 'we cater to the post-World War II baby boom. They are anti-institutional and don't like to be told they aren't going to church enough or giving enough.' (Quoted in Park *et al.,* 2017, 7) In the Californian Jesus Movement there was a distinct anti-institutional mood in the air, and this dislike no doubt included being told they must worship in a set and liturgical way. Thus Wimber's personal journey became canonical truth about the power of 'worship', and, it must be said, continues to prove powerful in charismatic churches worldwide in providing people with the felt sense of the presence of God which so many clearly crave. Whilst John's initial conversion to Christianity was as a result of a deep conviction of sin (Jackson and Di Sabatino, 1999, 48) it was some years later that his faith was transformed as he became part of a small group who used to sing worship songs. Initially he was sceptical and bored:

> They sat and sang in this house for an hour and a half, and then they sorta shared a little bit some verses, and then they prayed together. And frankly, I was sort of bored with the whole experience. I didn't really know what was happening. And I sat there. And I'm sure I was just a delight to everybody … I didn't know what it was all about. And I remembered coming home, and Carol [John's wife] says, "What did you think of it?" … I said "Gee, I don't know. I already know how to sing. And I know most of those songs, and I don't know. You know, what are you doing? (Park *et al.* 2017, 87-8)

But before long John became drawn in to this kind of worship:

> Soon, however, Carol began to recognise that as they sang with Carl [Tuttle] on Sunday nights, it was during the songs with words addressed directly to God that they experienced a more profound sense of his presence. She then began to realize that even though they talked of worship, they rarely ever did it, in the true sense of the word. (Jackson and Di Sabatino, 1999, 58-9)

'The true sense of the word' here is clearly worship in which one feels the presence of God, and this feeling is the driving force behind the Vineyard:

> I make no apologies in the Vineyard that throughout the Vineyard and worldwide, wherever the Vineyard is, that our number one priority is worship. And by that I do not just mean the activity of singing the lovely songs that God has given us to sing, which do express our heart and are an index of

our commitment to Christ, but it *starts* with the expression of love to God in worship. (Park *et al.* 2017 103-4)

In fact, if you don't enjoy Vineyard songs or their worship-style, it is because you do not love God:

> I was talking to a guy on Wednesday … and he was telling me about coming to church here. He said … 'I loved your sermon. … but'… now keep in mind he had told me he had been a Christian since he was twelve years of age, and he was about thirty. And he said 'I didn't like the worship very much.' [And I replied] 'I can understand that since you don't love God.' … If you don't love God, you're going to feel rather ridiculous in the process of trying to do it. Doing what you don't want to do just because somebody thinks you oughta do it is not much fun, is it? (Park *et al.* 2017, 90-1)

Elsewhere Wimber is very clear that worship is not just singing songs: it is a whole-life, Romans 12 lifestyle. But it begins with singing, with the involvement of mind, spirit and body (Park *et al.* 2017, 91-2). To not enjoy this particular style of worship is not truly to love God. Because that was how his own personal spirituality was ignited, Wimber makes some big claims about the spirituality of others, and builds a whole worship-praxis upon it. This is the legacy which has been handed down to Anglicans in the *HTB* and *NW* networks: add to that the previous negative experiences of Anglican worship recounted by some of the leaders, and it is easy to see why liturgical worship is not seen as really able to take people to the place of experiencing intimacy. It is clear that what was for Wimber a powerful personal understanding of the power of worship and intimacy resonated strongly with other leaders who had been brought up on a dry and unvaried diet of emotionless liturgy performed by rote as an act of duty, as some leaders commented above (HT5T, HT6T). Their past negative experiences of more traditional Anglican worship appear to have provided fertile soil in which a more experiential, joy rather than duty, style of worship could take root and blossom.

So if songs can produce these emotionally-charged worship experiences but liturgy cannot, it is easy to see why the use of liturgy is minimised, if not dropped altogether. There was little from the interviews which suggested in any way that liturgical worship might be redeemed, might provide a more wholesome diet, or might do jobs which the mere singing of songs could not. In those churches which employed 'worship pastors' there was no sense that their task was to do anything other than lead singing, and no sense that they were in any way equivalent to a cathedral precentor, with responsibility for the whole worship-life of the church:

> So [the worship leader] chose all the sung worship, but I [as service leader] did send him the video and said 'This is what I'm thinking' and it might have been that he based his songs off of that … He chooses the songs himself. (HT1T)

> So I mostly concentrate on the sung worship, that's my main thing, and what I try to do. (HT3T)

Underlying all this is an unacknowledged desire to fit in with the values of postmodern consumerist culture, with importance placed on experience, entertainment, instant gratification, short-termism and joy. But what was missing in the Vineyard was any critical examination of the biblical material on worship, of the kind provided by Marshall and Richardson, which will be examined shortly. This contrasts sharply, as has been mentioned, with the theological rigour of Wimber's 'Signs and Wonders' praxis. The corpus on worship from the Vineyard is nowhere near as academically rigorous as is that on evangelism.

The next chapter will deal with one prevalent belief which emerged from both fieldwork and interviews, the idea that liturgy is now unnecessary because the current worship songs have replaced it as a mode of worship. This idea will be critiqued, before a final chapter examines the wisdom of a non-liturgical policy in a broader way, and suggests a different way forward.

6. Can worship songs be 'the new liturgy'?

The third stage of the Practical Theology cycle, having described and analysed what is happening in a situation, is to move to evaluate the faithfulness and effectiveness of the policies revealed by the data. Osmer (2008) describes this phase in terms of a third, normative question to be asked and answered: Given that this is what *is* going on, and these are the reasons for these policies, what *ought* to be going on? Having described and analysed this study's situation, anti-liturgical Anglicanism within the *NW* and *HTB* networks, the next task is to ask whether or not the churches' negative relationship with liturgical worship is a good and helpful policy. This normative section will form the final two chapters of this thesis. Before considering the above question this chapter discusses a more specific issue which was raised by the fieldwork and interviews. This concerns the second of the research sub-questions: Do worship songs make an adequate replacement for liturgy? While some interviewees specifically expressed the idea that songs had replaced liturgy as the new medium for worship, virtually all the churches visited clearly held this as the *de facto* position, even if they did not articulate it. As the data have shown singing has replaced formal liturgy, either partially or completely. Like liturgy itself, as Earey (2018) explains, songs are not just ingredients in worship, but the whole way in which worship is constructed and structured. Singing is not just something we might do in worship: it *is* worship, and the interviews revealed that it is often referred to as such. This belief, however, that 'songs are the new liturgy of today' (HT2T), or that 'we are singing songs to reflect the liturgy that was there before' (NW9T), requires some examination. This is in a sense the heart of our networks' liturgical theology. If Anglican *ordo* and liturgy are being ousted, it is important to explore exactly with what they are being replaced, and whether or not those replacements are adequate. For what purposes are songs and liturgy employed, and are songs capable of fulfilling the role which liturgy has traditionally fulfilled? Or do songs in fact have a very different purpose from that of liturgy, so that they simply cannot replace it? This chapter explores this issue by asking three questions: 'What is liturgy meant to do?', 'What are worship songs meant to do?', and therefore 'Can worship songs be "the new liturgy"'?

It is worth saying before embarking on this exploration that although I have declared my hand clearly as a believer in and lover of liturgical worship (p.19 above), I am very aware of the fact that liturgy can be used badly, unimaginatively and unhelpfully, as indeed can worship songs. The choice of the wording of headings in this chapter is deliberate. When asking what are liturgy and worship songs meant to do there is no implication that either mode of worship will necessarily do that, nor do it well, in every case. But just because something is not always used well does not mean that it is automatically invalid: it may just need using better. If this chapter appears to paint an over-idealised picture of liturgical worship, that is quite deliberate. The purpose of this examination is to discover what liturgy and worship songs at their best are good at, and are designed to achieve, in order to

discover whether they are capable of replacing one another. It also needs to be pointed out that this chapter draws not only on material from fieldwork, but is also illustrated in a few places by my own experiences as an *HTB* church member. Of course this reflexive information is of a different nature from that obtained through the formal research process, but will nevertheless enrich the overall picture.

What is liturgy meant to do?

Gordon-Taylor helpfully defines liturgy as

> the structured body of text and ritual by which the Church as a corporate body offers worship to God. This is sometimes referred to as *ordo* – literally 'order' – and it is usually authorised by the official processes of the ecclesial bodies in which and by whom it is employed. (Day and Gordon-Taylor, 2013, 13)

and Irvine and Bergquist helpfully distinguish it from worship:

> worship is the more fundamental reality, the response of the whole person towards God in praise, adoration and thanksgiving. The liturgy is a structured set of words and movements that enables worship to happen. (2011, 45)

So what exactly does liturgy, this *ordo* and this means of enabling human worship, seek to achieve? When a church decides deliberately to worship liturgically, what is it actually deciding? What does it deem important enough to affect its worship, and what positive side-effects might flow from this decision?

Liturgy reflects a choice to belong

Fundamentally, liturgical worship places people within both a wider and longer relationship with other worshippers, and to choose to worship liturgically is quite deliberately to opt in to this company, which stretches back through the centuries and around the globe. White links these two together by suggesting that

> The liturgical tradition of Christian spirituality is constituted by those who say, clearly and consistently, that the primary source for the nourishment of the Christian spiritual life is to be found in the Church's public worship. (1999, 15)

The way in which the Church worships is the way which we believe will nurture us and join us to a community of fellow-believers. White suggests that this understanding of worship goes back to St Paul, who, in 1 Corinthians 11, urged his readers to move towards greater holiness of life by telling them to let their worship be their teacher. The 'body of Christ' is not merely the bread they share: they themselves are part of a scattered community of others on the same journey. White continues:

> In the liturgy, then, we are invited into a deep union with one another, which is achieved through a deep union with the God who is the ultimate source of our unity … it is a community which has particular qualities which are rooted in the sense of who God is and how God acts. (*Ibid.,* 61)

Liturgy provides a sense of the corporate, that of belonging to something bigger than just the local congregation, and can be a powerful tool in subverting Enlightenment individualism. Earey comments

> Liturgical worship will tend to be intentional about its connections with other Christians beyond the congregation. This means it is likely to include 'traditional' material or to follow traditional patterns … *because* it is traditional, rather than despite being traditional. (2018, 27)

It has been noted that NW3 acknowledged the importance of this wider connectedness (NW3T): he continued to talk about links which his church has with a Russian Christian, and the realisation of what it costs her to live faithfully. There is an awareness that they stand with her, and with other persecuted Christians, when they use the same liturgy.

To replace this with songs which are predominantly an expression of how *I* feel must surely mean a more isolated and individualistic feel to our spirituality. Indeed Adey suggests that there has been a shift from (and some fluidity between) *objective worship* which recites truths about God, to *subjective worship* which describes how the worshipper feels about God, to *reflexive worship*, which is about how worshippers feel about the fact that they are worshipping. (1988, 5-10) Agreement with this point of view can be found in perhaps an unlikely source, the first document to be produced by the Second Vatican Council of 1962-5. The Council in question, taking its cue from the Liturgical Movement, sought to bring tectonic changes to Roman Catholic worship in order to facilitate lay piety and discipleship. The Roman Church is unashamed and deliberate about its liturgical nature, and in this document the Council sets out not just proposed changes but also some of the values of liturgical worship. It expressed liturgy's corporate nature in one of the articles of the paper:

> Liturgical services are not private functions, but are celebrations of the Church, which is the "sacrament of unity," namely, the holy people united and ordered under their bishops. Therefore liturgical services pertain to the whole body of the Church; they manifest it and have effects upon it; but they concern the individual members of the Church in different ways, according to their differing rank, office, and actual participation. (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 1963, 26)

Whilst this might be true of any style of worship which promotes a feeling of 'togetherness' the liturgical tradition has the added effects of helping worshippers to be conscious of other Christians who, in different places and at different times, have worshipped or are worshipping the same God with similar if not identical forms and words. A purple passage in Dix (1945, 744) beautifully describes many different people and situations for whom and where the command to 'Do this …' has been obeyed. In worship I am not merely expressing 'how *I* happen to feel about God this morning', but rather how *we* (the worldwide Church) have felt about God for millennia. Good liturgical worship is based on solid biblical foundations, and the best uses biblical language to express them. Whilst there is room for faithful improvisation and spontaneity, Zahl explains that

> Formal [i.e. liturgical] worship means dignified service that is not governed by the spontaneity of the moment or the spontaneity of the officiant … it is not off the cuff or as mood would govern … you do not make it up as you go along. (2004, 23)

Faggioli, in his commentary on *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, uses the term *ressourcement* to describe the resources of the liturgy back to its origins, back to Christ himself, but he also uses to term to suggest that the liturgy of the Church is the source, the 'font' of Christian spirituality and discipleship. He discusses the role of *ressourcement* both in ecumenism and in mission:

> The contribution to the ecumenical dialogue and to the rediscovery of plurality within the Church, made possible through a *ressourcement*-based concept of liturgy, was clear from the very beginning of Vatican II … Liturgy seemed to provide for the encounter between Christians of different Churches a new and at the same time old language, shaped by the first millennium and thus ecumenically shared and far less polemical than dogmatic theology and canon law. (2012, 34)

Similarly in commenting on the missionary value of liturgy, he suggests that 'The most radical *ressourcement* in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* is the option to get back liturgy as *the* language in which the Church expresses and communicates within herself and with the world.' (*Ibid.,* 38) To reject liturgical worship can mean the rejection of other Christians and the Christian tradition, and the belief that what has spontaneously sprung into my mind today is to be preferred as somehow more authentic, more 'free', than that which the Church has always believed and known.

New Wineskins?

It is worth saying, of course, that for some, including many of this study's respondents, this rejection is deliberate and is believed to be in the best interests of the Church and her mission. Wallis' disdain for the traditions of the Church have been mentioned above, along with the Restorationist perspective on Church History (p.72-3 above). Wallis makes much use of Jesus' parables of the cloth and wineskins, so it will be worth examining these texts in more detail. Several times this study has

referred to this pericope, particularly in the section in chapter 2 containing stories from the early days of British renewal. Indeed one of the movements with which we are concerned, New Wine, is named after it. The allusion is to a passage which occurs in all three synoptic gospels (Mt 9:16-17/Mk 2:211-22/Lk 5:36-39), and which may be paralleled, in a typically Johannine way, in John 2:1-11. Ian Paul (2020) asks the question 'Do we need new structures for the new thing God is doing?', and goes on to examine the text in detail to begin to answer this question. He begins with Marcion, who clearly read it as a text of extreme discontinuity, but then turns to a closer examination of the text, in its three synoptic versions. Mark is typically terse and stark: he draws an absolute contrast which leads us to think that old is bad and new is good. To try to make the mismatch work will result in the loss of both. Paul notes that Matthew softens this idea with his unique comment that 'both are preserved', hoping, no doubt, that there might yet be a place for renewed Judaism within God's purposes. But Luke states this even more clearly, noting that old wine is still preferred by many people. Paul suggests that

> 'The old is "better"' is a poor translation of χρηστος, [*chrestos*] which should be rendered 'good enough'. The wine-taster does not prefer the old wine having tried them both. He is simply not interested in tasting the new wine because he is perfectly content with the old. (2020)

So if the parable is not about *structures* which need replacing, is there a better understanding? He finds a suggestion in the writing of Elisha ben Abuyah (a near contemporary of Jesus) as recorded in the Talmud:

> Rabbi Yose ben Yehudah of the city of Babylon said, "He who learns from the young, unto what can he be compared? He can be compared to one who eats unripe grapes, and drinks unfermented wine from his vat. But he who learns from the old, unto what can he be compared? He can be compared to one who eats ripe grapes, and drinks old wine. Rabbi (Meir) said: Do not pay attention to the container but pay attention to that which is in it. There is a new container full of old wine, and here is an old container which does not even contain new wine. (Pirqe Aboth 4)

It is not the *structures* of Jewish religion which need renewal so much as the *people*. Paul concludes:

> The parable is not about creating new structures or institutions (which surely themselves, over time, will become rigid as the old wineskins have done) but about people who are willing to receive the teaching about what God is now doing. We don't necessarily need to scrap the patterns created in response to earlier teaching (though we might be interested in reforming them). Much more important is whether, as people listening to this teaching, we enact the traditions we have received with flexibility, compassion and grace. It was *this* that the Pharisees lacked. (2020)

He notes that the New Wine network, of which he is a part, has never called for the abandonment of Anglican structures, but rather has sought to work out its spirituality in the context of Anglicanism. Our fieldwork has shown that with respect to liturgy there seems to have been little attempt to make it work with the new life of the Spirit, but it would be wise not to place too much emphasis on Jesus' words as giving a directive to abandon all that belongs to our heritage as being incompatible with the

work of the Holy Spirit. Much appears to have been made, perhaps unconsciously, of the Restorationist rhetoric which sees most of Church history as a series of tragic mistakes, which are only now being redeemed as gifts from the Holy Spirit, who has been largely absent, are restored to the Church in our times. Churches which choose to worship liturgically are rejecting this line of thinking, and are saying, therefore, that they value that heritage and that worldwide community more than they value their own current thoughts and ideas. Further support for the idea that to place the Spirit and the liturgy in opposition might be a mistake can be found in the *Sacrosanctum Concilium* quoted above. In particular the Vatican Council saw itself and its work as part of what the Holy Spirit was doing: 'Zeal for the promotion and restoration of the liturgy is rightly held to be a sign of the providential dispositions of God in our time, as a movement of the Holy Spirit in His Church.' (1963, 43) In terms of the disciple-making agenda, it would seem important, if Paul's exposition of this text is correct, to form Christians who are open to all the riches of the tradition, and willing to integrate old knowledge with new insights. Liturgical worship is deliberately designed to do this.

Liturgy provides support and structure

The metaphor of liturgy and worship as trellis and vine, suggested in HT6T, is a helpful one in that the trellis helps the vine to grow by giving it support and structure whilst not limiting its ability to move in and out of the framework. However, to change the picture slightly, most of the respondents, without using these exact words, seemed to regard liturgy not as scaffolding to support the building of worship, but rather as a cage to restrict and confine it, to limit its 'freedom'. It has already been suggested that a liturgical approach to worship may be seen as the structuring of text, space, time, gesture and silence to facilitate worship, and Christians down the ages and around the world have found these structures to be helpful. Text is the obvious ingredient here: well thought-out and crafted words are used regularly and congregationally. Time is about the movement through the seasons of the year with their particular theological emphases, centred around both the life of Christ and the life of the secular community. Space is about the physical environment for worship, and it is ordered (or re-ordered) in order to facilitate the type of worship we want to offer, whether with a high altar with the big six candles or a stage with lights, speakers and smoke. And gesture or bodily movement of various types, means that we bring our bodies, and not just our minds and voices to worship. Though usually stylised to differing degrees, such as bodily posture (kneeling, genuflecting, flag-dancing, the sign of the cross) which tend to be culturally conditioned and learnt within different types of church, nevertheless this element of liturgical worship serves to facilitate a more holistic approach to God, recognising that we are physical as well as spiritual beings. Deliberate silences allow the liturgy to breathe, and give space in what might otherwise be a frenetic journey through the *ordo*. This kind of

liturgical approach to worship, which takes seriously much more than liturgical texts, is able to provide structure and strength to our freedom in the Spirit.

In chapter 2 above an account was given of the development of Anglican liturgy, particularly over the last 60 years or so, and it is easy to see that journey as travelling in the direction of a loosening of the legal requirements on liturgical worship towards greater flexibility. Rubrics frequently permit 'other suitable words' to be used[83], and indeed Canon B5.1 allows that 'The minister who is to conduct the service may in his discretion make and use variations which are not of substantial importance in any [authorised] form of service.'[84] The creation of the *SoW* and its 'directory' approach to worship, where texts and other ingredients can be cut and pasted into a framework, has taken this flexibility to a new level. But liturgical theology says that the more important flexibility becomes, the more important it is to have a logical framework in which that flexibility can happen. There has also been a considerable loosening up of the kind of ingredients which might be inserted alongside texts, so that, for example,

> Telling [the Christian] story and expounding it in the 'sermon' can be done in many different and adventurous ways. Some are suggested [below] but there are many others. The word 'sermon' is used in the service, and explained in the note, precisely because it would be too limiting to use words like 'address', 'talk', 'instruction' or 'meditation'. (*CW* Main Volume, 2000, 21)

The note in question explains that 'The term "sermon" includes less formal exposition, the use of drama, interviews, discussion, audio-visuals …' It can even be omitted altogether. (*Ibid., 27*). It was certainly not a major feature of the interviews to describe liturgy as 'adventurous'! However, the whole point of the *SoW* is to provide a framework, an *ordo*, which can allow these different worship activities to work together logically, and to ensure that at least some familiar texts are used regularly. A liturgical service does not start from scratch with a clean sheet every week, a principle which will be illustrated musically towards the close of this chapter.

Liturgy leaves space for improvisation

One result of this increased flexibility, which is suggested by the 'trellis and vine' metaphor is that liturgy at its best might be seen as a framework around which we are free to improvise. Jazz musicians will use the basic harmonic structure of a piece to support their melodic improvisation, creating something new with each performance, but still retaining the chordal structure throughout,

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83 In the Order 1 Communion service, for example, this happens on pages 168, 170, 174, 182 and 183 of the *CW* Main Volume (2000)

84 https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/legal-services/canons-church-england/section-b [Accessed: 1 April 2024]

and departing from and returning to the melody. Zahl agrees with this basic understanding of formal liturgy:

> There is freedom in worship within a form, just as J.S. Bach worked within specific musical forms like the cantata and the Mass, just as Shakespeare worked within the Sonnet and Giovanni Bellini within the *sacra conversazione* and the triptych. (2004, 24)

Classical music is like liturgy with no improvisation, where you simply have to follow the score, and where anything not in the dots is simply a wrong note (although of course during the Baroque period a performance would have included much improvisatory virtuosity), while 'free jazz' might be the equivalent to liturgy-free worship, where structure and journey are undetectable and anything goes. It is worth noting, however, that, as any jazz musician will testify, it requires great skill to improvise faithfully and tunefully. It is not simply about 'making it up as you go along'. Earey uses a similar analogy:

> The plays of Shakespeare have been performed for some four hundred years and, though the plot and the dialogue is always the same, each generation, indeed, each director and cast, brings fresh meaning and emphasis to the same plays. This theatrical analogy offers a helpful way to understand Christian worship, as 'improvising' around a theme or script. (2018, 27)

The 1963 *Sacrosanctum Concilium* document expresses the need for flexibility writ large in its indication that (to borrow an Anglican phrase) within the right framework local custom might be established:

> Even in the liturgy, the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not implicate the faith or the good of the whole community; rather does she respect and foster the genius and talents of the various races and peoples. Anything in these peoples' way of life which is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy and, if possible, preserves intact. Sometimes in fact she admits such things into the liturgy itself, so long as they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit. (1963, 37)

This important understanding of liturgical worship is one missed by all those respondents who could only see liturgy as restrictive, set, dull and boring, and who therefore wanted to use a bare minimum (HT1T, HT7T, NW2T, NW4T, NW6T, NW7T, NW9T).

Liturgy ensures balance

If liturgy has value in bringing structure, and facilitating improvisation within that structure, it is also designed to provide within those freedoms a sense of balance. It makes it much more difficult to restrict our worship to one or two purple passages or themes, and it provides a safety net for human inadequacies, as in the service reported by HT6 (p.122 above).

On a macro level respect for the calendar ensures that over the course of a longer period of time the congregation engages with as much of the whole counsel of God and the whole story of redemption as possible. These qualities of liturgy are qualities which the Church has found to be helpful, so liturgical worship will celebrate them deliberately and unashamedly. If there is a postmodern tendency to want to reject the past and believe that we know better, and if we have been conditioned to believe that the spontaneous is necessarily more 'authentic' than the ordered, then liturgical worship seeks to subvert these ideas, and suggests that our worship is best held in place by something with more stability. On a micro level the *ordo* enables a balanced act of worship which includes the ingredients which have always been a part of worship: praise, prayer, intercession, Scripture, sacrament, silence and action, and making sure that each receives proportionate emphasis.

One interesting aspect of the fieldwork was to note both what was *not* used in any individual service, and what was *never* used in any of them. Referring back to the quantitative analysis in chapter 4 it is clear that notable omissions from most or all services included a liturgical greeting, prayer for preparation at the Eucharist, an absolution after prayers of penitence, the Collect of the day, Bible readings (a particularly strange omission in evangelical churches), Psalmody, a Gospel reading with procession and acclamations, intercessions, various texts and actions around the Eucharistic Prayer, the Lord's Prayer, prayers of self-offering after Communion, and a blessing and/or dismissal. Where the Vineyard *ordo* has taken over the traditional Anglican shape, these elements, where present, were reduced to the status of Albrecht's (1999) 'micro-rites' between the main blocks of the service. Liturgy is designed through the idea of *ordo*, and through liturgical calendar and the lectionary readings, to provide this kind of balance.

Liturgy facilitates evangelism *and* discipleship

There is often a tension in church life between an emphasis on worship as something for believers only, to build them up in their discipleship, and worship as something which converts and therefore can be used evangelistically. This tension was negotiated in the Early Church (and still in some churches today) by excluding the catechumens from parts of the services. Indeed the minor order of *Ostiarius*, first documented in 251 AD, had as one of its roles guarding the doors lest any unbaptised people should try to gain access to the Eucharist. Data from fieldwork have already revealed that *HTB* falls on the side of worship as evangelism whilst in *NW* churches there was more emphasis on teaching and discipleship. It was the conviction of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* that liturgical worship combined both these aims. Liturgical worship

> is the outstanding means whereby the faithful may express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church.'

> While the liturgy daily builds up those who are within into a holy temple of the Lord, into a dwelling place for God in the Spirit, to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ, at the same time it marvellously strengthens their power to preach Christ, and thus shows forth the Church to those who are outside as a sign lifted up among the nations under which the scattered children of God may be gathered together. (1963, 2)

Faggioli notes in his commentary that perhaps the most radical change brought about by Vatican II, the allowing of vernacular language celebrations of the Mass as opposed to the Latin Tridentine monopoly, was essential because Latin was perceived as a barrier to mission, not because church members did not like it. (2012, 38) This major change in the life of the Church seems to have been driven by the evangelistic imperative. If well used, the Anglican liturgical shapes, and particularly that of the Eucharist, hold evangelism and discipleship in tension effectively. The Creeds, for example, proclaim the truths which unite Christians into a worldwide church, and in one particular Affirmation of Faith the congregation are asked to affirm that 'We believe and trust'[85]. The penitential section encourages us to examine ourselves and our discipleship, and Scripture, preaching and prayers can both challenge evangelistically and build up in discipleship. The liturgy deliberately attempts to hold evangelism and discipleship together, so that worship is both for those 'in' and those not yet in.

Liturgy resources us for the long haul

One often missed benefit of liturgical worship, and the parts of it which emphasis discipleship, is the way in which it forms those who use it over a long period of time. Earey expresses the formational power of repeated liturgical texts thus:

> In the balance between worship shaping us for the future and worship expressing what is in us now, liturgical worship will tend to give more attention to the shaping that worship does. This means that it will have more of an eye to how patterns of worship shape us in the longer term, rather than just their immediate impact on us in the short term.
>
> Liturgical worship, therefore, tends to include items which are less obviously 'useful' in an immediate sense, but which experience and history has shown can pay off in the longer term, shaping us for God. (2018, 30)

I remember hearing a preacher once say that every time we repeat for example the *Gloria* in our services, we are collecting drops of water over many years which will be there to slake our thirst long into the future. He added ruefully that nowadays we seldom even give young people the bucket! It is well-known that during his years of captivity and solitary confinement Terry Waite was sustained by

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[85] *NPfW*, 163-4.

his regular praying of the Anglican liturgy, but what is not so often remembered is that he was allowed no books and had to rely on his memory.

> In this he was aided by his upbringing as a chorister in the parish church. "Unconsciously, those words, the words of the Prayer Book and the Psalms and the Bible, stuck in my mind. I can't remember a single sermon from my childhood, but I could and still can remember those words."
>
> Mr Waite says he fears that we are losing something extremely valuable by letting that knowledge slip. "We shouldn't despise learning by rote," he says. "In captivity, I had a store of language. Just last night I was with someone who is ill, an old man, aged 93, who is dying, and we said the collect together, 'Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord. . .' [But] in many churches, language has been put to one side. There's a place for extempore prayer, but it shouldn't be dominant."
>
> "So I fell back on the language of the Prayer Book. Most mornings, I saved a little bread and water in my beaker and I said to myself the communion service. 'We do not presume. . .' and so on was all there, and I could say it. In my imagination I was taking part in this act with congregations across the world, in parts of England or America. I joined with them, using my imagination." (Meyrick, 2017).

It is easy to wonder with what we are feeding our young people which will sustain them in times of exile. Smith addresses this issue, and suggests that 'All habits and practices are ultimately trying to make us into a certain kind of person.' (2009, 83) Indeed he defines 'liturgies' as rituals which

> aim to do nothing less than shape our identity by shaping our desire for what we envisage as the kingdom … Liturgies are the most loaded forms of ritual practice because they are after nothing less than our hearts. They want to determine what we love ultimately. (*Ibid.*, 87)

Because he works with an anthropological model of humans as fundamentally embodied creatures who love and desire, those desires are formed, like our skills, through the repetition of actions, what he calls 'drills', much as soldiers, musicians or sportsmen might gain mastery of their fields through physical practice and the building up of 'muscle memory'. Liturgy, therefore, is important because it is embodied, action-packed as well as text-packed, worship:

> It is the bodily practices (drills) that train the body (including the brain) to develop habits or dispositions to respond automatically in certain situations and environments. Our desire is trained in the same way. (*Ibid.*, 59-60)

Those who have worked pastorally with the elderly and dying, and particularly those whose memories are failing them, will understand the value of years of repetition of familiar texts and hymns to provide resources towards, and at, the end of life. This is perhaps one of the greatest of the benefits of liturgical worship, although it is not always seen as very important until it is needed.

Liturgy insists on quality

The final characteristic of liturgy which we shall note here is that it is meant to be well-crafted, in terms both of its theological expression and the beauty of its form and language. Zahl notes that 'Form is able, somewhat counterintuitively, to stimulate fineness and quality, even innovation and renewal, in the context of traditional givens.' (2004, 24) Whilst there is an importance, as Terry Waite affirmed, in the extempore, it is rarely the best in terms of poetry. Any work of literature (and indeed this thesis!) will have been sweated over, honed and polished, until it is as good as it can be. Of course like all art there is something of a matter of taste involved, and not everything will appeal to everybody, but it can help to avoid some of the more crass mistakes in expression which can be a hallmark of the worship song culture, and which are explored and caricatured so well by Page (2004, 8):

> God is doing new things,
> All the time;
> Shiny new wineskins
> With shiny new wine.
> A new anointing,
> And new words to speak,
> I really hope my wineskin
> Will never spring a leak.
>
> Oh, heal our leaky wineskins,
> Restore our dried out lakes;
> We want to feel your Spirit,
> When the waters break.

When we use well crafted words it is unhelpful and unnecessary to supplement the texts with odd conjunctions in an attempt to sound informal and trendy, an almost universal practice in the churches visited:

> So, the Lord is here.
> **His Spirit is with us …**

It is difficult to imagine a speech from, say, *Romeo and Juliet*, as being improved by this practice. Similarly liturgical texts are theologically thought through. Whilst the deliberations of the Liturgical Commission can be painfully slow, there are checks and balances built in which aim to keep texts biblically orthodox and party-neutral. The quality issue is important, as when something is well-crafted, and expresses good theology succinctly and poetically, it can help memorisation, which aids formation over time. High quality literature also has a longer shelf-life. The importance of the good use of words was also expressed by one interviewee who had studied dramatic art:

> I was always interested in texts and language, and performative texts. And when I was in my teenage years, and particularly when I took my theatre 'A' level I became fascinated with Berthold Brecht, and the way in which text and narrative and story and drama has a social transformative function. So that's peculiar to me, but also probably my convictions about speech-act theory, and how speech enacts reality and brings about reality, which is … but I suppose my conviction would be that we should be training leaders in understanding the power of words, and the power of language to define, to describe and even bring about new realities.
>
> Maybe one of the best ways into this around the power of words and speech act would be to come at it negatively and look at the psychological effects of verbal abuse. (HT6T)

We are well used to the power of words to harm, to bully, to tear down and destroy people if used badly, but we pay much less attention to what might be achieved with a skilful and positive use of words.

If liturgy, then, is designed to provide a sense of incorporation with a wider community, and also brings structure and balance, a framework for improvisation, the right emphases on both evangelism and discipleship, and a spirituality for the long haul, and to do so with a sense of high quality about it, what about songs? What are they intended to do; what are they designed do well?

What is music meant to do?

This is a huge subject, but for the present purposes this section examines five functions of music generally, and songs within charismatic worship in particular. Music, this section will argue, can unite us, touch us emotionally, provide a vehicle for our praise, and lead us closer towards God. It can also connect evangelistically with those on a journey towards faith.

Music unites us

Several respondents mentioned music as having a unifying effect on the congregation, three in particular comparing congregational singing to that at pop festivals (HT1T, HT6T, HT8T). But is there more to it than this? Myrick describes Participant Observation at a conference:

> I noticed that the section to my left was swaying with greater intensity. The swaying there grew stronger and more synchronized, until the chorus of the song. Then it locked in. Most of the section, about 100 people, were swaying in unison. Their united swaying seemed to attract others, and the sporadic swaying that had been going on throughout the auditorium now included nearly every individual, although only the section to my left swayed in unison. I found myself swaying along – unintentionally – as I took notes. Music connects us to each other in profound – often unrecognized – ways. It can also inspire strong feelings in its participants. Yet both the causes and the effects of

these connections and feelings are debated, and their value questioned. This is particularly true of congregational song – musical worship. (2017, 78)

He explains this by introducing the concept of 'entrainment':

> Recent scholarship in ethnomusicology, social sciences, and music psychology has examined the phenomenon of musical entrainment in human beings. As the theoretical explanation of how two autonomous rhythmic oscillators synchronize without direct physical contact, the theory of entrainment offers tantalizing possibilities for understanding human experiences of unity and intimacy in music. In a recent laboratory experiment by Wiebke Trost and others, musical entrainment has been found to directly influence the generation of emotion and affective feeling. Indeed, in another study by Carolina Labbe and Didier Grandjean, neurological entrainment was found to predict emotional responses to musical participation. (*Ibid.*, 82)

Entrainment is the synchronisation of movements in closely-placed physical objects without any direct contact between them – even two clocks will apparently adjust their ticks until they are in time. For our purposes Myrick suggests that

> Entrainment can occur when two or more individual human beings share an affective state, such as that afforded by musical participation – singing or performing, or simply listening. The affective function of entrainment in this sense orients the participant's emotional posture toward the event in a derivative manner. This is to say that entrainment may contribute to the generation of emotion – either positive or negative – for the participant, and that this emotional state is associated with the event that generated the emotion. (2017, 83)

He suggests that this physical phenomenon might account for some of the affective 'feel good' effects of music when singing takes place in a crowd, although he acknowledges too that strong social factors may also be at play. But the fact is that by whatever means singing together can feel very good, a feeling which may be interpreted as the Holy Spirit being present:

> This reality raises new questions for scholars and practitioners of liturgical music, as many worshipers often attribute these feelings and sensations to the power of the Holy Spirit. Does the fact that those feelings may also be experienced outside of musical worship mean that the importance and efficacy of musical worship is independent of the content and meaning of the lyrics and context? Would it follow, then, that the lyrics of the songs used for worship are irrelevant, and we could sing whatever we wanted? (*Ibid.*, 29)

Whatever the science behind this phenomenon, it is an observable fact that music in worship has the power to unite congregations in praise.

Music touches us emotionally

Many of the interviewees described the emotional power of music, often as opposed to merely saying liturgical words (HT1T, HT2T, HT4T, HT6T, NW1T, NW2T, NW3T), with one (HT6T) quoting

the famous epithet 'He who sings prays twice' falsely attributed to Augustine by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1993, 298). But while the power of music to touch people emotionally is well known and largely uncontested, the mechanisms by which music is thought to affect emotion have provided a fruitful field of study for musicologists and psychologists. This field, know as 'aesthetics', is complex and beyond the scope of this study, although three theories will be explored. But for now we simply note the contention that *singing* together can feel more powerful and more full of the Spirit than merely *saying* together, and musicians who understand how the power of music actually works can choose deliberately to enhance music's emotional effects by the ways in which they perform and lead musical worship.

Music provides a vehicle for our praise

Singing has been used in religious worship since time immemorial, and the Bible contains many invitations to join in song. Begbie (1991) suggests a theology whereby humans are the only part of the created order able to articulate praise for their maker, and so when we praise we are doing so on behalf of the voiceless creation. In the oft-quoted phrase, 'Worship without music does not easily soar' (quoted in Routley, 1980, 131). But why is music so important in worship? One respondent suggested that there is something naturally present within music and beauty which calls forth praise:

> Music affects us because we're created and wired for music and beauty and creativity, and just because we're feeling something when a piece of music happens, doesn't mean that that's coming from the Holy Spirit. But absolutely the Holy Spirit does do that and can do that, and lovely words can open up our hearts in ways that other things don't. (NW3T)

An unpublished paper by Sloboda (1994) introduced the concept of 'affordance', a term from the world of ergonometrics and design, coined by Gibson (1966), who was working on the ways in which the world impinges on our five senses. Much of our response, he believed, has less to do with our inner states, than with the properties of what we perceive. Certain things about our environment constrain and direct our response by the 'affordances' they contain. Through a process of learning we tend to respond to certain things in certain ways. Sloboda explains:

> For instance, a chair *affords* sitting. It has the necessary physical characteristics to allow someone to sit on it. If well designed it almost, by its very nature, *invites* you to sit on it. No one has to explain to you that it is for sitting. Even a very small child with no understanding of the concept of a chair would still naturally end up sitting on it in the course of physical exploration. This is because the object fits a set of human characteristics. Chairs have to be a particular way because humans are the way they are. (1994, 2)

Most objects have multiple affordances (you could also stand on a chair, or tame a lion with it), but as they invite some activities so they also preclude others. Most chairs, for example, would not afford 'eating' as an appropriate response. A good example of affordance in practice may be found by someone walking along a concourse towards double doors. The presence of either a handle or a flat metal plate does not absolutely force one to pull or push, but each affords pulling or pushing. Sloboda applies this principle to music and worship, and suggests that by its very nature music 'affords' worship:

> And so it is with music. We can choose what to do with music, but for most of us, the choices are limited by culture, background, social context, and the way the music itself has been designed (in Gibsonian terminology, the affordances it possesses). A key concept for music has always been worship. It must be the case that (at least some) music affords worship. Our task is to demonstrate how. (*Ibid.*, 3)

He goes on to suggest five ways in which music affords worship, to which could be added at least a further nine (Leach, 1984). The point is, though, that if we have a mind to worship, music provides an exceptionally helpful medium through which to do so. It is worth noting that by 'music' neither Sloboda nor this present thesis restrict it to one particular genre, nor indeed to congregational singing.

Music leads us into intimacy

The Vineyard theology of worship as a journey to 'intimacy' with God has become a taken-for-granted assumption in our two networks. The appropriateness of this piece of theology will be examined in the final chapter, but clearly the churches of this study believe that this is a valid aim for worship, and that the royal route to get there is through sung worship. The fact is that many of the respondents have experienced this kind of intimacy, are actively seeking to lead their congregation to this point, and have found music to be a good vehicle for so doing, far more effectively than can the recitation of liturgical texts. Steven (2002, 119) identifies what he calls the 'school disco' dynamics of worship where the playlist becomes slower and more emotionally charged as the evening wears on and as some kind of intimacy is hoped for. The power of worship music to take worshippers to this point has been demonstrated, and nothing further needs to be said here other than noting the power and common use of music deliberately to encourage this dynamic, rightly or wrongly.

Music connects evangelistically

Finally, several times during interviews the belief was stated that music connects with people outside the church and therefore is helpful in the task of evangelism. There was an interesting paradox in that new songs are available, for example on YouTube, and so one leader said that

> I'm really confident that before I start singing [a new song], there are a lot of people in the church that have already heard it, because they've got the latest Hillsong album, or they've seen it on YouTube. It's easy enough, and that's one practical reason. (HT2T)

While it is questionable that seekers or those brought to services by friends with an evangelistic intent have really spent the week searching YouTube for the latest Christian worship songs, it is more likely that the connection has to do with the subversion of negative expectations of what music in church might sound and look like – choirs, organs and traditional hymns. And the emotional power of music over spoken words has been known to 'soften people up' so that they are more open to an evangelistic encounter with God (NW1T, p.128 above).

There is more which could be said, but it has been suggested in this section that contemporary worship songs have five main functions, five jobs which they do very well: to unite us with others in the congregation and perhaps intensify feelings of togetherness and mild euphoria, to touch us emotionally in ways which merely saying words seldom can, to provide a helpful vehicle which affords praise, to provide a way towards a state or moment of intimacy with God, and to connect with younger people evangelistically. In the light of these findings, and with the information gained, the final part of this chapter returns to our original question:

Can worship songs be 'the new liturgy'?

Having identified some of the purposes of both liturgy and music in worship, in order to see what each does well, this question may now be answered. Are worship songs able to carry out the functions of liturgy within worship, and therefore allow churches which worship exclusively with songs to experience all the benefits and values which liturgy would have brought? The simple answer to that question, I would contend, is 'Possibly, but not in the ways in which songs are being used within the churches which were visited.' The seven functions of liturgy will be re-examined in turn to explore their transferability to music.

Music as a choice to belong?

It was noted above that the key idea of liturgical worship was incorporation and identification with a body of people which transcends time and space, as opposed to the belief that the only authentic expression of worship is that which springs spontaneously to one's lips in the here and now. Are worship songs (as experienced in the churches of this study) capable of such trans-congregational incorporation? My answer is 'perhaps'.

Given Myrick's work on entrainment and the links with emotion, there is undoubtedly something about singing together which bonds people and which creates fellow-feeling. There may also be a sense, even with the very limited current repertoire, of belonging to something bigger, knowing that people from one's network are likely to be worshipping with the same songs, a sense reinforced, no doubt, by the songs used at the respective summer festivals. So singing together can foster a sense of togetherness within a congregation, or within a network, but can this work more widely? Some types of churches will make use of 'World Music', reminding people that we have Christian brothers and sisters worldwide who are making very different music to the same God, but this was absent from any of the churches visited, and does not appear to have been a major part of the charismatic scene in general. Once again, the limited repertoire favoured certainly by *HTB* and less so by *NW* has missed some opportunities for making wider connections, but works well for connectedness *within* the streams. The cult of novelty which has been identified as a characteristic of contemporary worship certainly inhibits any sense of historical continuity. There are a few examples of 'remixed' traditional hymns, where ancient words are given a new tune and usually a refrain, but these are in the minority, and may not in fact be an improvement on the originals. One such remix of 'Hark the Herald Angels Sing'[86] is punctuated by 'Hey's and 'Oh, oh oh's, has seemingly random extra bars inserted from time to time (which makes it very difficult for congregations to sing), and has a refrain with the lines 'King of Heaven come down/King of Heaven come now' which surely misses the point that the incarnation is what the carol is celebrating, not praying for. But generally, any connection with the past tradition, certainly in *HTB* churches, is unlikely to stretch back more than a few years, although in *NW* there may be a greater variety of sources.

The strong sense of 'family' in both networks is clearly important, but the whole point of liturgy as incorporation, which comes out strongly in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, is not about the expression of our belonging to a body of people and churches *like us*, but rather being one with those who are *different* but yet united through common *ordo* and texts. It is difficult, therefore, to find in contemporary Christian worship music much which has a similar effect to that of liturgy of uniting across time and

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[86] Paul Baloche (2013) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3IghOn18VY [Accessed 6 October 2020]

space, to feel and know ourselves part of something both ancient and modern, as well as worldwide. And indeed there seems to be little likelihood, given the 'new wineskins' rhetoric, that such incorporation would be deemed to be positive. The danger for Christian disciple-making is that Christians are being formed within one narrow stream, Christians who can be infected with the view that only others like them are really worthy of the name. Worship songs as currently used within our networks appear to do little to help people break out of the narrow confines of the preferred musical and theological genre.

Music for support and structure?

Can worship songs provide a framework and a structure around which worship can grow? In one sense, again perhaps they can, if that structure is about the journey towards intimacy where it is the tempo and feel of songs which control the journey rather than any liturgical shape or theological theme. It has been noted that the Vineyard worship-word-ministry *ordo* has in many churches supplanted any structure previously used in liturgical churches, reducing other ingredients to the status of micro-rites between the main sections. But is the singing of songs alone capable of structuring a whole service which takes people on a different journey? I would argue that this is too heavy a burden for songs to bear, and that they function best as ingredients within a larger structure. Not least this is true, as the next section suggests, because of the nature and content of songs currently being written.

Music for balance?

Can songs help provide balance? Undoubtedly. A Eucharistic *ordo*, for example might begin with a gathering song, move into songs of penitence and forgiveness, thence into praise; a song based on a Psalm might come between two Bible readings, a song might form an appropriate vehicle for response to the preaching of the Word. We might use a credal song, and songs of intercession or lament might led us towards another for sharing the Peace, and then the communion itself; a setting of the Lord's Prayer could lead into songs of quiet praise give us some space to appreciate what we have received, and a commissioning song might send us out into service, before we are blessed with a song of benediction. I have used this kind of structure and balance in my parish ministry for years. The prevalence of liturgical songs in the early years of charismatic renewal has already been reported, and within the corpus of songwriter Graham Kendrick there are many songs which function in these ways, including an album, *The Banquet* (2011), which is intended for use at the Eucharist. The problem, is, though, that it is difficult nowadays to find the kinds of songs which function in these

ways, especially since there is a cult of novelty, and the stables which are in current favour and which are producing new songs are from non-liturgical churches. If all the songs are basically saying 'Thank you for saving me' in a variety of different words, there is little which might be used as intercession, or for penitence. The typical song-slot which we analysed above illustrates well this lack of balance. NW9's comments about sung liturgy have been reported above (p.135):

> I think that it would be hard to lead somebody, or a congregation, in an act of confession through song. I'm guessing, I'm guessing, I don't really know but I get the … I'm trying to imagine myself in a scenario that says 'Right, now we're going to come before God in humility and repentance, and we're going to sing …' I mean I'd be up for exploring it in some way if someone would have to write a good song.
>
> JL: I've written one: I don't know if it's good but I can send it to you (laughter). (NW9T)

This is interesting, and suggests that singing has become so identified with upbeat praise or intimate worship that the idea of singing penitentially simply does not compute. Certainly there are very few songs in the current corpus which might function in this way, but this respondent took it further by suggesting that moods other than praise simply cannot be articulated in song. There also appears to be a circular argument in evidence here: liturgy is unhelpful, so why would we want to sing it? Instead we will write and use songs which are designed to express our love for Jesus and which will take us to the moment of intimacy. Therefore we cannot use songs to do our liturgy, because there are none being written to fulfil this task. There are, of course exceptions, but when these songs, a creed and the Lord's Prayer were used, they were seldom used deliberately in any larger liturgical *ordo*, but merely as one among several songs during a worship slot, placed within no apparent logical order other than tempo. In this sense, then it seems that the current favourite songs are not able to provide the balance for which liturgy is intended, although there is great potential for the appropriate joining together of music and a traditional *ordo* to help Christians into a more balanced and rounded discipleship, a contention which will be discussed in the final chapter.

Music for improvisation?

The understanding of liturgy which sees it as a trellis or as scaffolding, both of which allow something else to happen around and within, suggests that here might be a positive. The desire among many of the churches in this study for 'freedom' has also been described. Is it possible to use songs as a framework around and within which faithful improvisation may take place? This ought to be an area where worship songs really score highly, given their ancestry in the worlds of gospel music and jazz, while hymns owe more to classical music. Unlike hymns, worship songs were intended to provide frameworks for improvisation and were never intended to be sung straight through from start to finish as were hymns. In the past I have sought to facilitate this flexibility through a system of

hand signals, traditionally used by Jazz musicians, which allow changes of order, key and instrumentation, and which can be decided by the leader during the course of a song or slot. This, one suspects, is the kind of 'freedom' so desired by so many interviewees, and much work went into teaching and learning with the bands in my churches how to play what the worship-leader felt was an appropriate musical response to the Spirit at any given time. The whole genre of Jazz is built around the ability of musicians to use this kind of flexibility well. But sadly here again the current musical usage observed within the networks militates against this kind of freedom, due to the ways in which music is learnt, rehearsed and performed. As a member of a worship band at my *HTB* church, I was sent, during the week before the Sunday in question, a series of YouTube links to the songs we would use, with instructions to learn them from this medium. The rehearsal would then be merely a run-through of the songs to make sure that we could manage the YouTube rendition accurately. We might also use a backing track to thicken out the sound and add instruments which were not available in the band. All these factors militate against freedom and improvisation. Because through the marketing of worship music we have grown used to high production values, the average little homespun worship band feels thin and amateurish compared to what can be experienced on YouTube or iTunes. But now we have the technology both to emulate arrangements which are available online, and even to play along with a pre-recorded track. While there is some flexibility, this means that the song can only be played at the recorded pace and in the recorded order, thus removing much of the improvisation inherent in the Jazz style. The research methods chosen for this study did not allow the gaining of any information about how prevalent this style of learning new material is within the two networks, but during Participant Observation there was little sense of any flexibility in action, and little to suggest that the performance of the songs was being directed by the worship-leader in a way which demonstrated any flexibility or spontaneity. It is also the case that to try to add any instrumental virtuosity is frowned upon, since when backing tracks are used overplaying by live instruments might make the sound too busy and crowded. But more significantly, to use music in this way flies in the face of the all-pervading Vineyard philosophy of worship, a policy which will be examined shortly. Because of backing tracks worship songs have become hymns again, sung through from start to finish with no variation. And even in churches which did not use backing tracks, the sense that we might be able to listen to the Spirit and the congregation and move flexibly through a slot was largely missing. Two notable exceptions were HT1D and HT5D, but most of the music did not appear to have this element to it: it was pre-planned and pre-programmed. The very high value placed on 'freedom' did not seem to have translated into the way in which songs were used.

Music for evangelism *and* discipleship?

Hunter's suggestion (p.166 above) that the songs from Bethel and Hillsong come from different national contexts and are therefore different in the ways in which they articulate the faith has been noted, as has the difference in emphasis on evangelism and discipleship within the two networks. So how do worship songs fare as vehicles both for proclaiming the faith and helping people grow in it?

Data clearly demonstrated the belief that a more contemporary (although severely limited) musical style would be more acceptable to young seekers or visitors, although that might be because it subverted what they thought they might expect in church. But there was very little sense that seekers might find some of the music strange and off-putting. Quite apart from the stream of vague biblical allusions which makes up the lyrics of many current songs, and which are unlikely to communicate much in today's biblically illiterate culture, some might be considered even more unusual. In one song the writer tells us how much he loves to shout 'Yahweh, Yahweh!'[87]. I myself do not, and I suspect neither do most not-yet Christians, yet it is felt that to sing material like this will be very helpful in commending the faith to them. There are of course a very few credal songs which proclaim and celebrate the truths of faith. But the fieldwork demonstrated that most songs currently used are more like personal testimony than proclamation and reinforcement.

It has also been suggested that it is the experience of singing together, rather than the style or content on any particular songs, which can be evangelistically powerful, although it is worth noting the doubts expressed by one interviewee as to the long-term helpfulness of this model:

> I think that emulating the celebration, the Bethel, the Hillsong, the big kind of worship experience may well tap into something in our current society in which people are craving experience and the sensational, and something which if you like elevates them. I actually think it's a search for the transcendent. Ironically I think the reason Choral Evensong is thriving and flourishing is exactly the same reason Hillsong is flourishing and thriving, which is high production values, something beyond the norm, you know, something that is … cos again, Choral Evensong and a great Hillsong celebration are exactly the same as going to the opera or Coldplay at Wembley. It's still about experience, elation, transcendence, sensory bombardment … arguably it may just be that it's actually simply that we are craving escape, and a moment of sort of … escape from the austere realities of our age. But I'm not necessarily sure that those things are good at sustaining people and enculturating people into patterns of discipleship and lifelong Christian obedience. (HT6T)

In terms of discipleship songs appeared to be very good at evoking a response among Christians, and while it is difficult to know much about what goes on during prayer ministry, people do appear to be meeting with God in some ways which one would hope would provide milestones in their journey towards mature discipleship. But as with the omission of some great themes in non-liturgical

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[87] Phil Wickham (2011) *At Your Name (Yahweh, Yahweh)*. Thankyou Music

worship, so current songs are, as has been said throughout, limited in their subject matter, and overwhelmingly positive and thankful. With nothing but a diet of the kind of music experienced during Participant Observation, Christian disciples would find it hard to explore such themes as suffering and lament, deep penitence, surrender, endurance, steadfastness, intercession, Scripture, the Sacraments, social justice, and many others. This might particularly be true in what Moy (2023a) has noted as the success-driven culture of *HTB*. Once again a balanced diet of the right kind of songs could indeed do the job of well-crafted liturgy, but we do not seem to be feeling the need for, producing, nor using the resources for this in the song culture.

Music for the long haul?

In the terms of the explanation of this given above, it is a fact that the cult of novelty and the desire only ever to sing the very latest songs means that there is very little which is memorable or which will stand the test of time. *NW* use a more eclectic mix of hymns and songs, and one can imagine some of the material still being available in people's minds and on their lips in 60 years' time, but in *HTB* churches little attention seemed to be paid to this aspect of worship, and it is interesting that it was only in *NW* churches that leaders mentioned the elderly or dementia care. It is good to observe the Church generally becoming more aware of the needs of those with particular issues, notably dementia, but there was little evidence of these concerns in the vast majority of churches visited, apart from NW10. This may of course be because among the target age group there was little concern for what might be their lot in 40 or 50 years' time. Whilst it is impossible to judge this aspect of song choice from single visits to churches, my experience as a regular *HTB* member is that on any given week there may be several brand new songs, most of which disappear without trace to be replaced by more new ones the following week. In previous research on music and emotion (Leach, 1984, 93) I suggested the term 'worship memory' for the power which a song or hymn may have because of the associations from the past, often from either particularly important events, or from use over a period of time. The 'Darling, they're playing our tune' theory of musical response was named by John Booth Davies (1978) to show the power of music to evoke memories of other times and places. It was interesting that when during the visits an occasional older song or hymn was used in the middle of a song slot, the increase in the enthusiasm and volume of singing was palpable (HT1D, NW3D). It was notable also during the fieldwork that there was never any attempt at teaching new material to the congregation: it was just expected that they would pick it up as the song went along, or that they would have already been singing along with YouTube during the week. The net effect of this policy, though, is that singing can be hard work, particularly if one is struggling to learn songs as well as to worship through them, and because they have no emotional memory attached to them.

Another question which must be asked about long haul spirituality has to do with the theology of the songs. It has already been noted that huge swathes of time during an act of worship are handed over to someone who may not have any formal theological training whatsoever, and who might even be downright heretical. I once heard a charismatic worship-leader, in a moment of deep spiritual intimacy, pray 'Thank you Father that you *are* the Lord Jesus Christ'. My attempts to inform her after the service that that particular heresy was called 'modalistic monarchianism', and that she would have been excommunicated for less in the second century, fell on deaf ears. It is easy sport to deconstruct and criticise the lyrics of worship songs, and that is not the purpose of this study, but a greater concern is that no-one really seems that worried about it, and if the tune is good, it will be sung. The answer to Myrick's question above, about whether the lyrics of the songs used for worship are irrelevant, could certainly be answered by suggesting that they are *less* relevant than might be good for the Church. The contrast with official liturgical texts is clear. They have been edited, refined and polished until they say exactly what the Church means them to say, and are not limited only to the theological position of one section of the whole Anglican Church. Page (2004) diagnoses part of the problem here as being to do with the cultural shift in Christian music from poem to pop song, and the rise of the singer-songwriter. He makes the point that in the past hymns were written originally as poems to be read, not primarily as lyrics to be sung. Poetry was a major art form in 19th century Britain, and famous hymn writers like Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley were not musicians: they were wordsmiths, and left other musicians to write tunes for them. In the past music and lyrics would have been written by teams like Rodgers and Hart or George and Ira Gershwin, but the singer-songwriter model often leaves words as less important as long as the tune is catchy. 'Worship song writing has bought into this model big-time.' (*Ibid.,* 37-41) Musician Andy Piercy (in Redman, 2003, 98) agrees, and questions the assumption that both music and lyrics should be expected to come from the same person. In contrast, the Church of England Liturgical Commission has made a point of including poets and writers as well as liturgists and theologians among its number (Hebblethwaite, 2004, 45-6). So again the answer here to whether songs are capable of being 'the new liturgy' is yes, possibly, if we use them very differently, and indeed if we start writing them for that purpose. Care needs to be taken that what we are communicating to new Christians is in continuity with orthodox Christianity as received and passed on, and there seemed to be little sense from the fieldwork that much discernment, and even less censorship, was employed by leaders as to what they were expecting people to sing, and therefore what would form them long-term.

Music for quality?

The music experienced during fieldwork was often described as 'contemporary' which of course actually means 'more contemporary than traditional hymns or other church music'. In fact all the 'contemporary' music experienced during the visits was of a highly similar 'soft rock' style, and did not in any way reflect the variety of secular music available to young people today, for example House, Hip-hop, Dubstep, Drum'n'Bass, Bluegrass, Acid Jazz, Reggae, Bhangra, Trance, Electroswing, Ghetto Funk, and lately even Electro-Shanties, to name but a few. Indeed Porter in his study of another large charismatic/evangelical church found that

> the church's musical leaders cultivate an intentional sense of musical consistency in terms of both style and repertoire. Musical departures from the norm are rare and there is relatively tight policing of what is musically acceptable in this public setting. The repertoire is authorised through centrally maintained lists, individuals are vetted before being allowed to contribute, and anything that is musically out of line is dealt with either during rehearsals or over coffee. Although the church employs a relatively uniform musical style, worshippers come from a variety of musical backgrounds and the use of soft rock does not often line up straightforwardly with their existing musical attachments. As a result, within the church environment, individuals are often expected to set aside existing musical tastes and attachments, adopting an attitude of worship to which such concerns are seen as marginal. (2016, 239-40)

Of course to say that a musical repertoire is limited is not necessarily to say that it lacks quality. But whilst beauty is very much in the eye of the beholder, quality may be measured more objectively. A song may be well-crafted but still not enjoyed by an individual worshipper or listener, and conversely the fact that someone dislikes a song might not be because it is a shoddy piece of work. To judge a song on the effects it has on hearers may provide a less subjective view of its quality, although individual taste nevertheless plays a large part. But there are two key effects of music which have been identified as important in an assessment of how interesting it is: 'expectancy violation' and 'architectural pleasure'. Sadly neither of them are very prevalent in the performance of the current repertoire.

Expectancy violation is a concept introduced by Meyer (1961), who proposes that music works through the building up and release of harmonic tension, and it is these tensions which cause the music to be interesting and to arouse emotion: 'Emotion or affect is aroused when a tendency to respond is arrested or inhibited.' (*Ibid.*, 14) Music touches our emotions by leading us to expect (often unconsciously) certain events, which may or may not occur according to those expectations. This dynamic of tension and resolution is a well known one which works not only in music but also in literature, and indeed in theology. Meyer suggests that in the human mind there is a constant drive towards resolution, return and rest. A typical story begins with a situation, into which some alien and perhaps sinister element is introduced (Goldilocks, a Troll, a wolf, some ugly sisters ...), but there is a happy ending to conclude as things return to rest and the nice characters live happily ever after.

Indeed it is possible to see the grand sweep of Scripture in this way (Eden, wilderness, the new Jerusalem), as well as many shorter sections within it (the conquest, exile and restoration of Israel, or the nativity, ministry, death, resurrection and return of Jesus). Because we are all exposed to Western tonal music for much of our lives, we subconsciously know the rules: in my teaching I can play a chord progression and stop before the final chord and ask the audience to sing what they think should come next, which they manage every time with 100% accuracy. But when what was expected does not happen, interest and emotion are aroused. One perfect example of this is the Vaughan Williams 'Coronation' arrangement of the tune *Old Hundredth* for the hymn *All people that on earth do dwell* (1953). The first four verses are harmonised almost the same way (although arranged slightly differently), but then a fanfare leads into a different harmonisation of verse 5:

Figure 4. Expectancy violation

The asterisked chord, on the word 'Ghost' is an E major rather than the G major which has been used in verses 1 to 4. Many listeners experience a physical *frisson* or 'thrill' at this moment, 'a subtle nervous tremor caused by intense emotion or excitement (as pleasure, fear, etc.) producing a slight shudder or tingling through the body' (Goldstein, 1980, 126) which he explains as a release of endorphins sweeping most commonly down the nape of the neck from the hypothalamus and pituitary gland. If these feelings are strong enough they may result in piloerection, sighing or even tears. In order to test his theory, Goldstein injected some students with naloxone, an opiate receptor antagonist which inhibits the release of endorphins, and found that their response to music was significantly lessened. Of course the violation of expectancy only works if the violation 'fits', as it does in the example above, because the melody note, B, belongs both in the usual triad of G major and in the E major which replaces it. To insert something which does not fit, such as an A♭ chord, would only inspire feelings of irritation. Meyer explores many other ways in which tension and resolution may be built into music, but the lesson to be learnt from this is that if music is to be interesting and emotionally arousing, the worst possible adjective which can be used of it is

'predictable'. If there is no real tension, if there is no delay to the resolution, or if there is no violation of expectancy, the music will, frankly, be boring. If there are no surprises, there will be little emotional reaction to it.

Holding that thought for a moment, another major factor in the enjoyment of music is 'architectural pleasure'. This is simply a sense of sheer delight in music, whether its composition, arrangement or performance, and expressed by Raffman (1993, 60): 'Wow, to think that someone thought of this!' This will, of course, strike different people in different ways, and will affect those who are 'musical' more than those who would not describe themselves in that way. A bass player may be aware of the technical difficulties of a virtuoso bass performance which would pass them by if they heard say a French horn solo. But when the music gets it right, it provides a sometimes intense emotional trigger. Now if these last two effects of music are such powerful creators of interest and triggers of emotion, we might define as good quality music any pieces which contain this kind of interest, and predictable music as of poorer quality. Surely in worship we desire music which will, as many respondents said, touch our emotions and so draw us into a more holistic appreciation of, and encounter with, God. But it is exactly here where the current musical repertoire lets us down again, as Vineyard music quite deliberately and as a matter of policy edits out this kind of interest:

> Another potential hazard was that some expected the worship team to put on a dazzling performance for passive spectators. Wimber worked hard against this notion, surely realising the possibility for this tendency from his own musical background. John Wimber was very sensitive to using the human power of musical performance and emotional manipulation to produce a response. But he recognised the difference between human effort and the sovereign in-breaking of God's Spirit during worship. (Park *et al.* 2017, 41)

A high value is placed on simplicity, with the words holding much more significance than the music. So instrumental solos and virtuosity are absent, as are surprising key changes or other musical events which elsewhere would be used to add interest. Nothing which might break the worshippers' adoring gaze on Jesus, or put human performance centre-stage is allowed. Worship leaders are there to help people on their journey to intimacy, not to display their own skill. This understanding of emotion and worship sees musical skill and quality (in the sense that they have been defined above) as dangerous diversions from true worship, rather than possible pathways into it, and human musical creativity as an idolatrous distraction rather than a God-given gift to celebrate. Whilst the songs may have become more complex since the early days at Anaheim, I looked in vain for any musical interest, instrumental solos or creative arrangements during the research visits, in either network, and during my time as a worship band member at my *HTB* church we were all directed not to play anything but the basics of the songs. This again may seem like a missed opportunity for worship, simply because of the inheritance from the Vineyard which has been uncritically adopted, and which is built on the premise that the one and only goal of worship is intimacy, and that anything which appears to remove the gaze from the face of Jesus is banned. This phenomenon is commented on by YouTuber and

musicologist Adam Neely (2020), in a video entitled *Learning to like Contemporary Christian Music (the music I hate)*. Although having some Christianity in his background, he explains his complete distaste for 'Contemporary Christian Music', noting particularly the Hillsong and Bethel stables which have provided much of the material for this study. He notes that such music is unremittingly diatonic in nature, with very little in terms of chordal interest, modulation and so on. Whilst he can understand the folksy attraction of simple music to which all can sing along (he inserts a clip of Pete Seeger leading a crowd in *Michael row the boat ashore*) he adds that he has a problem, in that

> the simplification of music in favour of glorifying God seems to me like kind of counter-intuitive, because if your entire point is to show like 'Yeah, God's amazing, and this life that God has given us is so amazing', and to express that in song, and it's … [sings one note].

These comments and my earlier research are confined to music, and do not discuss lyrics or theology. Obviously the most effective music is that in which the musical structure and the lyrics complement each other and fit together well, and in which the theology is biblical. It is not the purpose this study to discuss the merits of the words which congregants were invited to sing whilst participating in worship, but one fascinating trend did present itself: the change in the way in which songs use Scripture. There is a long tradition in the worlds of hymnody and 'songnody' of setting scriptural texts to music, and of course many biblical texts (such as the Psalms) would originally have been sung. But there has been a subtle shift in the way in which Scripture is sung. In the recent past a scriptural song might have begun with one particular passage, and, perhaps lightly paraphrasing it, set it to music. Consider Graham Kendrick's *To You O Lord* (from Psalm 25) or *Consider it Joy* (from James 2), or Stuart Townend's *The Lord's my Shepherd* (from Psalm 23), or Roger Jones' *Coming with the clouds* (from Revelation 1). All these songs, and many others, are settings of specific biblical texts, but nevertheless remain faithful to the passage. But in many more contemporary songs a different approach is in evidence. Rather than setting the words of a passage to music, they bring together a (sometimes seemingly random) collection of different scriptural ideas and images gathered from a number of different biblical locations. A good example of this trend is Aaron Keyes' song *Sovereign Over Us*[88]. Here are just a few of the lines, with some of the biblical allusions which they contain:

You are wisdom unimagined	cf Prov 8
Who could understand Your ways?	cf Is 55:8
Reigning high above the Heavens	cf Ps 99
Reaching down in endless grace	cf 2 Sam 22:17
You're the lifter of the lowly	cf Job 5:11
Compassionate and kind	cf Neh 9:17

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[88] Aaron Keyes, Bryan Brown and Jack Mooring, © 2011 Jack Mooring Music (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing).

You surround and You uphold me	cf Is 41:10
And Your promises are my delight	cf Ps 119 *passim*
Even what the enemy means for evil	cf Gen 45:4-8
You turn it for our good …	
Your plans are still to prosper	cf Jer 29:11
You have not forgotten us	
You're with us through the fire and the flood	cf Is 43:2 …

This is 'biblical' in one way, but theologians would warn us against this use of odd verses out of context. Neither does this approach help in the important art of memorising Scripture, or a mature theological awareness that all Scripture is best understood in context. Subtly, biblical phrases and images can become little mantras to help worshippers feel good, rather than passages which repay study with deeper understanding. And of course as an evangelistic strategy it demands a high degree of familiarity with a wide variety of biblical texts if it is to make any sense at all.

Summary: Can worship songs be 'the new liturgy'?

It has been argued that one way to answer this question is to ask what both liturgy and songs are designed to do, and what they do well, and to see how much of this is interchangeable. Liturgy is there to provide continuity and incorporation across time and space and to give us a sense of unity as we are worshipping which subverts the culture of individualism. It is there to structure worship, both within individual services and over a longer period of time, as represented by the emphases of the Church Calendar, but also to provide a framework for faithful improvisation around those themes and structures. It is there to provide balance, again both on a micro- and macro-scale, so that our worship includes a healthy balance of ingredients, and so that the different aspects of the Christian gospel are given due attention over time, and the whole story of redemption rehearsed. By repetition over a long period of time it forms and shapes our discipleship, giving us spirituality for the long haul, and resources for difficult times, as well as seeking to commend Christ and the gospel to those who have not yet become part of his Church. And finally it is meant to provide resources for worship which are well-crafted, both in terms of the beauty of its language and the quality of its theology.

What it is less effective at, the data suggest, is connecting with our emotions, overcoming the image problem which past associations with Church may cause in some people, and being immediately

accessible to people with no Christian background. It is also perceived as rigid and inflexible, although if we take both the model of trellis and vine and the resources of *CW* into the equation it need not be, although few leaders seemed to believe that it was worthwhile to put in the effort required to use it flexibly. Worship songs, on the other hand, were perceived as being more instantly accessible, at least to some people, were much better at connecting emotionally, could be used more flexibly (although in fact they rarely were), and good at leading people towards the point of intimacy which is the holy grail of the churches in this study. However they could also be musically uninteresting (and deliberately so), sometimes of poor quality both musically and theologically, and, because of the way they went in and out of fashion, were ephemeral and provided little in terms of rations for the journey. It was suggested that whilst they could be helpful ingredients within an act of worship, they were unable by themselves to bear the weight of structuring the whole service, and, given the current popular corpus, neither did they provide much in terms of a balanced diet, either for evangelism or discipleship. So to expect worship songs to be 'the new liturgy' appears to be asking too much of them, and churches which use them in that way run the risk of impoverishing their worship, and losing the valuable aspects which liturgy provides. The final chapter proceeds to make some more positive comments about the resources available to us for disciple-making in the liturgical approach and materials of the Anglican Church, and ends with a practical suggestion about how both songs and liturgy might be used to play to their strengths and compliment each other.

7. Conclusion: A more excellent way?

Because this research has been framed as a piece of Practical Theology, it is necessary in this final chapter to provide a critique of the policies which have been discovered through the fieldwork, 'with a view to ensuring and enabling faithful participation in God's redemptive practices in, to and for the world' (Swinton and Mowatt, 2006, 6). Such critiques may be of praxis, but behind how people act lies how they think, so an 'ideology critique' is also called for (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, 124). The unique contribution to knowledge of this piece of work is not merely to notice the growth of non-liturgical Anglicanism, to comment on it nor decry it, but rather actually to listen to practitioners with a view to hearing and understanding their reasons for the adoption of an anti-liturgical policy. The previous chapter, in seeking to answer Practical Theology's normative question, homed in on one particular aspect of the policies which were evident in the fieldwork, that of the notion that worship songs have now replaced liturgy as the main mode for worship, and came to the conclusion that in fact they make poor substitutes, at least as commonly used. This chapter zooms out to examine non-liturgical Anglican praxis more generally. It begins with two important questions: what is Church for, and how does its worship function within its whole mission and ministry, leading it towards that which is its end and goal? It then acknowledges four negative convictions which have been evidenced from the fieldwork data, before reiterating that it is a 'liturgical approach' to worship which is being advocated, and not just 'some liturgy'. Six benefits of liturgical worship are proposed, and the thesis ends with a section which makes three practical suggestions for a more excellent way (Osmer's final 'pragmatic' question).

Two key questions:

What is Church for?

In seeking to make a critique, and to answer the question 'What *ought* to be happening?', it is clearly necessary to articulate a rationale for the critique. This section begins, therefore, by addressing two important questions: only then can an attempt be made to decide what ought to be happening. The first concerns the purpose of Church. If, to be flippant for a moment, the goal of the Church is to fill our buildings with young people who are having a good time enjoying singing songs and feeling close to God, there is no doubt that the replacement of liturgy with worship songs is clearly a good policy. The apparent success stories of *HTB* plants provides adequate proof that this policy achieves the

stated end. So the question 'What is Church for?' is a highly pertinent one, which, in my experience, is rarely actually thought about. In my previous role I ran a training course for clergy, called 'The End Product', exploring questions around what we are aiming for as ministers and how we might know whether or not we have hit the target. It was a fascinating and rich day, but it also betrayed how little clergy actually ask such questions. We mostly just get on and do what we are expected to do.

The unarticulated view which I have held throughout this project, in fact throughout my ministry, could not have been better expressed than by the Archbishop of York in an address at the 2022 Lambeth Conference:

> McDonalds make hamburgers.
> Cadburys make chocolate
> Starbucks make coffee
> The Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela make music
> Heineken make beer
> Toyota make cars
> Rolex make watches
> Safaricom across most of Africa make connections
> And sisters and brothers, the Church of Jesus Christ makes disciples.
> That is our core business. That is what we are about.
>
> Not just converts. Jesus doesn't say go into the world and make converts. He doesn't say go into the world and make churchgoers. He says 'make disciples'. Followers of Jesus[89].

It has long been my conviction that disciple-making is the prime task of the Church, and that true disciples make more disciples. Therefore it is vital that questions about what worship ought to be like must be asked with a view to a deeper question: will what we are doing contribute helpfully to this process or not? If not, what might we do differently or better?

How can worship help achieve this?

Liturgical worship will not, of course, automatically make disciples. There is a strong Anglican tradition of beauty in worship, for example Cathedral Evensong, which is thought to be of value of itself, whether or not it takes people beyond aesthetics. Clearly it has not worked yet for Atheist guru Richard Dawkins, who, 'though he's not the sentimental type … admits to "an English nostalgia for village life, including church. I never go, find it excruciatingly boring, but still, I have some nostalgia for evensong on a summer evening."' (Reynolds, 2009) It is an interesting question to ask to what

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[89] https://www.archbishopofyork.org/speaking-and-writing/sermons/lambeth-conference-plenary-mission-and-evangelism [Accessed 9 August 2022]

degree the much-trumpeted numerical growth of Cathedrals[90] actually translates into attenders becoming committed followers of Jesus Christ. But I would argue that as part of a holistic parish evangelistic strategy, the traditional styles of Anglican worship can add much which will aid the local church if its aim is to build discipleship for the long haul. It has never been the intention of this study to criticise non-liturgical denominations, nor to suggest that churches which do not make use of Anglican liturgy will be unable effectively to make disciples: clearly that is not true. Nor is its purpose to criticise anti-liturgical Anglicanism because it is unfaithful Anglicanism, nor because it is illegal Anglicanism, but rather because it might be neglectful Anglicanism. It fails, this chapter will argue, to take full advantage of resources and riches which could prove so helpful in the evangelistic task of the Church. When used deliberately, confidently and well, the Anglican heritage of worship has, it will argue, much to offer. It is true that within global Anglicanism there is considerable latitude in the creation and use of liturgy, but nevertheless it is still liturgy. This study is concerned with the abandonment of liturgical worship, not different forms of it in different places.

Four convictions

Whilst the trend towards anti-liturgical Anglicanism has been in evidence for decades, embarking on this research has provided for the first time a way to listen to church leaders and at times to correct existing presuppositions. In the light of the evidence set out above, it may be said that four statements appear to underlie the espoused theology of anti-liturgical Anglican leaders.

Liturgy has been used badly.

This is an undisputable fact, if a tragic one. HT5 and HT6 particularly have been heard expressing their negative memories of growing up within the liturgical tradition, and Wimber himself has been heard to express antipathy towards traditional liturgical worship. However, the fact that liturgy has been used badly seems to have translated for many respondents into the belief that liturgy *can only* be used badly, and that it is therefore by its very nature irredeemable.

Leaders have not been inspired nor trained to appreciate liturgy.

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[90] https://www.choralevensong.org/uk/about-the-choral-evensong-trust.php#:~:text=Attendance%20of%20Choral%20Evensong%20has,resulted%20in%20the%20following%20press [Accessed 9 August 2022]

HT7 particularly expressed this view. It appears that particularly in evangelical training institutions there has been a signal failure to help students appreciate or fall in love with liturgical worship. And of course as *HTB* expands its own in-house training pathways, this is likely to be perpetuated.

Leaders have instead been inspired by other movements.

Whether charismatic renewal, the Vineyard, or the networks which have sprung from them, leaders have found new life, hope, fellowship and an experience of the Holy Spirit which the liturgy of the Church had never given them. Understandably they believe that a liturgical approach is a dead end, but that these other routes are a highway not just to personal spiritual fulfilment, but also to much coveted success in their ministries.

Non-liturgical Anglicanism could be said to have worked.

Even if, as Moy (2023a) suggests, the publicly trumpeted growth statistics *HTB* might not be telling the whole story, it still cannot be denied that, compared with the declining Church of England as a whole, the numerical success of churches within our two networks suggests pragmatically that a non-liturgical policy works. Indeed any growth in influence and evangelism within the Church deserves celebrating. It has been noted that this growth can be at the expense of nearby churches, as a high degree of transfer growth is evidenced when new plants of grafts arrive in town, but nevertheless even 20% conversion growth is no bad thing, and still puts most churches to shame. It also raises questions about what those who have transferred were not finding before which caused them to make the move. Questions have been raised about some of the content of the gospel as proclaimed in our churches, but of course the same criticism could be aimed in different ways at more mainstream churches.

Nevertheless, it is the contention of this chapter that with greater enthusiasm for, and skill with, liturgical worship, the task of disciple-making could be enhanced rather than hindered, the view expressed by most respondents. So what might a re-appreciation of the liturgy bring to the task of spiritual formation? And practically, if worship songs are not, as suggested in the previous chapter, designed to bear the weight of functioning in the place of liturgy, are there ways in which the two might be used constructively together? That is what must be explored in this final chapter.

A 'liturgical approach' to worship

Various possible meanings in common understanding of the term 'liturgy' have already been listed, but before embarking on this final critique it is important to be very clear just what it is that is being advocated. By suggesting that a greater appreciation of liturgy could be helpful in the task of spiritual formation, it has not been suggested that merely inserting some set prayers here and there between our worship songs will make much difference. Rather, this chapter will argue for what has been referred to as a 'liturgical approach' to worship, which concerns logical shape, the physical setting, richness, colour, beauty, variety and splendour. It concerns the ordering of time, and it fosters not just friendship and intimacy with God, but also a deepened awareness of his glory and majesty. It is about the ways our physical bodies are used. And yes, it is about text and words, crafted and used well with power to bless and to challenge us, to proclaim truth, to celebrate the character of God, to call on him in intercession and to proclaim his truth to an ignorant and apathetic world. And it is about the punctuation of those words with deliberate and well-used silences which let the liturgy breathe. This thesis ends by calling for nothing less than a wholehearted rediscovery of a liturgical approach, led with enthusiasm and skill, into which the congregation are trained and habituated, having caught something of the passion of the leaders. Above all it calls for liturgy infused by the Holy Spirit, brought to life by his power and pregnant with the possibly of life-changing encounters with the living God which form milestones on our lifelong journey of growth in discipleship.

What can liturgical worship do to help discipleship?

So with long haul discipleship as the goal, and a liturgical approach as the means towards that goal, how exactly might this work? What can liturgy actually do to help? This section suggests six ways in which a liturgical approach can aid the process of disciple-making.

Liturgy can help us become Christ-like

Warren (1995, 331-64) suggests a helpful road map of growth in discipleship, and a strategic approach to helping people along the journey. He lists five stages: 'knowledge' – how much we know about our faith, 'perspective' – the degree to which we are thinking as God thinks and seeing things from his point of view, 'conviction' – discovering and living out of our particular areas of passion, and 'skills' – practical abilities to take part in different areas of Christian ministry. But at the top of his list is 'character' – the growth in Christlikeness exhibited by their Lord's followers. Character is defined by Hybels (1987) as 'Who you are when no one's looking' (apparently using a quote from

UCLA basketball coach John Wooden). It was a prime concern for Paul who in Gal 4:19 told the church that he was 'again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you', and the author of Colossians, whose prime concern was to proclaim Christ, 'admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.' (Col 1:28) Other NT texts similarly see the goal of discipleship as to 'grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ' (Eph 4:15) and state that God 'predestined [us] to be conformed to the image of his Son' (Rom 8:29). Our liturgical worship should similarly proclaim Christ, and should do so in all the fulness of the biblical revelation, which is certainly wider than the picture gained from most contemporary worship songs. Warren (*Op. cit.,* 348-50) suggests that this maturity comes through the practice of spiritual disciplines, which he prefers to call 'habits'. Because it is deliberately repetitive a liturgical approach can help develop a mindset which sees spirituality as formed by habits, Smith's 'drills', rather than by the hope for emotional highs. The long path of spiritual growth, much of it unexciting, is mirrored in a liturgical approach which is also often merely a matter of habit. With our postmodern disdain for things like duty and habit it is easy to expect to see growth as a ride on an escalator which only ever goes upwards. But real life rarely goes as smoothly, and is more like a roller-coaster.

Behind this is an important principle of Anglican ecclesiology. It is an oft-repeated cliché that 'Anglicanism has no doctrines of its own' (Giles, 1998, 35). Typical is this from Bishop Stephen Neill:

> There are no special Anglican doctrines, there is no particular Anglican theology. The Church of England is the Catholic Church in England. It teaches all the doctrines of the Catholic Faith, as these are to be found in Holy Scripture, as they are summarised in the … Creeds, and as they are set forth in the decisions of the first four General Councils of the undivided Church. (Neill, 1965, 417)

However, two more recent commentators on Anglicanism disagree strongly.

> At best this proposition could only be half true. (Sykes, 1995, xii)

> While it may be true that there is no specifically Anglican Christology or doctrine of the Trinity, or even (though it could be disputed) doctrine of justification, it cannot be the case that there is no Anglican ecclesiology. (*Ibid.,* 125)

McGrath agrees:

> Traditional Anglican apologetic has placed considerable emphasis on Anglicanism's commitment to the common teachings of the Christian Church, and has studiedly avoided the suggestion that they are distinctively Anglican doctrines … the suggestion that there are such distinctive doctrines, or – even more significantly – that there is a distinctively Anglican theological method often rests upon a distressingly vague familiarity with the theological traditions of the remainder of Christendom, not to mention a lack of graciousness towards other theological traditions within Christianity. (1993, 74)

The reason, perhaps, for this oft-repeated misapprehension is that unlike several other post-Reformation denominations Anglicanism has no 'Confession' or statement of faith which seeks to set out clearly what members are required to believe. Even the Anglican *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion*, whilst setting out some Anglican doctrines, has never functioned in the same way as, for example, Lutheran or Calvinist Confessions. But this raises the question of where one might find the essence of Anglicanism expressed. The classic answer is by reference to the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, formulated in 1886 and accepted by the Anglican Communion in 1888, which states that our sources are:

> The Holy Scriptures, 'containing all things necessary to salvation'
> The Apostles' and Nicene Creeds
> The Sacraments of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord
> The Historic Episcopate

These four features were first advanced, it is worth remembering, as a basis for ecumenism: they were the Anglican Church telling others what she considered to be foundational for her life. It is significant that three of these four authoritative marks are manifested in the context of public worship. Another important source of authority is Canon Law, and Section B of the Canons of the Church of England lays down the legal requirements for Divine Service[91]. The key distinctive of Anglican belief, though, is the principle of *lex orandi, lex credendi*, in other words the fact that what we pray enshrines what we believe, and, if the third phrase *lex vivendi* is added, how we live out our discipleship. If one wants to know what Anglicans believe, one has to look at their prayer books, rather than at a specific 'confession of faith'. This principle is discussed at length by Stevenson. He traces this back to the 1549 and 1552 *Books of Common Prayer*, suggesting that 'In Anglicanism, the worship of the people of God plays a very distinctive role, being the principle arena not only of supplication and praise but also of theological experimentation and formulation.' (1988, 174) He notes that a similar process has taken place in other Churches of the Anglican Communion as they too have produced their own Prayer Books: this clearly is a strong part of Anglican theological method. Stevenson suggests that the unique political and social conditions of 16th century England were highly formative in the creation of the Anglican 'ethos', naming two key assumptions. The first is that order in society can be formed and maintained through some kind of a comprehensive contract which is forged through negotiation and consensus. Argument and violent conflict do not play a significant part either in the life of England nor its established church. This desire for peaceable consensus he traces back as far as the *Magna Carta*, which he sees as the start of an attempt by English people to transform the hierarchical mediæval society which brought order only at the expense of warfare. A growing sense of the value of personal liberty began to take root, so the

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[91] See https://www.churchofengland.org/about/policy-and-thinking/canons-church-england/section-b
[Accessed 18 Feb 2021]

Barons who negotiated the Charter with the King did so through compromise and the creation of a 'middle way', with the support of the Freemen. In the same way, the creation of a Church both Reformed and Catholic required a 'middle way', which was written up in the 1549 *BCP* and its successors.

It is therefore important to understand that our liturgical texts proclaim the truths of our faith, and reveal the Christ of Scripture, so that we can see clearly whom it is we are becoming more like. Our Creeds and Eucharistic Prayers particularly set out the facts of Jesus' life, ministry, death, resurrection and return, and the Anglican emphasis on the Gospel reading at the Eucharist, which, while this is not the only part of scripture which provides a source for preaching and teaching, nevertheless seeks to tell Christ's story systematically and deliberately, inviting us to enter into it. We learn about the character and nature of Our Lord by how we address him in prayer and praise, and our texts are carefully designed to provide a holistic and balanced picture of who he is, both as our brother and our enthroned king. Yes, we are grateful that Jesus has saved us, and we do want to praise him for that, but there is so much more, on which a liturgical approach helps us to focus. Our worship will inevitably shape our discipleship: indeed Anglican worship is deliberately designed to do so. It is too important to leave in the hands of singer-songwriters.

Liturgy can resource us for hard times

Whilst our euphoric experiences of the Spirit are a valid and usefully formative part of our spirituality, we all know, at least in theory, that they are not the whole story. A spirituality for the long haul will take seriously the ups and downs of life, and provide resources for growth through them. The process through which converts, and in particular young converts, become disciples has been documented by Westerhoff (1976) and Fowler (1981), who both charted what they saw as some steps towards mature discipleship. Fowler's four-stage process is simpler, but it is Westerhoff who has gained wider acceptance. The work of these two scholars is well known and well documented. Perrin (2020, 123-4) acknowledges that Westerhoff has been criticised from many directions as being too rigid, hierarchical, paternalistic and liberal, noting also that times have changed since Westerhoff and Fowler first wrote. She cites neurobiological factors as well as culture change as having been significant in thinking about faith development, but nevertheless recognises the importance of different stages, and particular times which are significant as transition periods. Young adulthood is recognised in several subsequent studies as a time of significant change, and it is exactly this age group which is targeted by *HTB* in particular. Some studies have focussed on Millennial faith development, notably that of Smith and Lundquist Denton (2005), who were responsible for the term 'Moralistic Therapeutic Deism' to describe the faith of then contemporary young adults in the

USA. What this means is that young people want a God who helps them to live life in better ways, and who will make them feel good, and will deal with their problems so that life is comfortable. The authors regard this faith as a 'misbegotten cousin' of orthodox Christianity. In a fascinating study Root traces the evolution of this phenomenon in much more detail, from the Enlightenment, through two World Wars, the post-war boom, the Cold War, the hippies and the Jesus Movement *via* Freud and consumerism to the present day Church which, he claims is obsessed with youthfulness, 'authenticity' and novelty. The comments from fieldwork interviewees in this study appear to demonstrate the accuracy of much of this research. A vignette sums up wonderfully Root's thesis. A famous Bible-teacher is talking to a young man who expressed to him his profound love for Jesus. But when asked about church, the young man confessed that he rarely attended because it was so boring.

> "I thought you loved Jesus",' the professor asked.
> "I do" the young man returned with genuine intensity. "I really do!"
> "So", the professor asked, "do you think you'd be willing to die for Jesus?"
> Now more reserved, the young man said "Yes … Yes, I think I would. I would die for Jesus."
> "So, let me get this straight," the professor continued, "you're willing to die for Jesus, but not be bored for Jesus?" (2017, 8)

If , driven by the numerical success imperative, we see our prime purpose as making the gospel attractive to people here and now, it is easy to see how we might neglect the building into people an understanding of, and resources for, the ups and downs of a lifelong journey, when at times the Way of Christ might seem anything but attractive. Whilst it is not necessarily the case that theological skill is a prerequisite for committed discipleship, it can be true that lack of theological depth can become a problem as faith matures, and especially as difficulties come to the fore. If one has been promised that coming to Jesus will mean an end to all one's troubles (or if this message has been picked up subliminally from the culture, including its songs and its testimonies, in spite of what might have been preached on occasions), it can be a shattering experience to find that life has not worked out as well as promised. Three of the many writers who have explored this area are Rohr (2012), Rolheiser (2014) and Allain Chapman (2018). Rohr addresses the phenomenon of 'falling upwards', when suddenly for experienced Christians things seem to fall apart without warning, and suggests that therefore we need a different spirituality for the two halves of life, before and after the crisis point. The first is about building a secure nest from which we may venture out and fly, and the second is about that scary venture outwards. In a slightly different way Rolheiser suggests that

> The human soul is like a fine wine that needs to ferment in various barrels as it ages and mellows. The wisdom for this is written everywhere, in nature, in scripture, in spiritual traditions, and in what is best in human science. And that wisdom is generally learned in the crucible of struggle. Growing up and maturing is precisely a process of fermentation. It does not happen easily, without effort and without breakdown. But it happens almost despite us, because such is the effect of a conspiracy between God and nature to mellow the soul. (2014, 3-4)

Like Rohr and, from a different perspective Mannix (2018, 334), he suggests that life is lived in two halves, and that the first is about 'the struggle to get our lives together', and the second 'the struggle to give our lives away' and to live in a way which focusses on others rather than on ourselves (*Op. cit.,* xiii). Allain Chapman challenges us to 'resilience', so that the difficulties of life strengthen us and enable us to bounce back. Resilience 'has become a popular theme because it focuses on developing the qualities we need to come through, rather than on the things that bring us down.' (2018, 1) Clearly there is a strong strand of spirituality here, taking its roots in the Christian tradition from St John of the Cross' Dark Night of the Soul, but actually common in many faiths as well as in contemporary psychology. One author who comes at it as a Christian and a psychiatrist is May, who writes

> The dark night of the soul is not restricted to holy people. It can happen to anyone. I believe that in some ways it happens to everyone. Yet it is much more significant than simple misfortune. It is a deep transformation, a movement toward indescribable freedom and joy. And in truth it doesn't always have to be unpleasant! (2004, 4)

This strand, though, is one which I have seldom heard explored to any depth in charismatic circles, despite the fact that there is great emphasis in Scripture about steadfastness, endurance, holding onto the faith and its Pioneer, and overcoming through suffering. Suffering in the NT is not the great existential puzzle which our culture has made it: it is part of the loving plan of a God who is more committed to our sanctification than to our comfort. There is little in the worship song corpus, and certainly nothing contemporary, which deals with these themes. Where difficulties are mentioned, it is almost always through the lens of our victory over them, and never of our being bewildered or crushed by them. But without this understanding it can be easy for those who believe they have signed up to a trouble-free ride to heaven to lose everything when problems arise. Partly this is an issue which grows from the culture of youth which we have identified, where such things as illness and hardship may seem so far away as to be invisible. It is interesting that in the *BCP* one important role of the priest is to ensure that people have made their wills properly[92]: a more contemporary equivalent might be encouraging savings or pensions before it is too late among those who can see into the future only as far as success and security. It is important in a local church to help prepare people, and especially young people, for the longer term cost of discipleship, and to use the wisdom of those who have had more of their lives to experience hard times as well as good. Again, using liturgy in worship will not of itself ensure that there are no nasty surprises in store for people, but it will make the possibility of such shocks harder to avoid, and will provide resources for prayer and worship when our own have run out. Whilst it may be claimed that those experiences of desolation are not reflected fully in the Anglican liturgical corpus, attention paid to the Psalter and to the

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[92] From the rite for the Visitation of the Sick (312)

seasons of Lent and Advent, with their particular texts and different moods, can at least help those in the first flush of young spiritual life to realise, even if they do not do so strongly at the time, that what they may later experience does in fact have scriptural precedent. But if these themes are neglected, and the church culture of victory over all that may assail us becomes the only voice we hear, it can come as a great, and at times faith-shaking shock, when our lives fall apart at some stage, a disintegration which Rohr particularly seems to see as fairly inevitable for serious disciples. On a personal level his book provided a lifeline for me when what I considered a successful ministry was shattered firstly by my being bullied out of a post by some church officers, followed closely by a diagnosis of cancer. Many of Rohr's readers must have shared my reaction: 'Why hadn't someone warned me that things like this happen?' He helped me to consider the possibility that this might all be a part of God's good plan for me, rather than a disaster which I had somehow earned or deserved. Suddenly many of the resources of the Anglican Church came into their own for me. Those very devotional habits and patterns with which I had always struggled became lifelines. In particular the Daily Office came alive, not because it was exciting and 'Spirit-filled' but because it was there, and gave me a pattern and some words when I had none of my own. Guiver (2008) reminds us of the value, as a discipline or habit, of simply setting aside time each day to be with God, in a world which can easily drive him for the centre of our attention, so that we refocus on him.

One vital resource which has long been a part of the Anglican liturgical tradition is the Psalter. In *CW* the use of a Psalm during the Eucharist as well as in the Daily Offices has become the norm, at least in theory. In the days of the *BCP* the Psalms were used in course, so that the entire Psalter was prayed each month. There are riches there waiting to be rediscovered, since Psalmody featured minimally during the fieldwork. A few verses were occasionally read as an introduction to the service, and no doubt some of the song lyrics had their origins in the Psalms (although only the pleasant ones!), but nowhere was there any use of psalmody simply because psalmody is helpful. Of course the unfortunate and inaccessible way in which Anglicans have traditionally sung the Psalms, to Anglican Chant, does mean that they require a great deal of redemption, but nevertheless the value of the Psalter lies in the sheer range of human emotion expressed in the light of a huge variety of human situations: approximately one third of the Psalms, for example, are songs of individual or corporate lament. Witvliet suggests that Psalmody is vitally important because Psalms are 'the foundational mentor and guide in [the] vocabulary and grammar for worship.' Just as a toddler needs to learn to say 'Please', 'Thank you' and 'I love you', so as Christians approaching God we too need to learn our words, and the Psalms help us not just with this vocabulary but also with more complex phrases:

> On any given Sunday, each of us comes to church with something different to say. Some of us come to church ready to tell God "Thank you!" Others of us want to cry "Why?" Others are ready to say "I'm sorry" – though we all need to. To say it another way, some of us come ready to sing Psalm 100, others Psalm 13, and all of us, if we're honest, need to sing Psalm 51. Good worship services make

room for these essential words … Authentic worship, like toddler talk, expresses who we are and forms what we are becoming. (2007, 12)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer agrees: 'A Christian community without the Psalter has lost an incomparable treasure, and by taking it back into use will recover resources it never dreamed it had.' (1974, back cover)

Some may feel that if the only strength of liturgy is that it is good for when you are depressed, that does not do much to commend it, but it would be concerning if in our zeal to proclaim the gospel and to make it attractive to people, we did nothing to resource them for the long road ahead, with its potholes and sharp bends as well as its comfortable highways. But the other side of liturgical worship is that is it perfectly able to lead us into the presence of the living God so that we might encounter him in life-changing ways. Many respondents in the fieldwork interviews genuinely believed that a liturgical style would neither 'connect' with worshippers in their churches, nor mean anything to visitors and seekers, and therefore was of little use. In fact it was felt to be positively harmful, reinforcing unhelpful images or memories of old and musty church life. There was little understanding of any theology of worship other than that it might or might not 'work' in terms of evangelism. There is however another school of thought which expects that the regular liturgy of the local church is perfectly capable of leading people to an encounter with God. Using the work of Rudolph Otto (1923) on the 'numinous' in worship, Weil suggests that religious experience ought to be 'deeply felt', a contention with which *HTB* and *NW* churches would heartily agree, but insists that

> Although this experience is not [inevitably] generated through participation in public worship, many Christians witness to having had such an experience in the context of a liturgical celebration. The purpose of liturgical rites is not the manipulation of the emotions of the worshippers. Yet, within the ordinary pattern of Sunday worship … one may feel suddenly touched at a very profound level and find one's faith confirmed and strengthened anew through the impact of this experience. (In Day and Gordon-Taylor, 1993, 7)

However, he notes that

> It must be admitted at the outset that the fruit of liturgical renewal of recent decades has often produced pedestrian models of corporate prayer in our churches. Some commentators have seen this as the result of the goals of the Liturgical Movement in general. Their judgement is that the quest for greater comprehension has produced rites which embody little sense of the sacred. (*Ibid.,* 8)

Weil suggests though that texts alone are not responsible for the loss of any sense of the numinous in liturgy. Rather, we need to rediscover the sense of 'fear and awe' in the celebration of the liturgy. This concept he sees as having first been addressed by Edmund Bishop in 1909, 14 years before the publication of Otto's *The Idea of the Holy*. Bishop in turn traces the idea back to the *Five Mystagogical*

Catecheses attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem[93]. Weil notes that the rise of opposition to Arianism, and a greater focus on the divinity of Christ, led to an increased sense of reverence, particularly for the eucharistic elements. He notes Otto's appendix in which he deals with St John Chrysostom's views on the elements in the light of a renewed awareness of Christ as fully divine, which meant that eucharistic ministers should fulfil their liturgical duties 'with fear and trembling'. The fifth *Catechesis* in particular instructs believers in the appropriate and reverent participation in the liturgy, and the receiving of the eucharistic elements[94]. This sense of 'holy fear' is as important a factor in worship as is trendy informality, and the language, demeanour and dress of leaders can do much to generate this sense of reverence, or to undermine it. This belief, that the regular liturgical worship of the Church can and should engender an awareness of the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, the fascinating but terrifying mystery of God, subverts the belief in a kind of vicious circle by which liturgy is thought to be irrelevant, and so rather than working on exploring it more deeply or leading it more creatively and with a greater sense of 'fear and awe' church leaders abandon it altogether, since it is irrelevant. It is significant that Miller (1997, 189) in his analysis of 'new paradigm churches' makes several suggestions to denominational churches, which are to do with the rediscovery of ancient paths in spirituality and disciplines and exercises such as those of Ignatius and Benedict, rather than suggesting that they abandon all that has traditionally been important in favour of a diet of worship songs. If we are tempted towards a theology of worship which thinks of it only functionally and often quite simplistically, it is good to remember that a liturgical approach both helps us meet with God, but also provides resources for when we do not.

Liturgy can help disciple our children

Another, and often neglected area which concerns spirituality for the long haul is that of our children, whom all the statistics tell us are deserting the church at an alarming rate. Scripture places the teaching of children firmly into the hands of the family and the community, from Dt 6 to 2 Tim 1, yet Kinnaman and Hawkins (2016) in their research-based analysis of both the statistics and the reasons for them, make it clear that whatever we are providing for our children is rarely lasting them beyond about the age of 12. Chris Leach (2007) suggests a strategy for staunching this haemorrhage, based on the ministry of an Anglican parish where the secondary school age drop-off was reduced almost to zero. Perhaps counter-intuitively, in that church Anglican liturgy was an important part of that strategy. Contrary to the belief that children cannot 'connect' with liturgy, the fact is that they thrive on it, as any visit to a school playground will demonstrate. There is a strong oral culture among

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[93] See Davies (1971).
[94] https://readthefathers.org/2014/04/20/lectures-for-holy-week-the-fifth-mystagogical-catechesis-of-cyril-of-jerusalem/ [Accessed 8 December 2020]

children where repetition, rhythm and rhyme communicate and aid learning. Far from being a hindrance, liturgical texts and action can be a tremendous resource in the discipling of children.

This thesis has already mentioned Terry Waite's conviction about the vital importance of memorisation of liturgy for times of captivity. The challenge is how we prevent the kinds of liturgy-averse reactions to childhood exposure mentioned by HT5 and HT6, but rather encourage our children into an appreciation of this approach which will carry them through the lifelong journey of faith, how, to use a picture mentioned earlier, we can 'give them the bucket' and lots of refreshing water to put into it. Clearly there are implications here for the attitudes leaders have towards a liturgical approach, and the enthusiasm (or not) with which they handle it.

What is true of children can of course be true in different ways of others who may have learning difficulties of different kinds, or at the other end of life, who may be living with increasing dementia. The apparent lack of much interest in the churches visited for any with difficulties or disabilities has been noted. In more subtle ways the images of happily married couples with radiant smiles which abound on the leadership pages of *HTB* websites, and the secondary role of leaders' wives in church and worship leadership, might seem unattractive for those who for a variety of reasons do not feel that they fit in with this ideal of good Christian living, or whose circumstances militate against them matching up to the perceived acceptable range of images. The fieldwork revealed little concern, for example, to give members texts which would stay with them and nourish them during later life when memory was failing, or when for other reasons they had no words of their own to pray, particularly important in a culture of ephemeral and often shallow worship songs. Both these different manifestations of lack of concern for those who in some way have different needs could be alleviated by a liturgical approach which means that even if you cannot read (yet), sing, or remember new words, you can still use different parts of your mind and body to worship, because you have been taught the same texts all your life, or because deliberate ways have been sought to make the worship accessible for you. A liturgical approach is highly inclusive: it does not set acceptable standards before allowing access, and it takes seriously those who cannot participate as fully, or in the same ways, as others. It believes strongly enough in liturgy, and is enthusiastic enough about it, that it will seek to introduce its riches to all, from cradle to grave, confident that it will provide rations for the march at every stage of the journey. If all our eggs are put in the basket of singing songs which came out last week, we may be acting exclusively towards some. But a more positive policy towards those who are different will not just do them good: it will create a culture where the whole congregation become sensitised to the need to show practical love and care towards others, which should spill out from church worship into a lifestyle of care and Christian service. The messages we give in our handling or public worship are important formative factors for those whom we are seeking to disciple.

Liturgy can help redefine 'Intimacy'

In its overriding emphasis on 'intimacy' with God as the one true purpose of worship, has the Vineyard discovered something important which has been lost from much church worship, or is the quest for intimacy as the driving force behind all worship a dangerous diversion? This section examines two questions: is 'intimacy' actually a biblical concept and purpose of Christian worship, and is the term as defined by the Vineyard adequate?

Evangelical scholar I. Howard Marshall asked in a 1985 article 'How far did the early Christians *worship* God?' This may seem like a provocative question, but his methodology was to examine some of the main Greek word-groups commonly used around worship, and to see how far these words were used in the NT of primitive Christian gatherings. His work, and that of his critics and supporters, will be worth examining more closely. He notes that often the basic position is that worship is entirely something we do for God: *we* worship *him*, giving him the service of our hearts and lips. Is this, asks Marshall, what the Early Church thought they were doing when they gathered? To attempt to answer this question he examines several of the word-groups used in the NT about worship, an examination which leads him to suspect that maybe the Church had different ideas. In summary, the words he analyses are λειτουργεω – (*leitourgeo*), σεβομαι (*sebomai*), λατρευω (*latreuo*), προσκυνειν (*proskunein*), the standard charismatic term which is often translated to mean 'to approach to kiss', and θυσια (*thusia*). His thesis is that these terms are rarely, if ever, used about Christian gatherings. Προσκυνειν in particular literally means 'to make a cone-shape towards', that is to prostrate oneself with face to the ground to kiss the feet of a conquering king in total submission, a far cry from a kiss of intimate love. If the Early Christians did think they were gathering to worship God, they certainly did not use any of the traditional worship terminology to describe what they were doing.

So what *did* they think they were doing? Marshall finds a completely different cluster of words, those around addressing God in prayer and thanksgiving, being addressed by God through teaching and prophecy, and overwhelmingly, being addressed by one another for mutual upbuilding. Two key terms are οικοδομη (*oikodome*, upbuilding) and διακονος (*diakonos*, service or ministry). He argues that these terms describe the most important NT understanding of why Christians gathered, in order to be built up in faith, so that they could perform works of service, among themselves and for outsiders. The idea that worship is something we do for God seems to be overshadowed in the NT by what God did for us, and what we do for one another, in building up and equipping one another for Christian service and discipleship.

Marshall's work was taken up ten years later by Richardson (1995), who attempted bring a different emphasis, that

> there is no such thing as 'worship'– at least 'not as we know it'. It will further be argued that worship (as we know it), and the emphasis it receives, find no parallel in the pages of the Bible. On the contrary, our present understanding of 'worship' actually obscures our understanding of the Bible, distorts our relationship with God and masks the true outworking of what it means to be his people. (1995, 197-8)

He conducts his own word study, but only on the three most common biblical terms for worship הִשְׁתַּחֲוָה (*hishtach'we*) and προσκυνειν (*proskunein*), both of which mean to bow down or prostrate oneself, and אָבַד (*abadh*), usually translated as 'to serve'. Both of the first two terms describe a downward move of one's body in reverence or respect. He notes thirdly that God's people are forbidden both from bowing down (הִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה) and from serving (תַעָבְדֵם) idols. His conclusion is that the NT is much more interested in holiness than 'worship': 'The church is ultimately not a "*God-worshipping*" community but a "*God-serving*" community.' (1995, 216)

Of course the views of Marshall and Richardson did not pass without some criticism, and Campbell (1996) attacks them for faulty linguistics, and for reflecting a Reformed distaste for demonstrative charismatic worship. He does agree, though, that mutual building up is key in the NT:

> Rather than say that the Early Christians did not meet for 'worship', it would seem better to say that while there was Godward activity in the early meetings which qualifies for the description 'worship', everything that went on in such meetings is consistently *evaluated* by the NT writers in terms of its manward benefits (or lack of them). (1996, 139)

Richardson then responded with a further, unrepentant, article, making his case even more strongly, and summarising: 'All this supports the conclusion expressed in my original article that "the contemporary understanding of 'worship' is moving us from a biblical understanding of our relationship with God."' (1997, 11)

It is worth considering these articles in some detail because they do serve to call into question the received Vineyard wisdom that 'worship' is only and always a journey towards intimacy which ought to make us encounter God and feel as though we have done so.

The second question which must be considered concerns the actual nature of the intimacy desired in Vineyard-influenced worship. Since this notion of intimacy is so deeply entrenched, it may be more helpful to seek to work with it, but perhaps to think differently, and more deeply about it. Might it be possible to broaden it out and discover a more holistic understanding of the concept? In the Vineyard material, as in the fieldwork interviews, there is little explanation of what intimacy really is,

and how we know when we have arrived there, apart from descriptions couched in terms of emotion. There is little information given about the effects of this intimate moment. Setting aside any questions about whether 'intimacy' has any biblical precedent, might it be possible to suggest that intimacy with God might mean more than just an emotional high? Indeed it is easy to see this quest for intimacy as nothing more than a desire for a postmodern experience-based moment which simply makes the worshipper feel good. This raises the question 'If I were truly to encounter the beating heart of God, what might I find there?' Would there be anything else apart from warm emotional feelings of love? When God looks down on our world, what range of emotions might be present for him? Is he livid about the invasion of one nation by another because of the greed and paranoia of its leader? Does his righteous anger make him scream out with frustration over the events in the land where his Son became incarnate? Is he moved with compassion when he sees the homeless lining our city streets? Does he weep over the blindness and arrogance of the human race which believes it can do without him now that it has discovered 'the Science'? Is he incensed, as he was in the OT days, by the corruption of nations' leaders? Does he still desire to tear down the rich, arrogant and mighty from their thrones and exalt the humble and meek? If all this feels uncomfortably anthropomorphic, it is worth remembering that Scripture is full of descriptions of God's feelings. Is it the case, then, that to think of intimacy with God merely as a moment which makes individuals feel special is a severe limiting of the concept?

I can remember many years ago hearing Graham Kendrick telling the story of one of his less popular songs, *Wish I Could Cry*. He described a dream in which he was staring at the face of Christ, and as he zoomed in on his eyes he saw they were in fact two globes of the earth, with Jesus' tears running over them. The chorus of the song which he wrote as a result of this vision reflects clearly what is meant here by different modes of intimacy with God:

> Oh I wish I could cry
> Oh I saw the world in your eyes
> And it was washed by your tears
> And you were calling to me
> To come closer and feel what you feel[95]

Perhaps a liturgical approach to our worship might broaden out the somewhat limited Vineyard concept of intimacy with God, and a greater variety of themes and moods might allow us to come closer and to feel more of what God is feeling. It must be a positive thing to adopt a liturgical approach to ensure that worshippers experience a wide range of moods in worship, in response to a wide variety of human situations, which will change and develop as the years go by. By this we more truly reflect the revelation of God and Christ in Scripture. As we become sensitised to what is really

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[95] https://grahamkendrick.co.uk/wish-i-could-cry-another-bad-day-at-the-world/ Graham Kendrick © 1983, Make Way Music. [Accessed 26 July 2023].

important to God, what Warren (*Op. cit.,* 352) calls 'perspective', there might be greater impetus for mission of all kinds as we really do see more of what God is wanting to do and join in with him. Might it be the case that an exclusive overemphasis on our own feelings might be blocking more useful and motivating outcomes from our worship? Perhaps a liturgical approach might provide a useful corrective to this 'me-centred' theology of worship, by taking seriously not just the victory of Christ but also those areas which still so desperately need to see it.

Liturgy helps challenge culture

This study has already identified some of the ways in which the churches visited seemed, to varying degrees, to have been influenced as much by the spirit of the age as by the Christian gospel proclaimed by his Church down the millennia, and part of the purpose of our sanctification is that 'the things of earth grow strangely dim' as we detach more and more from all that this world has to offer and become more and more attached to seeking first the Kingdom of God. Liturgical worship, by its very nature, helps us to refocus on what is important. It does this by informing us, by reminding us, by forming us, and by showing us. Liturgical texts inform us of the truths in which we believe and upon which our faith is based, and even the 'stage setting' of our liturgical space can reinforce, through décor, colour and lighting, the moods appropriate for the different seasons. Texts remind us, as we repeat the same words over and over again, of what is really central. They form us through that reminding: like actors learning their lines or students revising for an exam, the truths go deeply into us through repetition and reinforcement, and change who we are becoming. But there is more to it than this. Quite apart from the words of liturgical texts, the whole approach, the methodology of liturgy, demonstrates by its very nature what life is like. A liturgical mindset subverts the desire for novelty as we recite the same words over and over again, and we come to realise that the things we only ever say or sing once or twice do not penetrate deeply and so do us little good. It challenges our belief that we can reinvent the wheel with no need of those who have gone before us, or those who journey around us, as it forces us to join in with other voices, spread historically and geographically. There is a huge paradox here. In our attempts to be youthful, up-to-date and instantly accessible, it is easy for us to lose that prophetic voice which speaks against culture, calls it to account, and encourages disciples to something altogether better. The Christian gospel must speak out against the *Zeitgeist* when it is theologically wanting. Where the Church ought to be challenging some of the features of a postmodern consumerist world, it has instead capitulated. One important function of a liturgical approach is like that of a mirror, in which we look at ourselves and see where our desire for trendiness has blemished our witness rather than enhancing it. Might it be that the answer to the Church regaining the prophetic insight and challenge to our times might be that very Anglican ethos and style?

Various aberrations of the orthodox Christian gospel have been considered, which appeared to be present to differing degrees among the evangelical charismatic churches of this research, and Moy's work (2023a) has been heard to question whether *HTB* has lost some of the normative theology of its predecessors in its attempts to proclaim a trendy and appealing gospel. At its best, a liturgical approach to worship would subvert any temptations in the direction of the simplified gospel, because of the sheer range of theological material which is covered. The Bible itself at times wrestles with the paradoxes of life, particularly in the Wisdom literature, and encourages us to do the same. The Psalter takes seriously grief, anger and our desire for vengeance as well as joy and praise, and, as Witvliet has suggested, gives us the vocabulary to express them. It challenges any tendency towards a therapeutic gospel by striking more of a balance between times when we know healing and times when we do not. It insists that God is not there for our benefit, and that while he can and does heal, he also uses pain and suffering for our sanctification. The liturgical calendar invites us to times of waiting in darkness as well as to celebrating new life, times which can be enhanced by the physical décor of our worship-spaces. It subverts the numerical gospel by insisting that quality is just as important as quantity, and it builds in resources which will drill us into good spiritual habits, resources, incidentally, which, if we learn to value them in church on Sundays, we can take home and use throughout the week. And it refuses to pander to a feminised or sexualised gospel, valuing both what humans call 'masculine' and 'feminine' traits in the character of God and in each of us. At their best our texts seek to keep a balance between a God of love and of wrath, a God who nurtures and who challenges, who welcomes and excludes. They refuse to play into the hands of an over sentimental spirituality on the one hand, and an over 'muscular' one on the other, making it easier for both men and women to meet God through them. A liturgical approach refuses to pander to our postmodern individualism and our interest in the novel, the immediate and the instantly accessible. Root (*Op. cit.*) suggests that the key term is 'authenticity', but he then deconstructs it and finds it empty and hollow. Liturgy may be considered to be 'inauthentic', partially because of its negative associations with nominal churchmanship, and partly because it is considered to come from 'man' (*sic*) unlike the Bible which is the inspired Word of God, or even because we say it rather than sing it, but it refuses that label. It reflects the authentic deposits of faith upon which the Church has been built, foundations which will endure the shaking of culture and the ephemeral trends of this world.

Liturgy helps us belong to the Church

This survey of the purposes of liturgical worship began by suggesting that as an approach it connects worshippers through space and time with other believers, and sometimes very different ones. It is inevitable that sometimes Christians will abandon the path of discipleship: Jesus himself taught this,

and Paul knew his share of disappointment as previously faithful companions abandoned him (see, for example Mt 13 and 2 Tim 4). In the Fourth Gospel the preferred tense for the verb 'believe' is the present imperative, indicating that to go on and on believing, without falling away, is more significant that having once believed in the past. The author is clearly concerned that his readers maintain their discipleship, rather than risk losing their eternal inheritance. However, a body of literature from around the turn of the millennium began to explore the stories of those who had given up on church and organised religion without apparently giving up on their faith in God (Jamieson, 2002; Jamieson, McIntosh and Thompson, 2006; Duin, 2008). More recently Packard and Ferguson (2019) used the terms 'None' and 'Done' to distinguish between church leavers who had no residual faith and those who had simply done with Church. Coats (2010) explores research into the reasons for this abandonment, and finds that psychological studies tend to cast the offending churches as 'cults' who use 'brainwashing' to make it difficult for people to leave, while sociological studies suggest that escaping from unhelpful churches is more of a bereavement process than an eternally scarring trauma, or in some cases an escape from a POW camp. Both these views seem extreme when describing the British scene in general, and our two networks in particular, and nothing in any way sinister or abusive was apparent in the churches visited, nor in the congregation to which I belonged[96]. Nevertheless there is evidence that for some people there is a moving on from evangelical/charismatic congregations, which Jamieson explores in detail. This need not be for any sinister reasons, but may simply be about the experience that the simple gospel proclaimed in their churches no longer made sense to them, and as part of their growth they need to leave the basic truths of the faith behind and explore more deeply into doubt and ambiguity, an exploration which is not always warmly encouraged. Packard and Ferguson identify 'push' and 'pull' factors, issues within the church which can drive people away, and attractions from elsewhere which can draw them in. They identify the predominant 'push' factor from their fieldwork:

> The dominant factor driving people away from organized religion with regard to organizational structure is an overreliance on the bureaucratic organizational model. Our respondents repeatedly confirmed that, while there are virtues to bureaucracy, the congregations they experienced relied on this model almost exclusively, and it resulted in a stultified organization, with power and authority often concentrated in a singular pastor or small leadership team. (2019, 504)

They add to this a discontent with narrow moral agendas within church culture:

> We discovered that it was a *narrow* focus on specific issues that led to a lack of widespread participation. Aaron explained this very simply, when he said, "They were moral police—drugs and sex, drugs and sex, drugs and sex. That's it. I wanted to deal with poverty. They just wanted to police me." (*Ibid.,* 506)

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[96] Although the recent sad developments within Soul Survivor provide a salutary wake-up call to all churches.

and the feeling of some respondents that they are not allowed in their church culture to speak openly about their ideas and views where they clash with the mainstream, in other words where their operant theology does not fit the church's espoused theology. Among the 'pull' factors they identify two very clear and significant issues:

> In particular, the dechurched left seeking two things. First, they wanted deeper relationships in a religious context. In other words, they wanted community. Second, they desired to live out a more active version of their faith than they were able to find in the institutional church. (*Ibid.,* 508)

The approach of Jamieson *et al.* is different in that they identify five different groups of leavers, the 'Displaced Followers' who leave because they are either hurting or angry, the 'Reflective Exiles' who struggle with the disconnection between church teaching and real life, the 'Transitional Explorers' who are deliberately seeking a new mode of faith which feels more satisfying to them, those 'Transitioning to Alternative Faith', joining New Age groups or other religions, and the 'Integrated Wayfinders' who have reconstructed a new house from the materials of the old, and are largely living there happily (Jamieson *et al.* 2006, 14-21)

Of course any church will want to minimise this haemorrhaging of its members, and there are important lessons to learn from research such as this, but the work of Coats is in the area of the difficulties of readjustment once the parting of the ways has happened. It could be that a liturgical approach in charismatic churches would help members to feel that they were a part of something bigger than just their local congregation, and that should they feel the need to go, they would more readily find a home elsewhere if there were a perceived connection to the church they have perhaps been converted into, without ever knowing anything different. An overemphasis on initial evangelism can mean that a local church does not 'grow up' with its disciples, causing them to turn from the diet of milk to seek meat elsewhere. One of the values we have identified in liturgical worship is its connectedness to the wider church, and in particular to those who are different from the monochrome culture of some charismatic churches. If we have worked hard and enthusiastically on making the liturgy live, we should make it much easier for leavers to find a home somewhere recognisably the same in spirituality if different in culture. In other words, we ought to be able to minimise the numbers of Nones and Dones and facilitate their resettling elsewhere. It may seem paradoxical to extol the virtues of a liturgical approach as something which helps people to leave church well, and this is of course not the main value of it, but if our goal is life-long discipleship we cannot ignore the statistics or pretend that any particular local church will always be the best possible setting for every single convert. We need, even with some sadness, to allow people to leave well, and to help their transition go as smoothly as possible so that their faith-journey continues towards Christ-like maturity.

A New '*Via media*'?

The final of the three research sub-questions (p.20 above) asks 'Can there be worship praxis which is both charismatic and liturgical and which is more faithful to the gospel and more effective in forming long-term disciples?' This final brief section suggests that indeed there can be, and offers some practical strategies for churches wanting to rediscover their liturgical heritage. In terms of Practical Theology these comments provide the fourth, 'Action' phase of the pastoral cycle; in Osmer's terms they seek to answer the 'pragmatic' question. Cartledge (2000) has called for a new *via media* between structure and charisma, but might this dichotomy be cast in a different way? Fieldwork demonstrated, and some interviewees directly pointed to, a sharp dialectic between liturgy on the one hand and songs on the other, which meant that the two appeared as alternatives, with songs most often replacing liturgy as the worship style of choice, due to their perceived instant accessibility. This was true in both networks, although negotiated in a variety of different ways. This final section will explore some practical changes which could be made in order for the Church and her worship to be more faithful to the gospel and to the Church's disciple-making mandate. In particular it questions whether this 'songs are good, liturgy is bad' approach is an unhelpful way to view the issue (particularly in the light of the exploration in the previous chapter which suggests that actually songs are not perhaps as effective as they are perceived to be when it comes to replacing liturgy). Might a more helpful way forward, and an even newer *via media*, be to combine both, not in a tokenistic kind of way, nor merely in an attempt to fulfil Anglican Canon Law, but simply by asking what each is good at, and how we might creatively use the strengths of both to the best advantage of our worship and therefore our disciple-making? The previous chapter suggested that songs alone are not capable of providing all that good liturgy is meant to contribute to our worship, but that they do have important roles which are not easily able to be fulfilled by liturgy alone. Might it be possible to recognise this, and allow them different but appropriate functions within the whole worship of the local church?

This is certainly the vision of Wilson who invites us to 'eucharismatic' worship. His book is

> an attempt to join together two things that are frequently kept separate. It is a theological vision for the church that treasures all of God's gifts, the eucharistic and the charismatic … it is a call to pursue the best of both worlds, an appeal to being out of the church's storehouse both old a new treasures, so that God's people can enjoy his grace in Spirit and sacrament. (2018, 13)

After explaining what he means by the two terms from which his neologism is created, he assesses the strengths of each, and sets forth his vision for combining both, and suggests some helpful steps which churches who might want to make that journey might take. Particularly enjoyable is his suggestion that people might be encouraged to join in the Nicene Creed if music were used: 'If you

have someone playing a pad sound on the keyboard in the background, charismatics will do anything!' (*Ibid.*, 132) He acknowledges, though, that 'Eucharismatic worship' might not appeal to everyone: 'If eucharistic churches are dead and charismatic churches are ridiculous, then to be Eucharismatic would be dead and ridiculous, which is the only thing that could be worse.' (*Ibid.*, 14) Nevertheless he advocates this approach for exactly the same reasons as does this study: 'Our liturgy is the most powerful corporate disciple-making tool we have available.' (*Ibid.*, 79) Basing his thought on that of Smith (2009) he believes that discipleship is not merely a matter of what we know: it is far more about what we desire, and our desires are formed by what, and how, we worship.

Another writer who suggests a similar approach is Ross (2014), although her division of churches into 'evangelical' or 'liturgical' is more a North American descriptor which does not seem to translate easily into the British scene. Nevertheless she grasps the essence of the problem, quoting Richard Giles:

> We must accept that for most worshippers in non-denominational evangelicalism 'liturgy' is a dirty word, or at least an incomprehensible one … They regard the sacred liturgy, set texts, and lectionaries of the Church with suspicion and understand liturgy only as a quenching of the Spirit and the 'heaping up of empty phrases' warned against by Our Lord. The incomparable treasures of our tradition mean nothing to them. (Quoted in Ross, *Op. cit.,* 2)

So what steps might be taken to attempt to create this new *via media?*

Believing in the Liturgy

Of course it might be possible to treat the suggestions made in this thesis about liturgy with some incredulity. When one looks around the Church of England and sees small and struggling congregations, sticking rigidly to repetitive and uncreative liturgical worship with ever-dwindling numbers of people, very few of them below retirement age, many of whom appear to show no spark of spiritual life or enthusiasm, and compare those congregations with the vibrant, youthful and apparently dramatically growing *HTB* plants, it might appear that this thesis' lauding of the liturgy is severely misguided. Strictly liturgical worship in many struggling churches does nothing for the mission of the Church, not least because everyone is too elderly to have much energy to do anything other than keeping the show on the road, whilst vibrant charismatic congregations are not just growing numerically but also usually making a real difference in the communities in which they are set. Is it really helpful to suggest that to abandon liturgy and deliberately to target young and active people is a bad policy? The 'success' of charismatic congregations has been noted, whether we measure that in terms of numbers or of social impact. How can an approach to church life which many would say is simply our only hope for the future be so criticised? If the use of worship-songs is

really inspiring and fuelling evangelism and mission to the extent that appears to be the case in our two networks, how can that be decried? These are good questions, and as stated the purpose of this research project has never been to decry anyone or anything. But, having listened to the antipathy of leaders towards liturgical worship the essence of this section is not to suggest that their churches are bad or wrong, but rather that they might be even better.

I was asked two questions along the way during this research project, questions which have remained with me and which indeed require answering. First I was asked if I were a leader pioneering a 'Fresh Expression' of church[97], what would I regard as the minimum amount of liturgy required for the congregation to be validly Anglican? Behind this question was an awareness that the Church of England, along with other denominations, is involved in the planting of many new congregations aimed specifically at those currently outside any kind of church life. One of the movement's key ideas is that we do not begin with worship services, but that we build attractive communities, use those communities to evangelise those with whom we have connected, and then finally we create worshipping congregations, from the bottom up rather than from the top down. Obviously there has been much thinking and discussion about what makes such worship Anglican, how the sacraments might legally and validly be celebrated, and so on. So behind the question lay the idea that in our changing culture flexibility is the name of the game, and that my apparent insistence on a return to the liturgical tradition, which is the very thing which has put so many people off church, must surely be false path. My reply was that the questioner was asking the wrong question. As a leader who believes so strongly in the power of liturgical worship, I would be asking 'What can we possibly include which links us to the Anglican tradition, which values the resources of the past and those of the Church around us today? What wisdom can we draw on from the last two millennia which might be adapted and used creatively for the fresh worship of today?' The question is not 'What is the minimum we can get away with?' but rather 'What is the maximum we might find still has value?' This was the policy used in a past parish when planting a Fresh Expression.

I was also asked by a reader along the way whether I felt that by using the story of Terry Waite's captivity I was actually shooting myself in the foot, since strictly speaking his celebrations of 'Communion' were illegal. This question too, I believe, showed a profound misunderstanding of what is being suggested in this thesis, and misses the point completely. Clearly his situation was an extreme one, and his story was used to illustrate the value of the memorability of constantly repeated liturgical texts. But the reader had clearly misunderstood my work as proposing a return from the freedom of the Spirit found in the study churches to a strictly legal version of Anglicanism where rules and the letter of the law were more important than the freedom to improvise.

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[97] See http://freshexpressions.org.uk/ [Accessed 10 July 2023] for an explanation and account of this movement.

Both of these questions showed a misunderstanding of the purpose in this thesis. Clearly many respondents could see absolutely no value in liturgical worship, and so had no interest in using it at all, since it is by nature restrictive and irredeemable. They had heard the only options as being legally Anglican but spiritually dead, or bending the rules in order to allow for the freedom and the flexibility of the Spirit, and thus seeing growth. This dichotomous way of thinking is one which has constantly been rejected during this project. Instead this thesis has constantly suggested that a respectful and creative understanding of a liturgical approach can in fact enhance our worship and thus our effectiveness as missionary churches.

This vision of worship which refuses to be dichotomised along the 'liturgy' *versus* 'worship songs' fault line, with the added values of 'liturgy = bad' and 'songs = good' will require two things of the Church: enthusiasm and creativity. The glowing picture which has been painted of the values and virtues of a liturgical approach to our worship may indeed seem a far cry from the reality from which many charismatic leaders feel they have been liberated by the Spirit. So the first task must be to rekindle the belief that a liturgical approach can indeed bring resources to our disciple-making which will enhance it and make it more well-rounded and effective, whether in traditional churches or so-called 'Fresh Expressions'. In short, we have to start believing in liturgy again, and for many whose past experiences have been negative that might be a difficult step indeed. Indeed many leaders may never have believed in it in the first place.

'Parish Precentors'?

One thing I believe is disappointing in the Church of England is the lack of an equivalent role in local churches to that of cathedral Precentors. Trained and appointed to oversee the worship life of the cathedral, they typically combine musical and liturgical skill with great pastoral awareness. Whilst many of the churches visited, and most *HTB* plants, would appoint and/or employ a 'worship pastor', their roles are seen exclusively as leading sung worship, and often taking care of the extensive technological demands of the band, rather than as creating a healthy, creative and balanced worship diet for the congregation. My 'dream sequence' in this thesis is for the rediscovery of such roles, training pathways which go much deeper that mere songwriting, and the deployment of local worship-leaders with theological depth, pastoral wisdom and experience, a thorough grounding in and enthusiasm for the Anglican liturgical tradition, and the ability to construct worship in ways which are Spirit-filled, flexible, thoroughly creative and which contain within them the expectation that worship will connect us with God and transform us in the process. The data demonstrated that in many of the churches of this study clergy have a hands-off approach to worship-planning, with the fieldwork showing that it was usually delegated instead to worship pastors (p.174 above). So the

possibility of a much broader role for 'Parish Precentors' is an exciting one, which, once the will to begin the process is present, ought to be achievable in time. Of course much planning does go into preparing Sunday worship by the clergy, but the possibility of dedicated members of the leadership team to help with this role, of course under the direct authority of the senior leader, seems an exciting possibility. Their role would not be merely to plan and execute creative, Spirit-filled, encounter-pregnant services, but also to build up over time in their congregations a love and respect for liturgical worship which they have seen really can be life-changing.

Thinking Creatively

This thesis has not shied away from acknowledging that liturgy has a severe image-problem, and that that problem has grown from real-life experiences of flat, dull, boring worship from which both God and any spirituality seemed completely absent. It has also made the point that a liturgical approach is far more about routine than excitement, which is also true of real life. But the fact that liturgy is deliberately designed to be repetitive and perhaps unexciting does not mean that it cannot be creative. The tendency in the worship song culture to use the simplest of musical forms to express the awesome wonder of God has been examined, as has the idea of 'expectancy violation' as just one way of making music more interesting. The same principles can be extended to the art of liturgical construction. The effects of the violation work, it was explained, because the expectation has first been set up, so it might be said that the art is to ensure that the proportions of expectation and violation are just right. Too much of the same, and there is no violation: this might be the equivalent of a *BCP* Communion Service where the words are largely identical every time, and variation is minimal. But too much variation means that there is no expectancy to be violated: literally anything might happen. This is the equivalent of a non-liturgical service where every week begins with a clean sheet and there are no common factors or repeated words. In both cases the *frisson* is absent, either because there is no violation or no expectancy.

Let me give a practical example from my own parish ministry. During a period of Ordinary Time when we are encouraged to create our own teaching series I was preaching on being members of the church and what that meant, spending a week each on 'Passengers, Punters and Prima Donnas'. Passengers were those simply coming along for the ride without being involved in the life and mission of the church. Punters were the consumers who were happy when everything was to their liking, but simply shopped somewhere else if something failed to please them. And Prima Donnas were those who would become upset and defensive if their role or empire was threatened. I wanted to round off the series with a call to full-blooded commitment to our local church, to a refusal to act in any of the above ways, and above all a total commitment to God which would mean that we lived

out his mission in the world without church politics getting in the way. Wherever could I find a closing prayer which would say all this and allow people to recommit themselves to membership of our church and to God's people? I realised quickly that we already had one, and that we used it every week: the post-communion prayer

> **Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us**
> **with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.**
> **Through him we offer you our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice.**
> **Send us out in the power of your Spirit**
> **to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.**[98]

However well this prayer expressed what I wanted to say, I realised that because we said it every week it had become familiar and domesticated, so on the final week of the series I substituted the Methodist Covenant prayer, which is used annually in that denomination as a recommitment for the year ahead:

> We are no longer our own, but yours.
> **We are no longer our own, but yours.**
> **Put us to what you will, rank us with whom you will;**
> **put us to doing, put us to suffering;**
> **let us be employed for you or laid aside for you,**
> **exalted for you or brought low for you;**
> **let us be full, let us be empty;**
> **let us have all things, let us have nothing;**
> **We freely and wholeheartedly**
> **yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.**
> **And now, glorious and blessed God,**
> **Father, Son and Holy Spirit,**
> **you are ours and we are yours.**
> **So be it.**
> **And the covenant which we have made on earth,**
> **let it be ratified in heaven.**
> **Amen.**[99]

This was the equivalent of Vaughan Williams' E major chord, and the effect on the congregation was palpable. But it only worked because it was a variation from the usual post-communion prayer, which people knew so well that it had ceased to have any impact on them, and because the expectancy that the service would end in the usual way was violated by the prayer which said essentially the same thing, but said it differently and much more powerfully. So a good liturgist or worship-planner, or even 'Precentor', will bear in mind the need both to keep things the same but also occasionally to vary them. Once we have come to believe that liturgy is in fact redeemable there are many ways in

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[98] *CW* Main Volume (2000), 182.

[99] *T&S* (2013), 111.

which it can be used creatively so that it strikes that balance between what we do every week and the impact of that which we do differently from time to time. And because this chapter has extolled the idea of a 'liturgical approach', there are all sorts of things which might be done not just with text, as in this example, but with our understanding of our liturgical space, time and so on.

The churches visited during the fieldwork for this study fell into three different groups with respect to their liturgical spaces. Some, usually *NW* churches, used existing church buildings, which, while they may have been reordered, had been adapted in a way which was sympathetic to the past: they still looked and felt like Anglican churches, and retained furniture such as altar-tables and lecterns. The second group, mainly from *HTB*, met in church buildings but had gutted them, retaining only the shell with a stage. The third group, also *HTB*, met in 'secular' buildings which had been converted to the standard *HTB* layout of a stage with seats around, and usually some kind of coffee bar in a corner. But whatever we are working with, it can be good to ask questions about how we are using the space. Are we trying to demonstrate a connection with the Church as a whole, retaining but perhaps reordering some of the traditional furniture and fittings? Or are we trying to remove anything at all which may appear 'churchy', and seeking instead to recreate the ambience of a concert hall or club? Are we wanting to remove anything which, we have heard, young people and visitors might experience as negative, or are we trying to demonstrate the links we have with the worship of God which dates back through Tabernacle, Temple and Synagogue, and on into Christian history? Whilst different denominations of the Christian Church have varied in their appreciation of the symbolism of architecture and art in worship spaces, it has long been important to Anglicans, and to the Catholic Church before them, that buildings can speak as eloquently as texts, and, in ages of illiteracy, perhaps even more so. It has been my privilege in the past to work in the parish next to Coventry Cathedral, and the deep symbolism built into the architecture and décor of that modern building was deliberate, well thought out, and truly inspiring. The same is, of course, true for many other Anglican buildings. Even if a church adapts a warehouse for worship, there are ways of doing it which can build in some symbolism and artistic merit. For example, there might not be any altar frontals or other soft furnishings, but a few well-aimed Chauvet lamps could be used to bathe the building in the liturgical colour of the season.

Along with the sacralisation of space, Anglicans have always seen their worship as happening within time. The Church Calendar, with its reminders of different events in the life of Christ and the Old Testament *Heilsgeschichte*, is designed to help Christians engage with the full story of salvation, and to enter into the different 'moods' as well as the different aspects of the Christian story appropriate for different seasons. Whilst most charismatics can hardly avoid paying some attention to Christmas and Easter, and may regard Pentecost as their Patronal Festival, the fieldwork demonstrates that they are less keen on other times and seasons, particularly those which are more contemplative or penitential

in nature, and where their natural enthusiasm might be subdued. There is a thoroughly secular agenda hidden here: life is merely 'one damned Sunday after another', whereas Christians have discovered the value of variation, with some Sundays more special, and some more subdued, so that the contrasts, for example between Lent and Easter, are enhanced. Charismatics could perhaps learn the value of fasting so that the feast can be more appreciated. Christ's work was not achieved without any reference to time, and in fact life is liturgical in so many different ways. One of the greatest gifts to the Church of the liturgical calendar is Ordinary Time, and particularly those interminable weeks between Trinity Sunday and Advent. This 'non-season' is so important in our world, because, whether we like it or not, most of our lives are just ordinary time. We celebrate a birthday, an anniversary, Christmas and Easter once a year, but most of our lives consist merely of more of the same as we get up, go to work or school, and do the same again the next day. Charismatics who, rightly, place a high value on a God who acts and makes things happen, can find this so difficult, facing as they often do the pressure to make each Sunday more awesome than the last. But in reality most of the time things do not happen – we just get on with life. Because liturgical worship refuses to submit to our desires to make all things new on a weekly basis, because it forces us to repeat and repeat; precisely, we might say, because it is by its very nature dull, repetitive and unexciting, it teaches us what life is really like, and it shows us clearly the context in which our discipleship is to be lived out. Deep spirituality will rejoice in the gifts with which liturgical worship can resource it. There are so many seasonal resources available in the *CW* corpus which might be explored and used creatively. And powerful links can be made with the liturgical space question through the creative use of colour and décor for different seasons. The principles which have been discussed under the headings of space and time can also apply to the use of our bodies, Scripture and even silence. A truly exciting journey of exploration is out there waiting to be embarked upon.

One final thing which has come into clear focus during this research is that congregations, as well as worship-leaders, need training (and/or socialisation) in how to use liturgy well. When a congregation becomes used to liturgical worship a positive response is possible, and this was particularly the case at HT6, where enthusiasm for liturgy had been caught from the vicar. As has been seen from the reporting of the Focus Group during fieldwork (p.124-5 above), the idea of some teaching about liturgy sparked a good deal of interest among congregation members, a desire which leaders may wish to explore further. It is my conviction that charismatic worship could be so much better, so much more creative, so much more rich, so much more balanced, and so much better executed than it often is if we had a culture which valued the skills needed to make it so, and which invested in training, both of leaders and congregation, in how to use it well. This is not about an all-singing, all-dancing extravaganza which is fresh, new and different each week, with leaders striving to make every Sunday more Spirit-filled than the one before. It is simply about allowing the liturgy of the Church to which we belong to do its job, and to do it properly.

Then, having put our liturgical framework into place, it can be populated with ingredients which bring the whole service to life, including, yes, worship songs which are allowed to do what they do best, but which are chosen to work in the overall context. When liturgy is doing what it was designed to do, sung worship can complement and complete it by doing what it does best, specially if it is carefully chosen, creatively played and skilfully led.

My hope is that this study might help the Church to think through some of these issues, and provide a more healthy and holistic way forward, not just in our worship but also in our primary task of making disciple-making disciples.

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Appendix 1. Information for participants

1. Letter of invitation

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 1em;">

105 Nettleham Rd : Lincoln : LN2 1RU
07973-270658 : john.leach@durham.ac.uk

Rev XXX

4/10/18

Dear XXX,

Invitation to help with PhD Research

I hope you don't mind this rather formal letter.

I am currently pursuing doctoral studies through the University of Durham, and this research involves interviews with church leaders and members concerning styles of worship in Anglican Charismatic/Evangelical churches.

The attached information sheet gives more details about the nature of this research, and how you might be able to participate in it.

If, having read the information, you would be happy to be involved in this project, the University requires me to ask you to complete the attached consent form, acknowledging that you have not been pressurised into taking part, that you understand the process, how data will be stored and used, and that you understand also that at any point you can withdraw permission, and any material which you have contributed up to that point will not be used in the final thesis.

In terms of timescale, I am planning to do the fieldwork part of my research between the New Year and early summer. I realise that this letter comes at a busy time in the life of churches, but there is nothing that urgent about timing. I will probably conduct the interview via Skype or Whatsapp rather than face to face.

I hope very much that you will be happy to be a part of my project. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

Yours sincerely,

Rev John Leach BD, AKC, MA STh

</div>

2. Information Leaflet

Information Leaflet from John Leach
        6/6/18
'Charismatic Anglicans Negotiating Liturgy'

This is to ask for your help, and to explain what that would involve.
I am currently researching for a PhD at Durham University, looking at the worship of Anglican evangelical/charismatic churches, and particularly in the shift away from formal Anglican liturgy and towards what I will describe as 'informal liturgies' and the extensive use of sung worship through worship songs. The fieldwork phase of my research will involve visiting churches of this style, experiencing their worship, and speaking to leaders and others about their reasons for adopting this worship style.
In particular I am seeking to explore liturgical worship in two key networks, plants from Holy Trinity Brompton, and churches within the New Wine Network. In particular I wish to test my thesis that the worship of the Vineyard movement has been highly influential on British Anglicans.

What kind of research?
Qualitative research, which describes the methodology for my study, begins from a position of respect for the subjects being studied, and a desire to understand a given situation more deeply, and so to reflect on it theologically. As a participant-observer of worship my aim is simply to describe faithfully what I see, and, through questioning and discussion, to draw out deeper meanings and understanding.

Where am I coming from?
The world I am exploring is one which I have inhabited for many years, and one for which I have the greatest respect. I embarked on this research purely in order to satisfy my curiosity and because I enjoy study and writing, rather than to further any academic career.

Ethics and Safeguarding
To allow oneself to be interviewed and questioned can be a very vulnerable thing to do. As with all academic research I have had to comply with strict ethical regulations, and with the safeguards put in place by the Research Ethics Committee of Durham University. What this means is that there are systems in place to ensure respect, accuracy, confidentiality and protection of data. People and churches will be anonymised, and recordings and transcripts of

interviews will be stored securely, in an encrypted form, and erased once the research is finished. The only thing which I will identify about different churches is which of the two networks they identify with. Before the work is completed what I have written will fed back to interviewees, giving you the option of commenting on or of correcting anything you feel I have misheard, or any ways in which you feel misrepresented. The finished work will be examined as a PhD thesis, and will be stored electronically within the Durham library system. It is possible that the thesis will be subsequently published in some form as an academic book, or that findings may be written up at a more popular level. Obviously the same ethical standards will be used on any subsequent writing.

Where do you fit in?
I am seeking your help with this research, which means that you and your church will be anonymised and will be unrecognisable from my writing. Names of Dioceses, bishops and other individuals will be changed.

If you are happy for me to visit your church as a participant observer, and subsequently to allow me to interview you, I will need you to fill in the attached form which specifically gives me permission to do so, and which states that you understand how your views will be respected and how your data safeguarded. You will also agree to subsequent submission and publication of my research. Thank you for your time in reading this information sheet, and I very much hope that you will be happy to participate with me in my research.

Rev John Leach BD AKC MA STh
105 Nettleham Rd
Lincoln
LN2 1RU
John.leach@durham.ac.uk
07973 270658

3. Ethical Consent Form

Durham University

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: PhD Research
                         Worship in Anglican Charismatic/Evangelical Churches

Fieldwork Methods: Participant Observation (visiting an act of worship)
                         Individual interviews with Church Leaders
                         Focus Group discussion with Church Members

Name of Researcher: John Leach
                         105 Nettleham Rd
                         Lincoln LN2 1RU
                         John.leach@durham.ac.uk
                         07973-270658

Please initial each box

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet
dated 6/6/18 for the above project ☐

I have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask any questions ☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free
to withdraw at any time without giving any reason ☐

I have been informed about how the data will be used and stored ☐

I agree to take part in the above project ☐

Participant

Name ....

Signature .... Date ....

Appendix 2. Guide questions for semi-structured interviews

1)   Background
How long have you been at this church?
What was the worship like when you arrived?
What changes have you made?
What theological principles were important to you when making those changes?

2)   For the specific service I have observed/participated in:
How did you go about putting this service together?
What sources did you draw on?
Why did you choose to ...
How do you feel that fitted in with the general flow of the service?
Why did you choose not to ...

3)   General principles:
Are there things you always do?
Why?
Are there things you never do?
Why?

4)   Use of formal liturgy
What do you think is gained by a non-liturgical approach?
Is there anything you think is lost?

5)   Finally: what was going on for you when you said in front of the Bishop and the congregation that 'in public prayer and the administration of the sacraments [you] will use only those forms of service authorised or allowed by Canon'?

Appendix 3 - Key to Coding Convention

In reporting data this thesis uses the following coding system:

Each church was given a prefix identifying to which network it belonged. HT- was used for Holy Trinity Brompton plants and NW- for New Wine churches.

Each church was then given a number, in chronological order of visits: HT1 was the first *HTB* church visited, and so on.

Where these references remain unqualified, they refer *either* to the church *or* to the interviewee from that church: which of these can be clearly identified from the context. ('NW1 is located in …', 'HT1 believed that …'

References from the Participant Observation descriptions written up after visits are designated by an additional D: for example HT1D.

References to and quotations from interview transcripts have a additional T: for example NW1T.

The interviews with an Archdeacon and with a bishop were coded as AD1 and Bp1 respectively.

References to and quotations from the transcription of the Focus Group recording are coded as FG- followed by the anonymised participant's name and the letter T: for example FGBillyT.

A sample fieldwork description is included as Appendix 4, and a sample interview transcript as Appendix 5.

Appendix 4. An example Fieldwork Description – HT6

This classical Georgian building, which opened in 1826 is situated in a previously very deprived but now thoroughly gentrified area of the East End of London. It is set on a large green surrounded by medium rise flats. The interior is highly decorated, with a large gallery and magnificently painted ceiling. The chancel has been left intact, but pews removed from the nave, and a narthex created with a coffee area and toilets. There were many stage lights installed, and words and imaged were shown on two screens, either side of the chancel step, and two TVs in the side aisles under the gallery. The worship band, (keys and vocal, cahon and two backing vocals) were spread out in front of a nave altar (with two lit candles) across the front of the chancel, with the leaders in front of them with an iPad on a stand serving as a lectern. At the start of the service there were around 50 people present, but by the end this had almost doubled. One family arrived 50 minutes into the service, but there had been a trickle before that. As befits the nature of the parish, white faces were in the minority. There was a good age mix.

The service was led by the vicar, wearing chinos and a black clerical shirt, and a young lad who appeared to be in some kind of training, and who functioned pretty much as a liturgical deacon. The sung worship was led from a keyboard by the vicar's wife. The usual *HTB* countdown clock was show on screen, with enthusiastic joining in from some in the congregation for the final 10 seconds. The service began with a greeting from *CW*, to which the congregation responded enthusiastically, and we were then led, informally at first, into the penitential rite, with both confession and absolution from *CW*. This led into a song slot beginning with:

Come let us worship our king (Phil Wickham)

Then children were invited forward for some action songs, with three adults on the stage but no children in evidence. The songs were:

The Ark Song (Elevation Kids)

Big Family of God (Nick and Becky Drake)

Stand up and shout it (Praiseinmotion)

Father God I wonder (Ishmael)

It subsequently became clear that these songs had been carefully chosen around the teaching theme, quite a novelty in *HTB* churches.

The songs led into the collect for the day, and we sat for a video of 'Church Family News', with information about the launch of the new church website, the Sanctuary Course, about faith and mental health, and a new church app.

A child then read the Bible reading, from Mt 12:46-50. This was well read, but read from a version different from the NIV pew bibles we had been given on arrival. The reading ended with the usual *CW* response.

The vicar then spoke, for approaching 30 minutes, inviting children to come forward and sit down, which a few did, about the inclusivity of Jesus and the church family, of which you become a part not through blood relations but by obedience to God. there was a good mix of child-focussed teaching, using at one point the stained glass windows as a visual aid, and asides to the adults. There was no response opportunity or prayer ministry offered.

A *CW* creed followed, and then a brief liturgy of Thanksgiving for a child seeking baptism in due course. Whilst somewhat truncated, this words were pure *CW*.

Then a family led us in intercession, for climate change, the Covid pandemic, the Church, including those persecuted, families in the parish, and the bereaved. The standard responses were used throughout and at the end.

Holy Communion followed, with a brief explanation of Jesus' welcome to all his family, and Prayer E (minus the *Benedictus*) prayed with great gusto and dramatic manual acts. The *CW* Lord's Prayer followed, and we were told on-screen that all the bread was gluten-free and all the wine non-alcoholic. The liturgical invitation welcomed us, but no words of administration were used with the intincted bread and wine. The band began to sing *No longer slaves* (Bethel), and after most had communicated we were invited to stand and join in. The postcommunion collect and prayer followed, before a final song, *Who you say I am* (Hillsong), which would be a good time to get out our phones and give through the app. The vicar then prayed an informal blessing, followed by a *CW* blessing on the theme of family, before his assistant led us all in the Grace rather than the dismissal.

Appendix 5. An example Interview Transcript – NW9

JL

A few quick questions first of all in terms of background:
Did you tell me you'd been there three years?

AB

Four years now.

JL

OK. And when you arrived, what was the worship like, how would you describe it in a nutshell?

AB

Um … I think it was what you'd call a 'middle-of-the-road Anglican' church. What I would describe it as is dated, and relatively traditional. So the worship would follow a *CW* service, usually, at 10:30, a C of E Communion service. Occasionally, well sporadically we'd sing a song, so probably one at the beginning, then a load of liturgy, then a song part-way through, then maybe a song after the sermon, and a song to finish. And the songs would be generally 20 years old, or very old.

JL

And obviously you wanted to make some changes to that? What would you say were the theological principles that were important to you in what you wanted to do to the worship?

AB

I suppose that the thing that I wanted to do with worship was to explore encountering God, in a two-way manner, and also to go on a journey in the service.
So it felt to me when I first arrived that people went to church and sort of finished in the same place as they were when they started, so it felt like they were doing the same thing every Sunday, and there was a little bit of traditionalism, a little bit of going through the motions, and not a lot of expectation that God was going to do something in them, or that there was going to be encounter with the Holy Spirit. So what we tried to do was to use the same rough format of the *CW* communion service, but to try to finish in a different place with God than we started at. So to do that we use a what we would call a worship curve, going through five different stages of worship, with an expectation that as we worship God, he encounters us, and we are somehow transformed through that.

JL

Let me come back to the five-stage curve: is that related to the sort of famous Wimber five stages, or is that a different thing?

AB

Yeah, I think it was built on that. When I was playing musically in worship teams in our old church in the mid-2000s there was a thing which we called the worship-curve which was almost the same as our worship-curve. They used to talk about proclamation as the first stage, so you would declare who God is, and then the next stage would be reflection, which is realising who we are in brokenness and coming in confession, and things like that. Third stage would be adoration, where we say thank you for what God's done for us, the fourth stage is consummation, the idea of a moment of intimacy, whether that's receiving communion, or a revelation, a word, or prayer ministry or whatever, and the fifth stage is commission. So I've got a feeling that's similar to the Wimber curve, it was just rebranded.

JL

It kind of is. It's actually quite different. It's interesting; I've not heard this before. I think it's a blend of the Wimber stages and the shape of *CW* communion actually, and therefore I'm quite interested in that.

Let me ask you a question which I wish I'd have asked everyone else: is that the only possible journey through worship. because for the Vineyard, and I'm going to say that both *NW* and *HTB* are very heavily rooted in Vineyard praxis, and one of my … well I have two questions about those five stages. Number 1 is that the only possible route through a service of worship, and 2, could you say a little bit more about what you mean by 'intimacy'?

AB

Yep. Um … so to the first question I would say it definitely isn't the only route, and there's obviously many different routes, many forms, and we've definitely followed the *CW* pattern roughly to create these five stages. What I did with our music worship leaders was I taught them this five and we did a little … we would meet once a month to do training and I taught them these five stages, and I always said this is like your … I compared it to learning the music theory, that the rules are there to be broken. So the idea is you learn this, and once you're comfortable with that I'm fine for you to listen to the Holy Spirit and do whatever you want, as long as there is a thinking behind it in the first

place. So when I first arrived at the church the way of choosing songs would be 'What song do I like?' or 'What song has somebody requested?'. And what I tried to institute was use the songs that are at a particular place in the journey. So no, I don't think there is only one route, nor do we always stick to this route all the time. It was put in as a route just so there was something to be working with, and more often than not we do probably follow something similar to this, even if we don't manage a clear all five stages. It just was a framework to work with to introduce thinking about worship as a journey.

And intimacy, the words I was taught when I first started learning this stuff was that *proskuneo* Greek word of coming in for a kiss, or leaning inwards. The idea for that is that there is a moment of encounter with God, which may be the whole service, it may be like a one-off thing, with the idea that we are transformed through encountering the Holy Spirit. And what I try to think of in our Sundays is that that is going to be different for different people. So for some people it might be a particular revelation that comes through the teaching, for some people it may be when we stop and just wait on the Holy Spirit, that God says something that's just for them, it could be a prophetic word shared from somebody else. I'm very aware that for some people in our church it is when they receive communion, when they come forwards and actually receive the elements, that is a real moment of encounter with them. So I'd say it's not a one-size-fits-all, but it's … there will be, I think in any worship-time, there'll be a moment where you really encounter God, and there's quite a physical and a literal encounter with him.

JL

Let me take that a little bit further. I think that's really helpful, and again, you're telling me stuff that nobody's told me before, so I'm going to pursue this. In the … I mean I've sat through I don't know how many Vineyard-style worship slots, by which I mean singing slots, and I've led probably hundreds as well as a worship leader, and it's kind of characterised by what a friend of mine calls the 'school disco' model. You start off with the big bouncy ones and you're all leaping around, and then gradually is slows, and like the lights dim, and you're hoping to pull, basically, you're hoping for some kind of an encounter, and so the music gets slower and more lovey-dovey … that kind of thing. I think I would say that that is still what I've experienced in a lot of churches that I've researched, but I'm not sure … see, again in the old days of the Vineyard, there would be at the end of the slowest and final song a pregnant pause, and there will be expectation of prophetic words and that. for whatever reasons I think we are living through a time when the physical manifestations of the Spirit are less than they were … I suppose the 90s was the halcyon age. And so we still try to use that model but we're not quite sure what to do when we get to the orgasmic moment. Now what you're saying I think is that that moment might be different times for different people, and there might be different content for different people. Sorry, that was a long question and I'm aware I haven't asked a

question yet, but could you just reflect on that kind of school disco model and how you see things maybe being different from that?

AB

Yeah, I think that's true, and I think probably that model is what I four years ago would have been aiming for. Going into a first incumbency I only really knew one type of church and one churchmanship which was great in terms of seeing God move and seeing people come to know Jesus, and that was what I knew, and I thought the best or the right way to do worship which we've all move towards would be a big block of worship, half an hour or 40 minutes of song, through that curve, and yeah, waiting until the Holy Spirit manifested in whatever way at the end, and the more people fell over the more successful the worship time it was. And then I think coming to a church which was historically a very charismatic church in the 70s in that early season of renewal, and then had been much more reformed in the 90s, to the point where there wasn't really any expectation of manifestations of the Holy Spirit, and then we had quite a mix of people in the church when I came, very faithful Christians who all had different experiences and understandings of it. and so it's kind of blending what I'd known with what I came to in this church, that we expanded the model and expanded our understanding in that sometimes I would have a service and almost be disappointed because I thought 'Oh, the Holy Spirit didn't do anything crazy here. Maybe it was a bad service!' and people come in and say how much they met with God, or God met with them. So I had to change my mind a little bit about how God was allowed to move. Although I still in terms of my personal spirituality I would lean towards that more charismatic expression, I think I've probably had to change my understanding of well, maybe even what 'charismatic' means in itself, so I talk a lot in the services about we're not going for emotions or expecting God to move, God will speak to us, we'll meet with God. I'm not as explicit about what that might look like as perhaps I have been in the past, and I think as well it's not just in the … obviously you came to a 10:30 service which is a bit of a blending all these styles together. We have a few different variations on that. The other services are more stylistically explicit I suppose, so our 9 o'clock is a very traditional … well relatively traditional just *CW* service, and our evening services are probably classic Vineyard, a big block of worship, then teaching, then ministry. And so they're probably more … you know what, you know how it's going to go. But the 10:30 is certainly our biggest service numerically, and our expectation is that everyone will come and will meet with Jesus. But it does look different for each of them.

JL

Let me ask you a slightly cheeky question …

AB

The cheekier the better!

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JL

Why did you think … I mean obviously the main focus of my research is about liturgy, why did you think liturgy was worth saving? Was it because they were a traditional lot in some ways who used it and you had to work with what you'd got, or did it come out of a conviction that it is a Good Thing to do or something else? I went to one *NW* church and there was not one single word of liturgical text, unless you count 'Amen', in the whole service. What I experienced on Sunday was a liturgical framework and shape, with text but also space for the Spirit.

AB

I think that's a really good question, because I think when I came to this church, which I think I've said was a graft, so there was an established congregation in the past that had dwindled to a certain point but was still existing and I brought a team of ten people with me when we came in, so it was a merging of two styles. It's probably fair to say that I kept the liturgy to keep people on board and to make them feel safe, certainly at the beginning, and in my mind I'm anticipated gradually phasing liturgy out, so that when we were four years in it probably would never appear. And so it's been a learning experience for me to see how God can move through liturgy, in myself and in others, more in others than in myself, but from a variety of people. So I don't know how much of a theologian I am as much as a pragmatist, and so if something appears to be working and people will be meeting with Jesus, then I'll probably go for that. So we kept this liturgy as … we probably made a lot of big changes in the first few months, but we've stayed pretty similar, relatively similar since then, and people came and people met God in the service as we had it. I think some of the liturgy is helpful because it explains kind of what we're doing, like I think the confession is quite helpful, we have a liturgical confession, and in fact when we came to the church where we are now the people I brought with me were all really positive about this thing called a confession which they'd never done before, and they were like 'Wow! It's so powerful when we all confess together, isn't it?' And these were mainly people later 20s, early 30s who were mature Christians of that age, but had only really known one churchmanship, so we keep the eucharistic prayer once a month, which is the one that you came to, where again we try to scratch where everyone's itching across the month. If we do services where there is hardly any liturgy, there are people who find that difficult; if we do the service we did on Sunday there'll be some people that will say 'Oh, we've got to go to this liturgical one', but the others aren't like that. if you had come this Sunday there would probably be a confession, and that would be probably it in terms of liturgy, so we keep the Eucharist prayer liturgically, and we keep the confession, and I think that's been a pragmatic choice for taking people with me rather than just losing everybody as much as it's been a theological choice. But I think if I were to start from scratch now, and plant a new church where there were no expectations, and none of those kind of

parameters, I think I'd probably use liturgy more than I would have done if you'd have asked me four years ago before I started.

JL

Fascinating! I just want to pick up two things from that answer. You used the word 'safe'. Say a bit more about that? Why is liturgy safe, and is that a good thing or a bad thing?

AB

Again, I think it's fair to say that I've been on a journey over this. If you'd asked me when I first came to this church I would have looked at the services and the people who when you do the liturgy they were more comfortable than when you were doing anything extempore or freer worship or whatever, and I would have perceived it to be overly religious, sort of traditional and not a lot of engagement with God. I think what I see now is there's a faithfulness there, and there is an engagement with God, although I think that's come to a culture of worship. I don't think that was always there. I think actually people's engagement with worship through liturgy has grown over the last four years, more than it's just that I've discovered that it was already there. I think there are … um … for a lot of people space is uncomfortable if they don't know what it's going to be filled with. I'm not so sure that the liturgical structure, you know, is … makes people feel safe, that I'm going to a traditional service so I feel safe – I'm not sure I buy into that. but I do think that for some people if there's something written down in front of them they know what they've got to do. It's much less threatening than you know the other extreme if you go to a Quaker service or one of our prayer meetings or something, so there's like half an hour and we're just going to pray, let's go! I think what I've learnt is there are people, and I wouldn't put myself in this camp, but I guess you learn to understand people who are different, don't you? There are people who feel much more comfortable with that written down, and I think it … when I try to think 'What does that mean for engagement with God?' it probably doesn't matter as much, you know, to God or anybody else. If they're praying and there's a prayer they can engage with I think that's good.

JL

OK. I want to ask you about ten more questions coming out of that! Right, let me try and collect my thoughts. First of all, people have, you said, kind of developed in their appreciation, grown in their appreciation of liturgy?

AB

I think that's fair to say, yes.

JL

Do you think you've done something to make that happen, or to help that happen?

AB

I … We, as a leadership, and certainly the worship-leaders, I think have tried to develop a culture of worship, which I don't think was there necessarily four years ago. So I think as much as the form of service has changed, as we've talked about worship curve and bringing in more songs and things like that, I think the culture of worship and the expectation has changed. So I think I said in the first question, something about an expectation of meeting with God, and of going on a journey, and of being different after that encounter, I think that's a culture which hopefully has grown in the church, and that manifests probably through liturgy, as it does through sung worship or Holy Spirit ministry. I think there's been an engagement with the Holy Spirit, and engagement with God has grown through people that have comes as well as people that have been here for a long time.

JL

OK. Liturgy as user-friendly, and you said people feel kind of safer and more secure if they've got something in front of them. Would you say that's true for visitors as well as regulars?

AB

Yes, I think it is. As long as … I mean from our point of view yes, I think it is, as long as it is explained and clear. So I've been to churches, still go to churches, where I've no idea what's going on. I mean I think when I first started to explore ordination, and was told I needed to go and try different church styles, different churchmanships, and I would go to services at places where they give you a book with ribbons in it, and then they would do a full liturgical service, and I've have no idea what I was meant to be reading or whether I was meant to be saying things or not saying things, or leaving a pause, or whatever. I think it's as anything else it has to be handled well, but it's very clear that if someone, if they like 'We're going to say this thing which is on the screen, ort we're going to say this things which is on a piece of paper in front of you, then I think that is safer for people coming in. Not because necessarily they prefer a more traditional style of church to a more modern one, but just because it's very clear, I think, particularly for someone who has not been to church before, or is very young in the faith. The idea of praying out loud is really scary, I find, and actually we've found … so our church, it's been brilliant seeing so many people come to faith over the last few years, but there was a stage a while ago where you'd have a prayer meeting or a small group, and the majority of people had only been Christians for a few weeks or months. And so you'd say 'Right, let's pray together' and I would pray, and then you'd just wait in silence as nobody else knew what to do, and then, you know, I'd wait a few minutes, then I'd pray again, and then wait a few minutes, then close in prayer. And so having something written down in front of them actually just helps people to

engage in a way that they're not going to feel self-conscious. And I think there's a … I'm not saying that's the ideal, because I think extempore prayer is a mature thing you need to grow into. So I think there is a balance between the two, but I do think it feels … it's just easy for somebody to walk into a church, and for the vicar to say invite the Holy Spirit, say yes to God in your heart, and now we're going to pray this prayer, rather than saying 'Right, we're going to have an open time of prayer'.

JL

So most of the interviews I've done so far, people would describe … people would tell me that liturgy is completely user-hostile, nobody gets it, it's churchy, it's old-fashioned, it's out of date, and it puts people off. That would not be your experience or your understanding?

AB

That would be the majority of my experiences of church. But I think that is a cultural issue, and a leadership issue, more than it is a fault of the liturgy. And so I think … liturgy can be done well, and it can be led well, but I think whenever you go into church, if you've not been to church before it's going to be weird stuff, whether it's speaking in tongues, whether it's singing out loud, whether it's sitting or listening to the bible, whether it's liturgy, whatever. Whatever church you go to I think you have to be really high on explanation, and really high on accessibility. But I do think that can be done with liturgy, I think you just have to know what's expected of them, and why we're doing stuff, and I think there's this idea if you engage in any of the debates on Twitter about liturgy in the Anglican thing, they're very interesting, but there is a strong idea in a lot of the Anglican church, that the liturgy explains itself. I find this with Funeral services, that actually a lot of the bits in the *CW* Funeral service are clearly there to explain why we're doing things or what they are. But actually the phrases don't make sense to a lot of people in this area, so I end up doing a little explanation, and then the bit of the liturgy which is meant to be explanatory, and then the prayer. So I've started cutting out the middle bit now, and doing a bit more extempore.

JL

One of the things I've heard is that to stand and say stuff together is weird – there's nowhere in the world where you do that, and so therefore that is mission-hostile, and I say 'But to stand and sing is OK?' And they say well yeah, because you do that at football matches, you do it at Glastonbury, and so on, but we mustn't … we can't stand and *say* together 'cos that's weird. And then I say 'But you do expect people to come down the front, have a stranger put their hands on them and pray for them.' (laughter) So I think you've hit the nail on the head in terms of culture, and I think that it's also a lot down to what the leader actually thinks and believes, and whether they … See one of the things I get a lot is 'Well nobody understands liturgy' but there is no concept of actually we need to do some liturgical formation with people, we need to help them to understand it, teach them about the value of it, and I think that is going on 'cos fundamentally the church and the leader don't think it's worth the candle. Do you think that's …

AB

I think that's fair. I think that in church services we use really weird language, and either when we're singing or when we're saying liturgy. But we possibly don't think as much about how weird the words

are if we like the tune that we're singing it to! (laughter). So I think if you wrote down all the stuff that was said in a normal worship-song, then that is strange, isn't it, if it were to be spoken. So anything has to be explained. I guess we always have to trust the Holy Spirit is moving and is you know, doing things that we don't understand. But I guess … confession is the easy one; I feel that people really engage with that idea, but we'll frame it by saying 'We're aware of our brokenness, we're aware of falling short; we're going to say a prayer together to allow us to give that stuff to God.' And people are like 'Right, OK then' and then they say it.

JL

The problem with that approach, though, I mean most of the churches I've been to if they do use any liturgy at all, liturgy is there for the confession. And that might be the only thing. And I wonder what subliminal messages that gives about liturgy. You know, it's only there for the nasty things in life. (Laughter)

AB

But I wonder whether it's there for the *serious* things, as much as that. So we're going to stop, we're going to say these words. Like where else we do it outside of legal place where you have to make a vow or something. So we use liturgy for the Eucharist, or for the Communion, because potentially it brings a gravitas, maybe for Communion for that same thing. I hear what you're saying. If we only use it for the sin bit then it makes it more miserable. But I don't know … some of it I guess is the demographic make-up of your area as well of where your church is. Like our area is not a young adult, student area; it's young families, the vast majority of our growth has come from people that have recently had children and got back into church, cos that's a life-stage when you do it. Or older people that are rediscovering a faith that they had a long time ago. So if our church was mainly sort of late teens and 20s, and if liturgy became a problem, I wouldn't hold onto liturgy because of any personal principle of my own.

JL

And yet you've said that the sort of 20-somethings found real value in it once they were actually exposed to it and got into it a bit.

AB

Yeah, I say late 20-somethings who are now early 30-somethings, but yes, they have done, but those guys who came, they were very conscious, they weren't shopping looking for a church, they came with me to do this regeneration project. And so there's a level of consciousness there that you wouldn't necessarily have if there was someone shopping around for a new church. But maybe. I mean the growth that we've seen, we've not … since we made the major changes to the service I

found it's not been broken so we haven't fixed it. so we've stuck with what is allowing people to encounter God. sometimes people come to me and say various things, various phrases have jumped out and they've appreciated it. So there's that prayer in the Eucharist prayer that's about not being worthy, and yet being able to … which some people really connect with. There's the 'Holy holy holy' bit, which I know has got a proper name, which people often remember.

JL

The *Sanctus*.

AB

Yeah, that's the one.

JL

OK, that's really helpful. I think three more questions, unless you say anything really interesting and I want to go off and pursue it. Most of the people I've spoken to, it is a matter of doctrine that if we want to see the church grow, if we want to do mission, we've got to dispense with all liturgy, or certainly minimise it as much as possible. You've said that's not entirely where you are, although it's where you may have been. What do you think is gained by a non-liturgical format? Or what do you think they think, or what do you think you would have thought four years ago?

AB

I think there is more freedom in terms of going where you want to in following the Spirit's leading in a service without liturgy, which would be one of our priorities in worship, to always … we always pray beforehand that the Holy Spirit would lead the worship, and take us wherever, up, down, noisy or quiet or whatever. And I think there can be limitations that, although I'm sure there are experts at handling liturgy that can pull stuff out from whatever's going on. I couldn't do that, I just know a few bits. And I think there are limitations when people come into a church in terms of thinking growth missionally as well as for discipleship, there are limitations if a service feels like it is spiritually dry or if it's overly traditional, or if it's inaccessible. And I think the vast majority of my experience of liturgical services would feel like that. I'm not sure that … because of the liturgy or because of the church. And so … I guess I historically would have said that, you know, whenever you go to a really liturgical service, it's dry, the Spirit's not moving, therefore liturgy must be what causes that. I think probably I've learnt since that that isn't the case, but if you take elements out and put elements back in, I use liturgy because practically it works, and it's what God has done, and the way that God has blessed our services has been sometimes through the liturgical bits.

JL

So if it isn't the liturgy itself that's at fault, is it the way it's led?

AB

Er … Yes, I think so. Certainly in some experiences there's been a sense of … there's been a sense of going through the motions, probably for the minister as much as the congregation, because the book is there and has to be read, so you read the book, and then … one of my personal priorities in worship, as I say, would be following the Holy Spirit's leading, and responding to that, which I feel like in a fully liturgical service it's very rare that you see that happen.

JL

OK, question number two: One of the things that again people tell me, and they're right, and I've done a research degree on this, is that when we sing it connects with our emotions in a way that it doesn't when we just say. I think that's probably fairly well established. My question is, therefore why don't we sing liturgy? And in the early days of renewal, the Fisherfolk and all that kind of thing there was a really big movement towards singing liturgical bits as though they were worship (laughter) if I can put it like that. I've not met anyone who does that at all in any way, and again I think for most of them why bother, you know? Why try and redeem something that is just not worth redeeming? Do you have any … so instead of singing the *Sanctus* to stick in a song that says 'Holy holy'.

AB

I think it's … gosh, so much to say about that! what we did when we first came in to kind of change the services, was we directly replaced sections of *CW* with songs. So although we didn't use the words of the liturgy, we had the prayer of humble … um … obedience or acceptance or whatever it is, we said instead of that bit we're going to do a song. And when there's the *Gloria* that was in after the confession and absolution we said we're going to do a song to that bit instead, and so actually it was quite formulaic when we first started, we said there are the sections of *CW* which you have been saying, instead of that we're going to do a song. And I merged that with this kind of five stage worship curve. So we did try … we did do something like that, and there was an engagement with it. we have experimented with singing the … not singing the Creed but replacing the Creed with a sung Creed which is I think quite well-known amongst *NW* services, and that was good. We tried it for a while, I can't think of a reason why we don't still do it as much, we probably will do it now and again, but that was almost introduced as not necessarily … well it was part of the worship, we said we're going to sing this as a Creed of what we believe. I think the principle of that is right in terms of the majority of our service is sung, but we are singing songs to reflect the liturgy that was there before. I think … yeah, you know connecting emotionally with singing is 100% behind, if we were going to get rid of liturgy or songs, then I would get rid of the liturgy in our service. For me the singing is still the

more important, or the bit where the connection happens the best. And I think probably the hardest bit to sing would be the confession, which is the bit that we say.

JL

Is that hard to sing because nobody's written any songs that say that anymore?

AB

I think that it would be hard to lead somebody, or a congregation, in an act of confession through song. I'm guessing, I'm guessing, I don't really know but I get the … I'm trying to imagine myself in a scenario that says 'Right, now we're going to come before God in humility and repentance, and we're going to sing …' I mean I'd be up for exploring it in some way if someone would have to write a good song.

JL

I've written one: I don't know if it's good but I can send it to you (laughter).

AB

Yeah, that'd be interesting.

JL

Based on the *ASB* – it's quite old, but … yeah. OK, I'm just interested that, you know, that what you've said about making the songs fit the … doing the same job in the service as the *Gloria* would have done of the Creed would have done – that's exactly what I used to do when I was a worship leader so I'm totally behind that. you said right at the start that you inherited a system where songs were chosen by 'This is what I like', and then you said you moved towards where they're chosen for where they fit in that curve, but this is actually a third model, isn't it, where you choose them thematically, you want a song which will give people words to respond to the sermon, or give people words to do this job within the liturgical framework.

AB

It is, but when we originally taught it and introduced it, it was to … we sort of blended the *CW* service and the five stage worship curve into one, that was presented as the two were the same thing. Look this is the journey that the *CW* service takes you on, it can be broken down into these five, therefore we're going to sing songs like that.

JL

OK, and in terms of like preaching themes or something? So last Sunday was the Baptism of Christ, and you didn't particularly go there, although you did use the lectionary readings. See one of my beefs is that people aren't writing songs nowadays that do anything but say thank you for saving me.

AB

(Laughter) Yeah!

JL

Whereas I'm a … I'm unashamedly of the Kendrick era. I can't help it, it's just my age. But if you look in the Kendrick corpus, there are credal songs, there are songs of penitence and confession, there's even a song for sharing the Peace for goodness' sake, and nowadays all you get from Hillsong and Bethel is thank you for the cross and you rose again. I think that has impoverished our worship.

AB

There's probably a shared understanding across a lot of church leaders, and that's probably true. But then I wonder as well … I'm trying to decontextualize a little bit … yeah, that is I think true and right. I think what we do is we use … if we think of the whole service as a worship curve, then the sung bit is mainly proclamation, and then adoration and reflection. And the rest of it is kind of shoe-horned in. I mean we do struggle for good commissioning songs, good sending out song, and we nearly always end up on a … a kind of hymn, or a good solid theology one, Stuart Townend or something like that that's going to send people out. Yeah, there aren't as many songs for different bits in the service.

JL

I did enjoy, by the way, the really eclectic mix of the songs. One *HTB* church has even said on the front of its website 'We use songs from Bethel and Hillsong'. And that's it, that's the doctrine.

AB

We try and make sure in every service there is something that is less than three years old, there is something that is more than 50 years old, and there's something from the kind of big surge of 90s songs. I know there's such a variety of different people – it's not about pleasing people, it's about making sure that everybody knows at least a song that they know, that they feel sort of safe and at home with.

JL

Last question – I'm asking this to everybody, and I think you're one of the people it applies least to, but I've got to ask it anyway: what was going on for you when you stood up in front of your bishop and your congregation and said 'In public prayer and the administration of the sacraments, I will use only those forms of service which are authorised or allowed by canon'?

AB

Hmm … yeah, I remember that. Um … I don't think I gave it loads of thought, you know. I don't think that I was, er … I was conscious that I was going to be going off piste, and I was conscio9us that I was going to be stretching things when I was saying it, and I remember going through my mind should I not say 'only', should I just say the rest, or you know, you hear stories about people crossing their fingers and all whatever. I just decided not to overthink it, because you know there another line in the ordinal isn't there that say to proclaim the gospel afresh to each generation. So you can't have your cake and eat it (laughter).

JL

So just kind of 'Whatevs'?

AB

Yeah, that was my attitude. I did give it a lot of thought, though. I had conversations with people about it, some that struggle with it and some that insist on it, and certainly one guy who was planning on crossing his fingers. I think in my mind I was like, I just won't say the 'only' bit, I'll just say the rest of it and not say anything when it comes to 'only', but I'm not even sure that I followed through on that at the time. It was a bit of a blur.

JL

In the service you gave yourself and the preacher marks out of 10. What was that about, how did that function within the service?

AB

Just as a bit of banter really. A normal line, which I don't think I said on Sunday but I say almost every Sunday, is something like 'Welcome to our church; we're a church where we don't take ourselves very seriously, but we do take God seriously'. I use that quite a lot.

JL

That sounds like a liturgical text to me!